



# Town of Belmont

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**Budget Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, November 20, 2025, 6:00 pm**  
**Belmont Mill - Tioga Meeting Room**

Present were Chairman Tracey LeClair, Vice Chair Jessi Fleck, Selectmen's Representative Ruth P. Mooney, Members Ron Mitchell, Marsha Campbell, Don House, Mark Roberts, Rachel French, Paul Maggioli, Don Hurd, Lee Cheshire, Brian Gardiner, and Susan Roache; TA Alicia Jipson, General Assistance Director Donna Cilley, Finance Director Steve Forster and Library Director Eileen Gilbert. Also present were Cemetery Trustee Sharon Ciampi and Library Trustees Mary Charnley and Shela Cunningham.

Remotely present: Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman.

Also present for Health Agencies: Andy Morse of Granite VNA, Jim Harnett of Lakes Region VNA, Kristyn Albert and Nicholas Johnson of Franklin VNA, Shauna Foster of New Beginnings (Zoom), and Melissa Fisk and Melissa Frenette of HealthFirst (Zoom).

Chairman Tracey LeClair opened the meeting at 6:00 pm and those present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Minutes Approval – 11/06/2025:**

*Ron Mitchell moved to approve the minutes of the November 6, 2025 meeting as presented; seconded by Ruth P. Mooney. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**Minutes Approval – 11/13/2025:**

*R. Mooney moved to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2025 meeting as presented; seconded by Jessi Fleck. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**Health Agencies (17):**

**South Road Cemetery:**

R. Mooney spoke on behalf of the South Road Cemetery. It is an association, but the Town is allowed to list it as the Town Cemetery. By law the Town is required to have active cemetery. The Town and County own plots there. That is why the Town contributes towards maintenance and upkeep. The requested amount hasn't changed in 3-4 years.

*J. Fleck moved to approve the 2026 South Road Cemetery request of \$8,500 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by Don House. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**Granite VNA:**

Andy Morse of Granite VNA explained that Granite VNA is a non-profit organization that has served New Hampshire (NH) for 126 years. They provide home health, hospice and community wellness programs. In the last fiscal year, they served 233 Belmont residents with 4,205 visits and 65 residents in wellness programs. They appreciate Belmont's support and requested funding at last year's contribution level.

*J. Fleck moved to approve the 2026 Granite VNA request of \$11,000 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by D. House. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**Lakes Region VNA:**

Jim Harnett of Lakes Region VNA thanked the Committee for their past support. They provide support for all residents regardless of financial circumstances to ensure they have access to compassionate, professional home-based care. All services are provided in-home in a comfortable setting. They assist clients of all ages to recover from short-term illnesses and surgeries, and they provide hospice services with family guidance. They will be expanding their maternal and child care services. Lakes Region VNA made 1400 in-home visits to 74 Belmont residents and 4 of their employees and volunteers reside in Belmont. They hosted a community flu clinic in October and they look forward to continuing to support Belmont residents. Community support will help meet growing needs despite declining Medicare reimbursements and allow them to provide free or low-cost care to under- or un-insured residents.

T. LeClair noted that they have requested \$7,500 and the Selectmen recommended \$5,000. R. Mooney is the Selectboard representative and she explained they looked at numbers served and they made adjustments. There was some discussion about the default budget and previous requests made by the organization.

Susan Roache thanked Mr. Harnett for providing services to Belmont seniors once a month and hosting multiple events in Belmont.

*J. Fleck moved to approve the 2026 Lakes Region VNA budget line of \$5,000 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by D. House. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**Community Action Program (CAP) Belknap-Merrimack County:**

Beth Heyward of CAP thanked the committee for their support over many years. CAP provides resource centers for food and referrals and is not only for fuel and electrical assistance. Their request of \$15,000 is the same as last year's request. They served 1,027 Belmont residents, 687 households, 11,922 meals and provided \$881,160 in services. This is the second year with a full array of services available in Belmont. Public transit is not tracked.

