



Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes Wednesday, September 17, 2025, 6:00 pm Belmont Mill, Tioga Meeting Room

Chairman Mooney opened the meeting at 5:15 pm.

Non-Public Session 5:15 pm:

Those present and voting were Chairman Ruth P. Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Claude "Sonny" Patten, Jr., Selectman Travis O'Hara and Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Also present were TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman and Attorney Hannah Devoe from Drummond Woodsum.

Chairman Ruth P. Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II c at 5:15 pm; seconded by Selectman Travis 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).

The Board and Attorney Hannah Devoe discussed employee disciplinary actions and made a decision.

The Board and Attorney Devoe also discussed the conduct of a contractor who works for the Town of Belmont's Cemetery Trustees and made a decision.

Chairman Mooney moved to exit non-public session at 6:22 pm; 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).

Selectman O'Hara moved to seal the minutes of this evening's first non-public session because, if discussed in public, it would likely adversely affect the reputation of a person or persons, other than a member of this board; seconded by Chairman Mooney. Roll Call 5: S. Patten – aye, J. Pike – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

Public Session 6:00 pm:

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/Assessing Administrator Colleen Akerman, Library Director Eileen Gilbert, DPW Director Craig Clairmont, General Assistance Director Donna Cilley and Fire Chief Deb Black. Also present were Library Trustees Mary Charnley, Hillary Horne, Shela Cunningham and Terry Elliott, Budget Committee Members Susan Roache and Brian Gardiner, Barry Beauregard from Bonnette

Page & Stone and Jason LaCombe from SPM Architecture. Via Zoom was Devon Tibbetts, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Assistant.

The Chairman opened the public meeting at 6:26 pm.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review & Approve Minutes:

Minutes of Public Meeting 09/03/2025:

Selectman Patten moved to approve the minutes of the public meeting held 09/03/2025; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Minutes of Non-Public Meeting 09/03/2025:

Selectman Pike moved to approve the minutes of the public meeting held 09/03/2025; seconded by Selectman Patten. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Moment of Silence for Former Fire Chief Akerstrom:

The Board held a moment of silence to remember Al "Tykie" Akerstrom, former Fire Chief and Budget Committee member.

There was a suggestion to consider dedicating the new ambulance in his memory. Fire Chief Deb Black explained the department recently brought Tykie the plaque from the older tanker mounted into a shadowbox and he was ecstatic.

New Business:

Library Expansion Presentation:

Library Director Eileen Gilbert thanked everyone and said she is excited to share their proposed expansion project. She introduced Jason LaCombe of SMP Architecture and Barry Beauregard of Bonnette, Page & Stone.

A PowerPoint presentation including project renderings was shown on the large screen during the presentation by Mr. Lacombe. They work primarily on municipal projects and have 30 libraries in their portfolio. They have a concept in the design process that checks a lot of boxes but it is still just an idea. A preliminary budget has been drafted. Part of the goal is to construct a project that will meet today's needs, and the next 20-25 years. The needs are dictated by square footage, the site and the existing historical building. The plan is to expand the building to the rear and left of the existing library to respect and maintain the historic front of the building and how it sits on Main Street. The main door will be moved to the rear of the building to allow for ADA compliant access and to work with the current parking area so that no additional pavement is necessary. There will be a split level entry that connects to the children's area, as well as a "grab and go area", a welcome desk and technical services, a small community room, stairs and an elevator, an adult section, young adult section, study room, staff area, resource desk and some outdoor space with a small patio to take advantage of the gazebo and the Town green. They are looking at the project holistically for construction, interior design and risk management. Bonnette, Page & Stone has experience with budgeting and design.

Taxpayers need to know that they can trust the budget numbers, and there are contingencies (10%) built into the budget which include construction costs, furnishings, fixtures, equipment, design and engineering. There are many unknowns with the economy.

The Board had concerns about how to pay for the project, the amount of the contingencies, and if the library will remain open during construction. Chairman Mooney said the plan is nice and attractive. Selectmen Pike and O'Hara agreed the expansion is needed. Selectman O'Hara liked how the expansion keeps the front of the building.

Library Trustees Mary Charnley and Shela Cunningham spoke about the work they have put into this project and options for financing it. They are looking for feedback from the Board for next steps. They have been putting away money for a long time and have about \$425,000. There are upcoming repairs of about \$30,000 that need to be completed to the existing library building, which will come out of the Duffy Fund at no cost to taxpayers. They are looking at as many grant opportunities as they can for financing the expansion. Selectman Pike suggested that even though we don't want to spend the money, it may be worth finding a professional grant writer. The need for an expansion has been recognized for over 40 years. There is no good time to ask for an expansion, but the Trustees are hopeful the Board and Budget Committee will agree that this is reasonable. There was conversation about how to increase voter turnout and get their approval for this project. They've looked at other options but they can't move from the existing location and still retain access to the Duffy Fund and there is no way to cure that stipulation. Some of the financing options include donations, grant funding, bonding, or a loan. Selectman Pike asked how many additional employees will be necessary. Trustee Shela Cunningham explained part of the design is to keep the lines of sight. Some additional staff may be needed but they don't know for certain at this stage.

