Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 1, 2026 10:00 am
Belmont Mill, Tioga Meeting Room

Present were Chairman Ruth P. Mooney, Selectman Travis O'Hara, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Sharon Ciampi, Selectman Mark Lewandoski, TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant/Assessing Administrator Colleen Akerman, Town Planner Karen Santoro, Finance Director Steve Forster, DPW Director Brian Jackes, Police Chief Steve Akerstrom, Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz, Town Clerk/Tax Collector Jennifer Cashman, Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden, and General Assistance Director Donna Cilley. Also present was Budget Committee Member Susan Roache.

Absent: Selectman Jon Pike.

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 03/18/2026:

Selectman Lewandoski moved to approve the minutes of the public meeting held 03/18/2026; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

New Business:

Town Meeting Article #4 Recount Update – TC/TC Jennifer Cashman:

TC/TC Jennifer Cashman reported the certified recount on the operating budget article #4 was 480 yes and 474 no. She thanked everyone who participated in the community effort. It was her first recount and it was well planned and executed. There was a difference in the ballot count, but she stands by the machine count, because there can always be human errors. Chairman Mooney commented that it was nice to have so many people participate.

Cemetery Trustees Alternate Re-appointments – Hillary Horn & Barbara Binette:

Cemetery Trustee alternates must be re-appointed every year. These are re-appointments for people already serving.

Selectman Lewandoski move to re-appoint Hillary Horn and Barbara Binette as alternates to the Cemetery Trustees with terms to expire March 31, 2027; seconded by Chairman Mooney. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Heritage Commission Re-appointments – Jillian & Benjamin Rolfe:

Selectman O'Hara move to re-appoint Jillian & Benjamin Rolfe as members of the Heritage Commission with terms to expire March 31, 2029; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Route 106 Park & Ride Overnight Parking Extension Request:

The Town received a request for a local seniors group for an extension on the 72-hour parking limit at the Route 106 Park & Ride lot for bus trip tours. There would be 8 or fewer cars left in the lot longer than 72 hours for three different trips in July, August and September. Police Chief Akerstrom received the request and spoke with Susan L'Heureux about the request, and the fact that parking was at their own risk and he did not have the authority to grant an extension.

General Assistance Director Donna Cilley suggested keeping the rules consistent at the Park & Ride location and making a special exception for parking in the Pavilion lot. There was some discussion about the safety of loading a big bus at the Park & Ride location because the last tour bus loaded in the breakdown lane of Route 106. It was suggested that the bus should be able to make the turn radius for Mill Street because school buses and our fire trucks are able to do so.

Selectman O'Hara moved to allow extended overnight parking for three special events only at the Tioga Pavilion parking lot, at the vehicle owner's risk, for the 2026 dates of 7/28 through 7/30, 8/30 through 09/05, and 09/28 through 10/03 for Diamond Tours; seconded by Selectman Mark Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Police Department K-9 Grant:

Chief Akerstrom requested approval and support from the Board for Captain Boulanger to apply for a K-9 grant from the Stanton Foundation for a K-9 which would include training, vet bills, food and handler training as well. Officer Faath was hired to be a K-9 Officer, and he has experience as a K-9 handler. There are some funds set aside for a dog but not for training. The request is a little bit premature, but they will need a letter of support from the Board for their application. The grant would also cover any cruiser retrofit if needed. The K-9 would be the property of the Town and Officer Faath will sign an agreement to stay with Belmont and the K-9 for a specific number of years, but the K-9 could be reassigned to a new handler depending on the age of the dog if Officer Faath left employment. Selectman Lewandoski recommended re-establishing relationships with Noreast Vet and Agway as well.

Investment Fund Policy Re-adoption:

The Investment Fund Policy needs to be readopted each year. We neglected to readopt it in 2025, but there have been no changes since it was readopted in 2024. It was an oversight, but we are on top of it now. Chairman Mooney stated the auditors will let us know if there need to be any changes to the policy.

Chairman Mooney moved to re-adopt the Town of Belmont Investment Policy as presented; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Aquarion Environmental Champions Grants:

The Board received information in their packets about environmental grant opportunities for non-profits, businesses and students. TA Jipson will share the information with the Conservation Commission as well.

Other New Business:

Underground Utilities:

DPW Director Brian Jackes reported that JBC Utilities will be working to put Fidium cable underground on roads where Comcast cable was recently installed. They are working on the permit process and will try to minimize the pavement impact so that no bonding is needed. Some citizens may be frustrated by the work. Some roads have no utility poles and there are only underground utilities. Some driveways may need to be dug up but they are going to try to direct bore to minimize the impact.

