Office of Board of Selectmen

143 Main Street, P.O. Box 310, Belmont, New Hampshire 03220-0310
Telephone: (603) 267-8300 Fax: (603) 267-8327

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 3, 2024, 10:00 am
Belmont Mill, Tioga Meeting Room

Present were Chairman Ruth Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Claude "Sonny" Patten, Jr., Selectman Travis O'Hara, Selectman Sharon Ciampi, TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman, Police Captain Stephen Akerstrom, TC/TC Jennifer Cashman, Fire Chief Deb Black, Assistant Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz, DPW Director Craig Clairmont, Land Use Technician Rod Cameron, General Assistance Director Donna Cilley, Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden, Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge, Library Director Eileen Gilbert, Cemetery Trustee Hillary Horn, and Planning Board Member Kevin Sturgeon. Also present were Allie & Amanda from Fern Floral and Rooted & Grounded.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence was held for Police Chief Mark Lewandoski's father, Alexy Lewandoski.

Review & Approve Minutes – 03/20/2024, 03/25/2024, 03/27/2024 & Deliberative Session:

Selectman Jon Pike moved the minutes of the meeting held on March 20, 2024 as written; seconded by Selectman Sonny Patten. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Selectman Travis O'Hara moved the minutes of the Work Session held on March 25, 2024 as written; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Selectman Sonny Patten moved the minutes of the Work Session held on March 27, 2024 as written; seconded by Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Selectman Pike moved the minutes of the Deliberative Session held on February 3, 2024 as written; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

New Business:

Fern Floral – Flower Festival Proposal:

Amanda and Allie from Fern Floral and Rooted & Grounded would like to host an annual flower event for the community that would be family friendly. This would be at the Pavilion and parking area at the end of summer. They would expect attendance to be free this year and rent vendor spaces to help cover costs such as for live music, police and fire coverage. They would help support local flower farms and greenhouses and nurseries and provide some low cost activities for children, as well as hold art contests. There would also be food and beverage vendors similar to a farmer's market. New Hampshire does not have an event like this one and

it would bring other people into our community and showcase our Town. Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge and TA Alicia Jipson are working directly with Amanda and Allie. TA Jipson is coordinating with Town Planner Karen Santoro and LU Technician Rod Cameron to look at vendor fees for an event like this. A lot of advertising will be done by social media, in the Daily Sun and the Concord Hippo. There are tentative plans in place for cleanup and setup, as well as porta-potties and garbage collection. In the future, they may ask for permission for a business to sell or sample alcohol at the event, but not at this time. It was the consensus of the Board to keep moving forward with planning for this event.

Police Department New Hire Request:

Captain Stephen Akerstrom reported they have finished the background check on a new candidate and are looking for the Board's blessing to hire.

Selectman Pike moved to approve the hiring of Syntia Somogyi as a full-time police officer; seconded by Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Police Department Part-time New Hire Request:

Captain Akerstrom said they were approached about taking on another part-time officer, whose role is to cover investigations through the County Attorney's Office. There is no expense to the Town of Belmont. It will give the position a "homebase" and it is funded through the County Attorney's Office.

Chairman Ruth Mooney moved to approve the hiring of Kristyn Bernier as a part-time police officer; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Heritage Commission Member Appointment – Priscilla Annis:

Selectman Pike moved to approve the appointment of Priscilla Annis as a full member of the Heritage Commission with a term expiring March 2027; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Cemetery Trustee Alternate Member Appointment – Norma Patten:

Selectman Patten moved to approve the appointment of Norma Patten as an alternate member of the Cemetery Trustees with a term expiring March 2026; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Cemetery Trustee Alternate Member Appointment – Kevin Sturgeon:

Selectman O'Hara moved to approve the appointment of Kevin Sturgeon as an alternate member of the Cemetery Trustees with a term expiring March 2027; seconded by Selectman Patten. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Gale School Grant Funding Extension:

There is a request in the Board's packets to extend the Community Development Block Grant for $500,000 for 12 more months for the Gale School. The project has been delayed due

to COVID and pricing increases. The new expiration date will be 05/30/2025. Chairman Mooney will sign the document.

Perambulation – Canterbury and Gilmanton:

TA Jipson was contacted in 2022 about conducting a perambulation but it was put off as a low priority item. It is supposed to be completed every 7 years. It requires a walk through the woods with a surveyor to map out the boundaries between towns. The Board may choose to do this or appoint a designee, such as LU Technician Rod Cameron, who has surveying experience. There are various records for perambulations in 1978, 2002 and 2006 but there does not appear to have been a complete perambulation for all towns. Belmont has a large boundary with Laconia, Gilford, Gilmanton, Canterbury, Northfield, Tilton and Sanbornton. It is not easy to coordinate because some areas are virtually inaccessible. The process primarily locates the bounds along the Town lines, and is difficult in areas where there are no satellites and GPS is unable to be used. Canterbury will be working with their own surveyor so there would be no cost to Belmont.

Chairman Mooney moved to appoint LU Technician Rod Cameron as the Board's designee for perambulation; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unopposed (5-0).

Adopt RSA 80:52-a Tax Pre-Payment:

TC/TC Jennifer Cashman recommended the Board adopt RSA 80:52-a to allow for tax prepayments up to 2 years in advance. It looks like it may have been addressed in 2016 however we can find no records of a BOS adoption or a warrant article. If the records can't physically be found it is recommended that the RSA be adopted/re-adopted. It is a very common practice and one we have been doing for some time.