R. Mitchell said it doesn't look like the need is going to go down. Ms. Heyward said it looks like it will increase.

*R. Mitchell moved to approve the 2026 CAP request of \$15,000 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by D. House. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA):**

Stacey Lopes of CASA was present for CASA's request. They are a state-wide organization of volunteers who speak for abused and neglected children who are in the court system. There are two advocates who reside in Belmont, and there are 9 active cases in Belmont with 13 children in the court system. They serve 1,500 children with over 600 advocates in the state. They requested \$500, which is 1/5 of the \$2,500 required to support one advocate.

T. LeClair asked R. Mooney about the Selectmen's recommendation of \$0. R. Mooney said the Board had to pick and choose and it is about numbers.

*R. Mitchell moved to reinstate the CASA budget line to \$500; seconded by Paul Maggioli.*

R. Mitchell said \$500 is not a lot of money and it is worth it. P. Maggioli suggested we could take \$100 off other lines to reinstate this. T. LeClair asked if this request supports volunteers, and it does. CASA recruits, trains and supports the advocates. They learn how to write court reports and go to family court and provide training and support groups because they can't talk about confidential information at home. They keep up to date with changes in the laws. They are the first call from court when a guardian ad litem is needed. They can only serve 85% of the children who need services. J. Fleck said it is important to know that a child who doesn't have someone to advocate for them can get support.

*Motion passed (12-1). R. Mooney opposed.*

**Waypoint:**

There was no one present for Waypoint.

*J. Fleck moved to approve the Waypoint budget line of \$0 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by S. Roache. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**New Beginnings:**

Shauna Foster was present via Zoom. New Beginnings has been providing local domestic violence and sexual assault crisis services in Belknap County since 1991. Ms. Foster thanked the Committee for their support. They are available 24/7/365 and provide free, confidential, non-judgmental support. They do not help with decision making but they walk alongside individuals and help them make own decisions in their own way. Last year their group of 10 served just under 800 individuals. Services range from a one-time call to comprehensive support over many years. New Beginnings provides emergency hotel stays, transportation, shelter and relocation services. They operate a 15-bed shelter, provide court accompaniment and consult with DCYF. They partner with Belmont Police Department on the LAP program which is Lethality Assessment. Officers provide screening and make calls in real

time for an advocate. They are on-call to the hospital 24/7 with a 45-minute response time. They provided 284 services to 39 Belmont residents aged 4-80 for court, crisis counseling and personal advocacy and \$443 in financial assistance for hotels, gas or car repairs. Clients are not required to report their town of origin so more Belmont residents may have been served. The \$1,418 request will go towards all of these expenses and shelter costs.

*R. Mitchell moved to approve the New Beginnings budget line of \$1,418 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by D. House. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**American Red Cross:**

There was no one present for the American Red Cross.

*J. Fleck moved to approve the American Red Cross budget line of \$0 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by P. Maggioli. Motion passed (12-1). R. Mitchell opposed.*

**Lakes Region Mental Health (LRMH):**

There was no one present for LRMH. Information was provided to the Committee in advance. General Assistance Director Donna Cilley supports the Selectmen's recommendation because the request is critical due to mental health issues. R. Mooney reported they served 251 Belmont residents last year.

*J. Fleck moved to approve the Lakes Region Mental Health request of \$19,921 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by D. House. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**Franklin VNA:**

Kristyn Albert and Nicholas Johnson presented for Franklin VNA. They are a small non-profit who supported 62 Belmont residents in 807 home visits for hospice home care and private duty services. They also provide blood pressure clinics and flu shots and education through support groups. 8 of their 39 employees reside in Belmont as well as two volunteers and two board members. Franklin VNA served 43 hospice patients and provided \$20,000 in unreimbursed care to Belmont residents.

*J. Fleck moved to approve the Franklin VNA request of \$4,000 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by S. Roache. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

S. Roache thanked Franklin VNA for their senior programs.

**Partnership for Public Health (PPH):**

There was no one present for PPH. T. LeClair noted they assisted 1,795 residents and they made a request before the Selectmen. TA Alicia Jipson explained PPH sent their regrets that they were unable to attend this evening. PPH helped collect 10,189 pounds of unused medications.