There was some concern about the timing and cost of the upcoming WRBP force main replacement along with the library expansion project. TA Jipson noted that the WRBP force main replacement would be included with the sewer budget and not a separate warrant article on the ballot.

TA Jipson asked about the timeline and potential funding sources. Any warrant article will need to be written carefully to allow any grant funding obtained to reduce the amount needed for the project.

Chairman Mooney moved to direct TA Jipson to look into funding sources such as bonds and loans for the library expansion project; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Special Event Non-Profit Fee Waiver Request:

TA Jipson presented a request for special event fee waiver from a non-profit group. They are hosting a mobile oil change service at the Belknap Marketplace for the Winnisquam Watershed Network. They are doing 10 vehicles at \$35 each, so the \$200 fee would be prohibitive. The Board has the authority to waive or reduce the fee for a non-profit.

Chairman Mooney moved to waive the Special Event fee of \$200 for the non-profit Winnisquam Watershed Network's "Get Changed for Good" Mobile Oil Change Service event to be held 09/26/2025 at the Belknap Marketplace; seconded by Selectman Patten. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Fire Department Promotion – Lt. Nathan Phillips:

Fire Chief Deb Black notified the Board that a vacancy created by Lt. Sean McCarty's retirement was filled by Firefighter Nate Phillips, an internal promotion. They started with 4 interviewees and they narrowed it down to three, then one more pulled out of the running.

The Board was also provided with the August statistics that show where the department is at with calls.

Citizen Compliment:

TA Jipson shared a citizen compliment because too often we only hear about complaints. Resident Jack Greeley complimented the Assessor's Office, as well as the Clerks' and Building Offices and said there is an awesome group of people at the Town Hall.

TA Jipson also reported on a compliment for Town Clerk/Tax Collector Assistant Devon Tibbetts. She was recognized for being professional, courteous, kind and helpful.

Other New Business: None

Old Business:

News Article Daily Sun Clarifications:

The Board signed a Letter to the Editor for publication to help clarify some information presented in the Daily Sun's article of 09/09/2025.

Other Old Business:

Safety Concerns at Town Hall:

TA Jipson previously spoke with the Board about safety concerns at Town Hall. The Building & Grounds crew can repurpose a door from the Mill to make a split door for the back Administrative Offices for a few hundred dollars.

Selectman Pike moved to approve replacing the door to the back Administrative Offices at Town Hall; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Public Comment:

Budget:

General Assistance Director Donna Cilley expressed concerns about how to promote this year's budget and help educate taxpayers. DPW Director Craig Clairmont noted that department heads, at the Board's directive, have flatlined, or made minimal 1-2% increases to the budget over many years, and voters do not seem to appreciate that work. We now have nothing to fall back on. The Board has been really hard on everyone even though they've tried

to be conservative. GA Director Cilley said we should try some different approaches and consider mailings to all of our residents.

Next Meeting: October 1, 2025 at 10:00 am

Non-Public Session Continued 7:44 pm:

Chairman Mooney moved to re-enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II c at 7:40 pm; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Roll Call 6: S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Patten – aye, T. O’Hara – 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 Patten and Sharon Ciampi. Also present was Fire Chief Deb Black.

The Board discussed contract obligations and performance expectations with Chief Black.

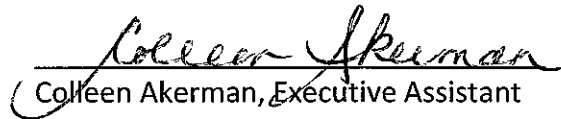
No decisions were made by the Board during the second non-public session of the evening, and the minutes of the second non-public session were not sealed.

Selectman O’Hara moved to exit non-public session at 8:26 pm; seconded by Selectman Pike. Roll Call 7: T. O’Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Patten – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

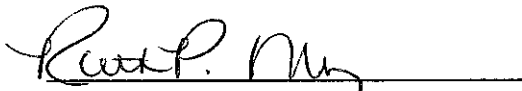
Adjournment:


Selectman O’Hara moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 pm seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted By:


Colleen Akerman, Executive Assistant

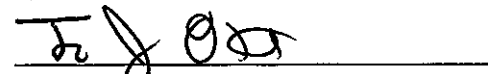
Approved by the Board 10/01/2025:


Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman


Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman


Jon Pike, Vice Chairman


Sharon Ciampi, Selectman


Travis O’Hara, Selectman