

# Office of Board of Selectmen

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## Selectmen's Meeting Minutes Tuesday, January 22, 2025, 10:00 am Belmont Mill, Tioga Meeting Room

Present were Chairman Ruth P. Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Claude "Sonny" Patten, Jr., Selectman Travis O'Hara, Selectman Sharon Ciampi, TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman, Town Planner Karen Santoro, Police Captain Steve Akerstrom, Fire Chief Deb Black, Assistant Fire Chief Don Pickowicz, DPW Director Craig Clairmont, Library Director Eileen Gilbert, and Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden. Also present was Budget Committee Member Paul Maggioli. Present via Zoom were Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge and TC/TC Assistant Devon Tibbetts.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Review & Approve Minutes – 01/07/2025:**

*Selectman "Sonny" Patten moved the minutes of the public meeting held on January 7, 2025 as written; seconded by Selectman Travis O'Hara. Motion passed (4-0-1). Selectman Jon Pike abstained as he was not present at the meeting.*

*Selectman O'Hara moved the minutes of the non-public meeting held on January 7, 2025 as written; seconded by Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Motion passed (4-0-1). Selectman Jon Pike abstained as he was not present at the meeting.*

### **New Business:**

#### **Highway Safety Grant Amendment:**

The Board amended new language for this grant a few meetings ago, but they also want to give us more money. The amount needs to be amended to include two laptops with docking stations, printers, adapters and USBs for vehicles.

*Selectman Pike moved to amend the current FY25 Highway Safety Grant 25-016 Agreement original award amount from \$16,169 to \$26,217.50 for the purchase of two laptops and all associated equipment as stated in the agreement; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

#### **Request for Highway Department Vehicle Purchase:**

DPW Director Craig Clairmont proposed the purchase of a new 1-ton dump truck with plow and to give Building & Grounds one of their older trucks. This has previously been discussed with the Board as an option to replace the old Building & Grounds truck and update the DPW fleet. Selectman Pike researched and initiated contact to obtain some great pricing. There are funds in the Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) to move the purchase

forward now. If the warrant article passes this year it will replenish the fund. This is an incredible deal for a 1-ton dump truck with a V-plow, flat bed, electric hoist and removable sides. The body can be ready in March if this is approved. The equipment plan won't be affected and there would still be \$108,000 left in the CRF after the purchase. They may need to hold off a year on replacing a loader if the warrant article does not pass this year. Chairman Ruth Mooney is concerned the Building & Grounds truck is on its last legs. That pickup is still worth some money and could be taken to auction. DPW Director Clairmont thought the price of \$74,000 only included the pickup, but it also includes the body and the plow. He commented that getting the other new truck through the grant has helped the big picture a lot. TA Alicia Jipson verified that \$60,000 was placed in the CRF in 2024. There is a warrant article for 2025 to add \$110,000 to the CRF through unexpended fund balance and not through taxation.

*Selectman Patten moved to approve the purchase of a 2025 GMC Sierra 3500 HD from Weirs GMC for the Highway Department in the amount of \$74,241, with funds to be expended from the Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

#### **2024 Encumbrances:**

Every year there is a lit of items that we can encumber forward to the next year. Some lines not spent can be redesignated for use in the first part of 2025 instead of using the operating budget.

There is a line for the Winni Scenic Trail that has been carried since 2016 for \$18,836. We may need to consider moving it to a CRF for the future. There were questions about how the money was obtained and how the funds could be expended. Research will need to be done to decide what to do with this in the future.

There are funds in the telephone, heat, Mill heat and PD cruiser lines to be encumbered. The new cruisers arrived last week and we should have the invoice soon. There were also funds for custodial services, Highway Block Grant (HBG) and Conservation to encumber. Excluding the cruiser and HBG funds, the total is \$64,159. It was suggested that the Board could encumber some funds for fireworks since they were part of the 2024 default budget. This would not affect the budget in any way. Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge will still be working to collect donations. The Budget Committee did not support the fireworks for 2025 but the Board of Selectmen did. If it was encumbered and not used it would be deposited back to the General Fund to offset taxation. The amount is \$7,500.

*Selectman O'Hara moved to approve the 2024 Encumbrances as presented with the addition of the fireworks; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

#### **Health Agencies' Budget Restoration Consideration:**

Last March the Board worked on reductions to health agencies as part of the default budget process but agreed to reconsider the reductions at the end of the year. The balance that could be restored to 11 agencies is \$20,098.