Senior Program/Mill Building Discussion:

Selectman Ciampi spoke about the lack of a Senior Center in Belmont, and she would like to see something set up in the location where it was previously held. This led to a discussion about the use of the Mill and priorities for occupying the space there, with the need for a fire and waterproof vault as the highest priority. There were some concerns about mixing recreational activities with business operations in the same building, but the long-term goal is to move Town Hall to the Mill, and Parks & Recreation to the current Town Hall building. The Board supported starting a senior program emphasizing that it should not cost the Town money and it will be necessary to avoid the issues that led to the previous program's closure. The conversation led to ideas for organized activities rather than hosting a casual space for socializing.

Plans to move Town Hall to the Mill building were reviewed, with concerns about keeping departments together for convenience or moving departments separately which would mean decreased efficiency for residents and staff traveling between two different buildings across downtown for different functions and access to paperwork and files. There were concerns about file management and storage at the Mill building due to structural capacity.

Parks & Recreation Director Danielle St. Onge joined the meeting and proposed weekly walking groups starting in May and evening exercise classes. She noted challenges with low participation and survey responses, but she is willing to start offering some structured activities targeted at seniors at the Board's recommendation. Participants will need to agree to the rules and sign the forms that protect everyone, and if there are any issues, activities will be discontinued. Seniors will need to understand that this is a temporary location and that the Parks & Recreation Director is in charge of all activities and the program will be discontinued if there are any of the same issues there were before.

It was the consensus of the Board for Parks & Rec Director St. Onge to move forward with plans for structured senior activities and report back to the Board about the program.

Cemetery Trustees Vacancy:

The Board discussed the vacancy of a full member of the Cemetery Trustees due to recently elected Kate Eaton moving out of Town. The Board discussed the role of alternates and recommended offering one of the alternates a full position. Alternate positions should be ready to move up to fill a full position if there is a vacancy. The current alternates will be offered the opportunity to step up and if they do not want to step up, the vacancy can be advertised.

Old Business:

Fire Station:

Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz completed a structural inspection of the fire station with a local contractor and determined that while the overall construction of the building is great, the gable ends were never tied into the trusses. This is not a structural issue, and the contractor proposed a tie-in that will save money. The plywood inconsistencies are cosmetic, and the concrete block issue is cosmetic as well. There is no need to hire an engineer; the trusses just need to be connected. It will take about one day to complete the work. The building was fully constructed with volunteer labor, and it has served us well. The department has outgrown the building, but they will make do, and could put on an addition in the future if necessary.

Vault for the Mill:

Chairman Mooney asked for permission from the Board to start researching the needs/work for the Mill vault with TC/TC Jennifer Cashman. Selectman Lewandoski said we have to because the vault is "one and done". The vault was inspected today by Selectmen O'Hara and Ciampi, Fire Chief Pickowicz and Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden. The vault is stuffed. There are records back to 1700 and we still have some of Gilmanton's records from when they had a fire. TC/TC Cashman said they will take an inventory and send records back to Gilmanton. It was the consensus of the Board to start researching a vault for the Mill.

GA Director Cilley proposed a creative idea for work at the Mill: ask local companies if they would "sponsor a floor". Fire Chief Pickowicz thinks there are some businesses that would love to help. TA Jipson will do some research on this to determine viability. The Board discussed the importance of the vault to protect the Town's old records.

Public Comment: None

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 15th, 2026 at 6 pm.

Non-Public Session:

Those present and voting were Chairman Ruth P. Mooney, Selectman Travis O'Hara, Selectman Sharon Ciampi and Selectman Mark Lewandoski. Also present were TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman, TC/TC Jennifer Cashman and DPW Director Brian Jackes.

Absent: Selectman Jon Pike.

Chairman Ruth P. Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II a, c & L at 11:08 am; seconded by Selectman Mark Lewandoski. Roll Call 1: M. Lewandoski – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

TA Alicia Jipson, TC/TC Jennifer Cashman and DPW Director Brian Jackes spoke to the Board about a water abatement request.

The Board made a decision to consider a future abatement for sewer if the property owner makes a good faith payment and sets up a payment arrangement with the Tax Collector.

TC/TC Cashman and DPW Director Jackes left the meeting.

TA Jipson updated the Board about a legal matter related to employment.

Selectman Ciampi moved to exit non-public session at 11:54 am; seconded by Selectman Pike. Roll Call 2: S. Ciampi – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, M. Lewandoski – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Selectman O'Hara 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 Selectman Lewandoski. Roll Call 3: M. Lewandoski – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Adjournment:

Chairman Mooney moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:54 am; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Respectfully Submitted By:

Colleen Akerman, Executive Assistant

Approved by the Board ____/____/2026:

Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman

Mark Lewandoski, Selectman

Travis O'Hara, Vice Chairman

Jon Pike, Selectman

Sharon Ciampi, Selectman