Selectman Pike moved to adopt RSA 80:52-a regarding Tax Pre-Payments; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Other New Business:

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Day 2024:

Per the Board's instructions, TA Jipson contacted Lakes Region Planning Commission to let them know Belmont would not be participating in the HHW day for 2024. That saves approximately $9,000 this year. Belmont residents will also not be able to participate in any other Town's Household Hazardous Waste Collection this year.

Old Business:

Hazard Mitigation Plan Match Clarification:

TA Jipson clarified that the match for this program is not made with financial funds; it is an in-kind donation of time of personnel to work on the project. There is no money to come from the budget for this match.

Letter to DES on Route 140 Force Main (WRBP):

The Board received a copy of the follow-up letter sent to DES regarding the report on this project. They were given until 04/12/2024 to provide a copy of the full report. General Assistance Director Donna Cilley asked what our State Rep who is on the Board can do for us. Selectman O'Hara explained that he is part of the legislative branch, and this is an executive branch issue. He can talk to them, but he can't enforce anything. The letter we sent disagreed with the findings and requested a copy of the full report instead of just the summary. It is a $9 million cost to our water/sewer users only. If it was voted down by the voters, the Town would still be responsible to pay for it somehow. The agreements for the Winni River Basin Program were formed many years ago and now we are on the hook.

Chairman Mooney commented that we have waited for 9 years for the State's help with the intersection of Main Street and Route 140 and wondered what the status might be on the project. TA Jipson will check into this.

ARPA Funds Update:

TA Jipson reported that during COVID, every Town and County received ARPA funds. Belmont received $767,789. When the funds were received, the majority, $660,000, was earmarked to repair or replace well 1, and some for body cameras for the police department. Bid packages are being sent out to replace well 1 as the State is not allowing a repair. Right now, we need to obligate the funds and sign contracts before 12/31/2024, and the funds must be expended by the end of 2026. We will need to wait on the bids to see if there are enough funds or if more is necessary.

Parks & Rec Update:

Parks & Rec Director St. Onge provided packets for the Board. She is working on designating rooms and program ideas, and program names for the community space and the senior program. There are also guidelines in the packet for the senior program such as ages, and calendar ideas. An open house for the new second floor space is planned to follow the May 1st BOS meeting. This will give the community the opportunity to provide input on program ideas. Meals on Wheels will come in once a month if there are consistently 15 people who need meals. The room name is important and the Board should think over some of the suggestions.

Other Old Business:

VW Mitigation Grant Update:

DPW Director Craig Clairmont reported the grant had unanimous approval from the governor's council. They have ordered the truck and body and hope to have it before the end of December. The funding goes up to $207,000 and the Town is responsible for the remainder. One of the old trucks will need to be decommissioned but the scrap parts could be used to help offset costs.

Mill Building Water Leak:

There is a leak in the Mill building near the General Assistance Office that needs to be addressed. It has caused damage and mold, which were remedied by Building & Grounds, but we don't want to risk more damages. There is a porous rock foundation and the grade has allowed the water to find its way in. A machine and new fill will be needed to get things drained away from the building. This was a problem back when the childcare facility was located there. B&G will start working on obtaining some quotes. There are some funds in the Municipal Facilities Capital Reserve for this type of repair.

Default Operating Budget:

All of the new department numbers have been plugged in to new budget worksheets for each department head to review their budget targets and how much they are spending within their new line-item budget amounts. As a whole, the Town budget is at 23% spent right now, where 25% is the current target percentage.

WOW Trail/Leslie Roberts Drive:

Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden reported there is lots of activity near the WOW Trail and the Leslie Roberts beach access with 10-wheelers and tractor trailers and equipment traversing the trail to access 36 Horse Point Road. The lawn is destroyed and the path is taking a beating. Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman and Town Planner Karen Santoro met with the property owner and counsel and the owner's agreement with the State requires that the property owner repair any damages to the trail. We still have a bond for Leslie Roberts Drive. The new driveway for this property will be moved just past the WOW Trail, and the current access over the WOW Trail will be discontinued. B&G Supervisor Golden has some concerns about foot traffic from the parking area to the WOW Trail once the property owner relocates the driveway.

Next Regular Meeting Date: April 17, 2024

Public Comment: None

Non-Public:

Chairman Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II a & c at 11:11 am; seconded by Selectman Pike. Roll Call 1: J. Pike – aye, S. Patten – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Those present and voting were Chairman Ruth Mooney and Selectmen Jon Pike, Claude Patten, Jr., Travis O'Hara, and Sharon Ciampi. Also present were TA Alicia Jipson and Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman.

The Board discussed the compensation of Police Department employees and non-public sessions and sealing/unsealing of minutes. No decisions were made.

The Board also reviewed an abatement request and made a decision to grant the request.

Selectman Pike moved to exit non-public session at 11:53 am seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Roll Call 3: S. Patten – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Selectman Pike moved to seal the minutes of the non-public session because it could render a proposed action ineffective; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Roll Call 4: T. O'Hara – aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, S. Patten – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

Adjournment:

Chairman Mooney moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:54 am; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Roll Call 5: S. Patten – aye, J. Pike – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman

Travis O'Hara, Vice Chairman

Jon Pike, Selectman

Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman

Sharon Ciampi, Selectman