*Selectman Pike moved to not restore the 2024 Health Agencies' Budget requests; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

**Other New Business:**

**HB 348 – Welfare Assistance - Selectman O'Hara:**

Selectman O'Hara asked the Board to support this house bill that would require proof of residency for 90 days before someone could apply for welfare assistance. A lease, car registration or utility bill from the Town would be required. He spoke previously with General Assistance Director Donna Cilley and he said that she was not opposed to the bill and thought it could be a good start. The Board can support the bill, but what will happen with it is up to the State.

*Selectman Pike moved to show support for HB 348; seconded by Selectman Patten. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

Chairman Mooney signed the letter of support.

**Old Business:**

**2024 Default Budget Updates:**

2024 final invoices are coming to an end. All of the legal, Casella and health insurance has been paid and we are waiting for the December credit card bill. Chairman Mooney complimented everyone for keeping the budget under control. There was a lot of learning, creative thinking and departments going without items all year long. There are concerns about the fall out such as the roads, and the police department vacancies. Chairman Mooney commented that she hopes everyone understands if we get another default budget it is going to affect everyone. We skimmed and eliminated some things this year but not to punish anyone. We worked to stay within the default budget. All department heads worked hard this year and kept things fine-tuned. There are union negotiations coming up in August for Highway, Police and Fire.

**2025 Budget Updates/Changes:**

TA Jipson provided the operating budget, the MS-737, the warrant articles and the default budget to the Board. The Board has signed and the Budget Committee is coming this week to sign as well. Everything will be posted in the legal places Friday. When comparing the 2024 requested budget to the 2025 requested budget, there would have only been a \$220,000 increase if the 2024 operating budget had passed.

The Voter's Guide will be available after the Deliberative Session on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. Many of the warrant articles are not funded through taxation but through the unexpended fund balance. Two petitions were received on the last submission day. One is to require the Board to meet after 4 pm unless there is an emergency, but it would be advisory only. A meeting vote cannot enforce that. The Board will make a decision after elections. The other article is to increase the Cemetery Trustees from 3 members to 5 members. There was discussion about the meeting time article and how any necessary overtime would be paid. It was noted by Selectman O'Hara that Town Staff would only need to attend meetings if they

were on the agenda. Other Selectmen mentioned the lack of resident attendance at evening meetings hosted by the Board or the Budget Committee.

**Other Old Business:**

**Website Transition:**

Executive Admin Colleen Akerman reported that discussions with our new website provider have begun and we are detailing the tasks and responsibilities for the transition, and the timing of the invoicing. Departments and Boards will be responsible for auditing their areas of the site and determining how many years of minutes should be transitioned over. The cost is \$100 per year, per Board or Commission, for the transition. All minutes are available at Town Hall in hard copy format, and some older versions of minutes for certain Boards could be emailed electronically on request. There is no legal requirement to host minutes on a website, but it is helpful for the public if we do so. Some groups do not meet often and it could be possible to manually upload the minutes for some groups to save on costs.

*It was the consensus of the Board to transition the current year and 2 years of previous minutes for the Selectmen.*

Other Boards will need to determine how many years they would like to transition and if they will be done manually, or if they will be transitioned, how the cost will be paid.

**Public Comment:**

Doug Poirier of Umbral Technologies introduced himself to the Board. His company submitted an RFP for IT services, which they provide to many towns. Belmont is an ideal candidate due to the Town's size and budget.

Kaleb with Eagle Network Solutions introduced himself to the Board. They also submitted an RFP for IT services. They have been in business for 20 years and working with towns for 5-6 years. They work on forecasting and the budget to plan what to do for 3-5 years. They have about 15 employees.

**Next Meeting:** February 5, 2025 at 10:00 am.

**Non-Public:**

*Chairman Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (d) at 10:51 am; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Roll Call 1: J. Pike – aye, S. Patten – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).*

Those present and voting were Chairman Ruth P. Mooney and Selectmen Travis O'Hara, Jon Pike, Claude "Sonny" Patten and Sharon Ciampi. Also present were TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman and Budget Committee Member Paul Maggioli.


The Board discussed the bids for the 5-year IT RFP and reviewed the information provided. It was the consensus of the Board that more information be obtained on some of the RFPs.

No decisions were made.

Chairman Mooney moved to exit non-public session at 11:42 am; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Roll Call 2: S. Ciampi – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Patten – aye, J. Pike – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

**Adjournment:**

Chairman Mooney moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:42 am seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed (5-0).



Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman

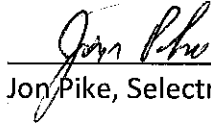
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Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman



Travis O'Hara, Vice Chairman



Sharon Ciampi, Selectman



Jon Pike, Selectman