Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 4, 2026 10:00 am
Belmont Mill, Tioga Meeting Room

Present were Chairman Ruth P. Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Sharon Ciampi, TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant/Assessing Administrator Colleen Akerman, Finance Director Steve Forster, DPW Director Brian Jackes, Police Chief Steve Akerstrom, Police Captain Evan Boulanger, Town Planner Karen Santoro, Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer Glenn Caron, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Jennifer Cashman, Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz, Parks & Rec Director Danielle St. Onge, and General Assistance Director Donna Cilley. Also present was SAU 80 Superintendent Michael Tursi. Present Via Zoom: Assistant Tax Clerk/Tax Collector Devon Tibbetts.

Absent: Selectman Claude "Sonny" Patten and Selectman Travis O'Hara.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 10:00 am and those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review & Approve Minutes:

Minutes of Public Meeting 02/18/2026:

Selectman Sharon Ciampi moved to approve the minutes of the public meeting held 02/18/2026; seconded by Chairman Ruth P. Mooney. Motion passed unanimously (3-0).

New Business:

Police Department Cruisers – Means of Disposal – Auction Type:

Police Chief Steve Akerstrom has 4 cruisers to dispose of. Selectman Jon Pike asked about the back seats and the Chief confirmed they have the original seats for the cruisers. Selectman Pike recommended taking the cruisers to auction. He has looked at two of the cruisers and will check the others in the next few days to advise. He said there is better competition at a local auction than using an online auction. Selectman Pike will have a final recommendation at the next meeting.

Candidates' Night Reminder – March 4th @ 5:30 at BHS:

Tonight is Candidates' Night at Belmont High School at 5:30 pm in the cafeteria.

Reminder of Town Meeting March 10th from 7 am to 7 pm at BHS:

Tuesday March 10th is annual voting, and we are hoping for a good turnout. The Voters' Guide has been shared online, in the newsletter, in the annual report and is available in hard copy at Town Hall and the Library.

Letter of Support for SAU 80 USDA Community Facilities Grant – Superintendent Tursi:

Superintendent Michael Tursi asked the Board for their support for congressional grant funding through Senator Shaheen's office for major HVAC projects in Belmont and Canterbury. They are requesting close to $1,000,000 in funding. This would also replace the fire panel at BHS and complete bathroom renovations. The Canterbury Board of Selectmen signed a support letter on Monday that will cover the cost of the remaining project at Canterbury Elementary School. Overall, this is a $12,000,000 project. The majority of the HVAC systems are past their useful life. Several units that need replacement will expire at the same time. Taxpayers will not want to bond or lease for such a large project. There will be a warrant article next year for additional funding. Canterbury has an application with a 25% match of $250,000 and Belmont is separate with a 45% match of $450,000. The district can receive more funding with separate applications for each town. The Belmont Board of Selectmen always supports and pushes for grants and has received a lot of grants due to the work of our Department Heads. It was the consensus of the Board to sign the letter of support today.

Code Enforcement Update:

CEO Glenn Caron provided an update on enforcement issues:

130 Depot Street: This violation has been a difficult process, and the court has issued a contempt order. Mr. Walker has until 3/6/2026 to show that the vehicles on site are customer cars. If no proof is provided, the Town will start to remove the vehicles in the spring after mud season. The property is liened for legal and cleanup costs. Chairman Mooney said it is important to note that taxpayers are currently paying the attorney fees for this enforcement action, and we are trying our hardest to get it cleaned up, but we need to follow the law.

328 Union Road: This violation has been sent to our attorneys because there has been no response from the resident/property owner. The owner wants to have a contractor's yard and was given the paperwork to complete but has failed to do so. We have tried to work with the owner to avoid costly legal fees. Selectman Pike noted that there were similar enforcement issues when this owner resided at another property and there were concerns about people living in the camper/s. CEO Caron noted that he can't check the property all times of the day and night and he does not generally have the occasion to drive past the property in off-hours. We have tried to resolve this amicably, but we had to send it to our attorneys because it has not worked out.

43 Rogers Road: This property is being monitored, and they were slowly making progress last fall. There was someone living in a car, but they have moved out and some junk has been removed. We will go back in the spring after the snow has gone.

