



Town of Belmont

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Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, January 7, 2025, 6:30 pm
Belmont Mill
Tioga Meeting Room

Present were Chairman Tracey LeClair, Vice Chair Ron Mitchell, Selectmen's Representative Ruth P. Mooney, Members Fred Wells, Al Akerstrom, Marsha Campbell, Don House, Mark Roberts, Jessi Fleck, Rachel French and Paul Maggioli; TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman, DPW Director Craig Clairmont, General Assistance Director Donna Cilley, and Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Also present were Donald Simpson and Norm Duval of the Sunray Shores Water District.

Absent: Member Don Hurd.

Chairman Tracey LeClair opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Minutes Approval – 12/10/2024:

Ron Mitchell moved to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2024 meeting as presented; seconded by R. Mooney. Motion passed unopposed (11-0).

TA Update:

TA Alicia Jipson reported there are some proposed adjustments to the budgets after the Board of Selectmen (BOS) received some updates.

The Town's Master Plan has not been updated in over 20 years and should be updated more often. It helps us to obtain grant funding. Lakes Region Planning Commission quoted us \$16,500 for the update and there is already \$500 in the line. This is a bargain basement deal because other municipalities spend \$50,000 to \$100,000 for Master Plan updates. Our Town Staff will do a lot of the work. We are fortunate to have talented in-house staff who can help with the work to save money on this project. The Board of Selectmen approved the amendment.

R. Mitchell moved to amend the Land Use budget line item 01-4191-506 to \$17,000 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by R. Mooney. Motion passed unopposed (11-0).

R. Mooney moved to amend the total Land Use Budget to \$435,566 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by D. House. Motion passed unopposed (11-0).

TA Jipson explained Fire Chief Deb Black asked the Board of Selectmen (BOS) to place a separate warrant article on the ballot to hire two full-time firefighters. The BOS did not support funding for the article. The Budget Committee did not previously support the two firefighters in the budget. The article would go on the ballot as not recommended by the BOS or the Budget Committee. R. Mooney explained that even if the article was approved, the BOS can choose whether or not to expend or hire. Chairman LeClair commented that these numbers don't represent the full total cost such as training, overtime and equipment. We don't know how the rest will be funded. It was suggested that the Committee make an affirming vote.

M. Roberts moved not to approve the proposed warrant article to hire two full-time firefighters; seconded by R. Mitchell. Motion passed unopposed (11-0).

TA Jipson advised the Committee the BOS voted to move a warrant article for the creation of a Contingency Fund for \$20,000, to come from the unexpended fund balance. This article would not be funded through taxation. The funds do not roll over from year to year. If there are any remaining funds at year end, they will be deposited to the General Fund.

Chairman LeClair moved to support a warrant article for the creation of a Contingency Fund for \$20,000 to come from the unexpended fund balance; seconded by J. Fleck. Motion passed unopposed (11-0).

Sunray Shores Proposed Budget:

Don Simpson, President of the Sunray Shores Water District, explained they are in the middle of the engineering phase to get ready for permits to start work on their project. The engineering is almost done and then it will go out to bid. There were some problems with the initial location due to it being in the middle of wetlands. They want to start digging as soon as possible, and they are replacing everything except the wells. Norm Duval of the Sunray Shores Water District commented they are putting in a whole new water distribution system with all new pipes, a pump house and storage tanks. They are going to avoid digging up Town roads as much as possible because they don't have the funding to repave everything. They met with department heads at the ARC meeting to review the basics of the project.

R. Mooney moved to approve the 2025 Sunray Shores Water District proposed budget of \$1,698,567; seconded by F. Wells. Motion passed unopposed (11-0).

Default Budget Review:

TA Alicia Jipson announced that the default budget with prior years appropriations, reductions or increases is a total of \$10,822,658, to be submitted to NHDRA on the MS-737.

Public Hearing on 2025 Proposed Budget for Town of Belmont and Sunray Shores Water District:

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 6:50 pm.

There was no public comment on the Sunray Shores Water District.

R. Mooney moved to approve the 2025 Sunray Shores Water District proposed budget of \$1,698,567; seconded by M. Roberts. Motion passed unopposed (11-0).

It was noted that the Sunray Shores Water District received a grant when they first started and the BOS needs to sign for the grant and give oversight, because they are their own entity. This is a formality and gives a second set of eyes for checks and balances. Former TA Jeanne Beaudin was instrumental in helping form the district to get the grant funding.

Chairman LeClair reviewed the 2025 MS-737 for the 2025 Town of Belmont proposed budget:

Estimated Appropriations:

- General Government \$2,426,650
- Public Safety \$5,671,747
- Highways and Streets \$1,456,872
- Sanitation \$753,909
- Health Agencies \$66,900
- Welfare \$254,709
- Culture & Recreation \$ 467,372
- Conservation \$21,046
- Debt Service \$255,881
- Capital Outlay \$20,000

Total Operating Budget Appropriations \$11,395,086.

Special Warrant Articles for Fire, Other Culture & Recreation, Special Revenue Funds, Sewer & Water Proprietary Funds, Capital Reserve Funds and Expendable Trusts are proposed at \$3,361,795. The Capital Reserve Funds include: Highway Reconstruction, Municipal Facilities, Water System Repair & Maintenance, Sewer System Repair & Maintenance, Heavy Equipment, Bridge Repair & Maintenance, Property Revaluation, Library Building, Information Technology, Durrell Mountain Road, Dry Hydrant & Cistern Maintenance.

The proposed Individual Warrant Articles include creation of a Contingency Fund \$20,000, Public Safety Employees Unions for Police \$145,724, hiring two full-time firefighters \$193,391 and the Highway Block Grant \$197,367 total \$556,482.

The proposed Revenues include:

- Taxes \$186,472
- Licenses, Permits & Fees \$1,895,000
- State Sources \$933,482
- Charges for Services \$365,134
- Miscellaneous Revenue \$318,076
- Interfund Transfers In \$1,672,295

Other Financing Sources \$405,000

Total Estimated Revenues & Credits \$5,775,459

The estimated total amount of taxes to be raised is \$9,537,904.

There was no comment from the public.

TA Jipson observed that looking at budgets and warrant articles and adding and subtracting revenues there is only an increase of \$220,000 from what was submitted for the 2024 MS-737. It was also noted by Vice Chairman R. Mitchell that the Town has very low debt. Almost everything has been paid off except the Police Department.

The Chairman closed the public hearing at 7:10 pm.

Candidacy:

Fred Wells, Tracey LeClair, Albert Akerstrom and Ron Mitchell are up for re-election.

Paul Maggio and Rachel French will need to decide who runs for the 2-year position or the 1-year position. They have served their appointment for one year and must now be elected. There are a total of 7 vacancies on the ballot for Budget Committee.

Candidate signups start January 22nd and end January 31st.

Members were reminded to turn their binders in at Town Hall when they come to sign the official draft of the budget. Three copies need wet signatures. We will email everyone when they are ready to be signed.

The Deliberative Session will be held on February 1st at 10 am at Belmont High School.

Other Old Business: None

Adjournment:

R. Mooney moved to adjourn at 7:15 pm; seconded by R. French and the motion passed unopposed (11-0).

Tracey LeClair
Chairman Tracey LeClair

Albert Akerstrom

Mark Roberts
Mark Roberts

Jessica Fleck
Jessica Fleck

Paul Maggioni
Paul Maggioni

Don House
Don House

Ron Mitchell
Vice Chair Ron Mitchell

Ruth P. Mooney
Selectman Ruth P. Mooney

Marsha Campbell
Marsha Campbell

Fred Wells

Don Hurd

Rachel French
Rachel French