*R. Mitchell moved to approve the PPH request of \$3,000 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by D. House. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**Family Promise of the Lakes Region:**

There was no one present for Family Promise due to illness. R. Mooney reported they are a new organization the Selectmen chose not to fund. The Selectmen would like to see the organization established a little more.

*J. Fleck moved to approve the Family Promise budget line of \$0 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by P. Maggioli. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**HealthFirst:**

Melissa Fisk presented via Zoom with Melissa Frenette. They are a local non-profit community health center serving the Lakes Region for 30 years, providing primary care, behavioral health, and substance use disorder and support services regardless of ability to pay. They provided 1,500 visits to Belmont residents last year. 61% of patients are covered by Medicare, Medicaid or are uninsured. HealthFirst is a safety net provider who helps families with gaps in coverage. They have 7 employees who live in Belmont, and they absorbed \$225,000 in uncompensated care. They are expanding to provide increased access and reduced wait times with more services under one roof. They have requested \$1,000 to support continued access to high quality affordable healthcare. Support will keep care local, accessible and equitable.

*D. House moved to approve the HealthFirst request of \$1,000 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by R. Mitchell. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

*J. Fleck moved to approve the Health Agency total budget of \$69,339; seconded by P. Maggioli. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

R. Mooney will review the \$500 change for CASA with the Selectmen at the next meeting

**General Assistance:**

General Assistance Director Donna Cilley provided general information about subsidies to the Committee with a breakdown of what things look like and an article from the NY Times about the growing homeless population with an explanation of continuing care funds. The focus continues on homelessness, mental health and medical. With the government shutdown, SNAP being frozen and the marketplace on hold, we don't know where we are going.

GA Director Cilley has never seen a population like this. It is very transient and there is a lot of "shuffling" as homeless encampments are broken up and we end up with overflow. The homeless are not all drug users; many have mental health conditions. LRMH can't keep up with the volume. The Town has contracted rooms in a hotel at \$1,200 a month and the shelters are all full. The majority of individuals have mental health but not substance issues. There are

complications with medical conditions requiring oxygen and walkers and it is difficult for local welfare to handle mental health. We are on the verge of running a rehab/skilled nursing facility without the tools to do it. If not for CAP's housing stabilization assistance, we would be in trouble. There was a bed bug outbreak at our shelter motel, and it had to be closed down for some time. It was awful and individuals and their belongings were displaced. There have been lots of cuts to outreach and the federal funds have been reduced. The state has cut \$3 million to \$3.5 million in housing assistance, which will be crippling. It is anticipated that subsidized HUD money will be reduced by 30%. We are projected to have a larger homeless population the first quarter of next year. The Town has strict shelter agreements in place and we do not allow substance abuse or behavioral issues. Rents are high even with individuals working. The insurance area is unknown and we've never been stretched this far.

R. Mitchell complimented the GA Director on how she keeps things working year after year. She uses her own vehicle to transport people and works all hours of the night and goes way beyond what she needs to. She has a big heart and she shows up.

There was some discussion about providing services for transients and how the law works. There are some proposed changes that would require someone to be a resident for at least 90 days to receive services but that will be a challenge.

*R. Mitchell moved to approve the General Assistance Administration budget of \$102,799; seconded by D. House. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

R. Mooney stated the Selectmen changed the Assistance Payments housing line from \$140,000 to \$150,000 at their most recent meeting. It is mid-November and \$146,000 has been expended this year.

J. Fleck asked what happens if we have another default budget. The funds will have to come from somewhere else in the budget. The legal and welfare budget lines are allowed to be overspent without penalty. T. LeClair commented on \$6,893 in welfare liens that were collected this year. GA Director Cilley explained we also collect rent from some shelter residents when possible.

*R. Mitchell moved to approve the General Assistance Vendor Payments budget of \$161,720; seconded by J. Fleck. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**Cemetery Trustees:**

Cemetery Trustee Chairman Sharon Ciampi reported for the Cemetery Trustees. There was no summer storm damage this year, and they put the maintenance contract out to bid this year and have solid numbers instead of a guesstimate. They reduced their budget from \$27,500 to \$26,000. This will cover maintenance costs and leave a small amount for emergencies and association dues.