54 Depot Street: A camper was allowed on site while work was being done, but there has been no progress on the building. The owner was told he could not stay there and he has moved. There is not a septic, well or utilities on the site and his building permit expired. We are going to work with him on the permit, and he can complete some cleanup to prepare to build. Selectman Pike noted his continued concerns about the location of the driveway for this parcel, which was permitted by the State of NH. CEO Caron explained he has no control over a driveway on a State road. DPW Director Brian Jackes reported that he spoke with NHDOT and was told there were no

grounds to deny the permit. Chairman Mooney asked about having the location of the entrance flagged so there is one point of access to the property.

390 Jamestown Road: This property was purchased at auction and sold three days later. The interior has been cleaned up, and some exterior work was done but there is still snow on the ground. They are moving forward with a renovation permit. CEO Caron is optimistic that cleanup will be completed this spring.

10 Range Road: This property was taken by tax deed and sold to a new owner. They already have a demo permit to remove the home and will remove the travel trailers as well. The new owners plan to construct a house rather than replace the manufactured unit. The other junk will be cleaned up after the snow is gone.

Other CEO Projects:

The Gale School is looking good. It has been insulated, and they are starting sheet rock. The shaft for the elevator and the addition for the new staircase is ready, but the elevator has not arrived yet. They anticipate an April opening.

The Village Apartments had a sewer backup due to residents flushing cat litter. A few residents were displaced but were put up in hotels or they are staying with family. They are in remediation now. Our Sewer Department checked the main and the issue was not on our end.

The manufactured unit destroyed by fire at 9 Valley Drive has been purchased and will be demolished and a new manufactured unit installed.

Besides regular inspections, the department has been closing out old permits or extending those that need to be extended. Some have been open for a while without any work. It is hard to follow up with the part-time building clerk's hours. There are three new homes going up on Knotty Way, one on Bishop Road and two in Wild Acres. There are some big additions and remodels in the lake area, and one new build off Jefferson Road. There is an uptick in activity with spring on the way, but some builders are weeks behind due to weather conditions.

There was discussion about 53 Concord Street, which is for sale. The property is reported to be under contract, and the owner has started the process to get the third dwelling unit permitted. The front of the building is the property line, and it is technically our ROW. Chairman Mooney is concerned about the traffic that will be coming in due to the opening of the Gale School building. CEO Caron noted there should be plenty of room out back when things get removed and the parking issues should be resolved. It will be part of the site plan review for the multi-family use.

Other New Business:

Trustees of the Trust Fund (TTF) Alternates:

The TTF requested the Board re-appoint two alternates.

Selectman Pike moved to re-appoint Paul Maggioli and Woodbury Fogg as Alternates to the Trustees of the Trust Funds for the 2026-2027 term; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (3-0)

Belmont Baseball Organization (BBO) Players' Parade:

Don Miller was present for the BBO with a request to hold their 3rd annual players' parade on May 2, 2026. They expect about 120 kids ages 4-16 years old. The Police Department did not have any problems with the proposal.

Selectman Pike moved to allow the Belmont Baseball Organization to hold their annual players' parade on May 2, 2026, at 9:00 am with a parade route starting at Sargent Park, proceeding down Sargent Street, up School Street, and behind the SAU building to Bryant Field; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. (3-0).

Police Department New Hire:

Police Chief Akerstrom stated that they have a candidate that is the end stages of the background process, the next academy session is filling up quickly, and they are first come-first serve. He requested authorization to hire, contingent on the completion of the background process, in order to ensure a spot in the next academy session in May. Field training will be completed until the next academy session.

Chairman Mooney moved to approve hiring Hayden Parent to the Belmont Police Department; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (3-0).

2025 Annual Report Available:

The 2025 report is available online, at Town Hall and the Library and will be available at voting. The Voters' Guide is inside the report.

Solid Waste Update:

Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman reported on recent issues involving solid waste collection including construction debris, which is unacceptable waste; loose items not bagged in the trash cart; and unacceptable road conditions due to weather preventing the truck from servicing some private roads. She also mentioned that a resident who was upset about a collection issue disposed of their trash in Casella's front yard, which is a littering offense.

Finance Director Steve Forster also reported that the additional solid waste disposal fee we are supposed to be charged this year of $3.50 per ton, has not yet been charged by Casella. The fee is supposed to be reimbursed to us from the State on a quarterly basis. It is supposed to be charged for all solid waste disposed of in New Hampshire, but sometimes our trash goes to Massachusetts and it is difficult for Casella to track. The State did not understand how the trash business operated before passing this legislation. They are working on a resolution, but Casella said they would not bill us in arrears if they don't get it figured out before the end of the quarter.

Abatements:

This year we received 11 abatements compared to 41 last year. Two of them were education constitutionality abatements. We are waiting for guidance on how to respond to those requests.

Other New Business:

Public Response to Newspaper Letter:

TA Jipson referenced a letter from Budget Committee Member Susan Roache that was in the local paper that stated the Town has an Advisory Budget Committee, which is false because our Town's Budget Committee is formed under RSA 32 and our members are elected by the voters. The Town Budget Committee is responsible for signing the Budget documents. The budget is well prepared and researched because employees have to prepare the budget and Department Heads work with our Town Administrator before presentation to the Board of Selectmen, who review the budget before it is sent to the Budget Committee for approval. Only the Budget Committee has the power to vote to increase or decrease budget lines to be presented to the voters. Chairman Mooney said as the Selectmen's representative she brought changes made by the Budget Committee back to the Board of Selectmen for approval so that there was not disagreement on the ballot. The Board voted to increase the funds that the Budget Committee approved. There are usually very few changes made. The records were reviewed and the budget brought forward to the ballot was passed by the Budget Committee with no opposition from members and no changes were made at the public hearing. Department Heads review budgets in front of the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee, who ask questions and review all of the budget lines.

TA Jipson also stated that the Town does not respond to FaceBook posts. Residents with questions should reach out to Town Hall or their elected representatives.

There was discussion about difficulties in other communities with default budgets such as Gilmanton, and reduced coverage for the Fire Department. Because of our Mutual Aid agreement, we are obligated to respond to Gilmanton when they lack coverage, which puts more of a burden on us and other local towns. Their Chief is doing his best but it has been difficult. We may lose employees if our budget does not pass. We are not the highest paid, nor the lowest. We try to stay even with other towns to be competitive. Selectman Pike spoke about the grant opportunity for the Fire Truck and said that it is important for voters to know our new trucks were the result of grants and were not purchased from the budget. He congratulated our DPW Director and Fire Chief on their hard work to obtain the grant funds for the new trucks. Selectman Pike also spoke about the charette that supported revitalization of the Mill building to be the center of the Town and house our Town Hall operations. This is a goal the Board has worked towards for many years. We have outgrown our current Town Hall and there is no ventilation system. He was frustrated to see the warrant article brought forward to sell the Mill after all the work and money that has gone into making it functional for use as a Town Hall and meeting space.

Old Business:

Other Old Business:

Well Update:

DPW Director Jackes reported on the communication failure between the tank and the well. Some equipment needs to be replaced but the cost is too high to cover with the operating budget. He requested approximately $20,000 from the capital account, which needs the permission of the Board. It will take about 2-3 weeks to resolve the issue. Selectman Pike and Chairman Mooney stated it has to be fixed, and we have no choice because this is for drinking water. It was the consensus of the Board to agree to use capital funds for the communication repair for the tank and the well.

Public Comment: None

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 18th, 2026 at 6:00 pm

Non-Public Session:

Those present and voting were Chairman Ruth P. Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, and Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Also present were TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman, Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz and Attorney Hannah Devoe. Attending remotely: Selectman Travis O'Hara (11:21 am).

Absent: Selectman Claude Patten.

Chairman Ruth P. Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II L at 11:11 am; seconded by Selectman Patten. Roll Call 1: J. Pike – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (3-0).

Attorney Hannah Devoe spoke with the Board about employment issues.

Selectman O'Hara joined the meeting remotely at 11:21 am and left the meeting at 11:53 am.

No formal decisions were made by the Board.

Selectman Ciampi moved to exit non-public session at 11:54 am; seconded by Selectman Pike. Roll Call 2: S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (3-0).

Selectman Ciampi moved to seal the minutes of this 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 and it could render a proposed action ineffective; seconded by Chairman Mooney. Roll Call 3: S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (3-0).

Adjournment:

Chairman Mooney moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:54 am; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Respectfully Submitted By:

Colleen Akerman

Colleen Akerman, Executive Assistant

Approved by the Board 03/18/2026:

Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman

Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman

Jon Pike, Vice Chairman

Sharon Ciampi

Sharon Ciampi, Selectman

Travis O'Hara, Selectman