T. LeClair asked what is included in the maintenance contract. It is a 2-year contract that covers spring and fall cleanups and regular mowing and trimming bushes for 23 cemeteries. Weymouth Cemetery is going to be added to the contract after they get it where it needs to be. They are having a partial survey completed because they do not know the set boundary for the 25-foot cemetery setback required by state law.

R. Mitchell thanked Ms. Ciampi for her efforts locating deceased veterans and for the Wreaths Across America program. S. Roache asked if the program is funded by donation. It is, but they get many wreaths at no cost.

*R. Mitchell moved to approve the Cemetery Trustees budget of \$161,720; seconded by P. Maggioli. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

### **Library Trustees:**

Library Director Eileen Gilbert and Library Trustees Mary Charnley and Shela Cunningham presented the Library budget.

It was a busy year, including a 37% increase in e-book services. They see more people in the building to sit and talk, play a game, or to use the copier or printer. They are working hard to get more involved with the community and other departments. The summer camp program attended all of the summer programs except for one. The National Register building is maintained with diligence and they improved accessibility using 2 grants. The building was built in 1927 and the bathroom can't be expanded for accessibility. They move furniture for those with mobility devices.

The Trustees are working on reviving the building expansion that was first mentioned in 1983. It is a modest proposal that was presented to the Selectmen. They want to create safe spaces for everyone and maintain the look of the historic building. They hope it will be on the ballot in March. They moved some things around in the budget due to the default. They were able to compensate staff according to plans for 2025 to keep services at the level we should have. There was a vacancy in the youth services position, and they made great use of their part-timers. They are within 3% of the 2025 requested budget. The Duffy Fund will support chimney work being done on December 18<sup>th</sup> and the walkway and painting will start in the spring. T. LeClair asked about the increase in e-book services and if there is a limit. The library keeps an eye on the subscription so they can adjust things if necessary.

TA Jipson explained some budget line changes due to library staffing changes adjusting the benefits. Line 01-4550-300 Benefits should be \$40,325.42 and line 01-4550-324 is a decrease to \$12,421. The new total budget recommended by the Selectmen is \$260,869.

*R. Mitchell moved to approve the Library budget of \$260,869 as recommended by the Selectmen; seconded by Don Hurd. Motion passed unopposed (13-0).*

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held December 11, 2025 at 6 pm.

Other Old Business: None

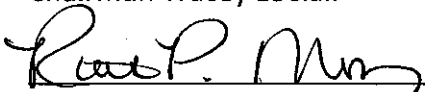
**Adjournment:**

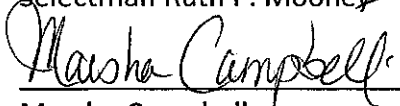
R. Mitchell moved to adjourn at 7:36 pm; seconded by M. Roberts and the motion passed unopposed (13-0).

Respectfully Submitted By:

  
Colleen Akerman, Executive Assistant

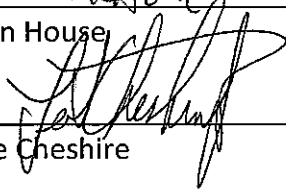
  
Chairman Tracey LeClair

  
Selectman Ruth P. Mooney

  
Marsha Campbell

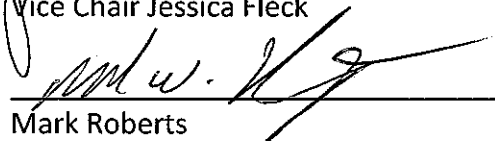
Paul Maggioli

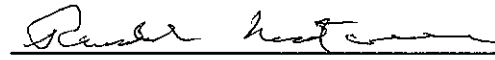
  
Don House


  
Lee Cheshire

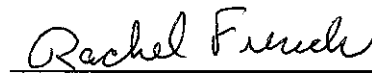
Susan Roache

  
Vice Chair Jessica Fleck

  
Mark Roberts

  
Ron Mitchell

  
Don Hurd

  
Rachel French

Brian Gardiner