Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 6, 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, DPW Director Brian Jackes, Police Chief Steve Akerstrom, Police Captain Evan Boulanger, Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz, Parks & Recreation Director Danielle St. Onge, Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden, Building & Grounds Crew Member Kyle Dodge, Water Department Contract Worker Don Hurd and General Assistance Director Donna Cilley. Also present was Barbara Binette, Cemetery Trustee Alternate and Budget Committee Ron Mitchell.

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

Review & Approve Minutes:

Minutes of Joint Public Meeting 03/18/2026:

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

Minutes of Public Meeting 04/01/2026:

Selectman Pike moved to approve the minutes of the public meeting held 04/01/2026; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Minutes of Non-Public Meeting 04/01/2026:

Selectman Pike moved to approve the minutes of the non-public meeting held 04/01/2026; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Minutes of Non-Public Meeting 04/15/2026:

Selectman Travis O'Hara moved to approve the minutes of the non-public meeting held 04/15/2026; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

New Business:

New Hires – Assistant Fire Chief Matt Famolare, FF Josh Huestis, FF Travis Akerstrom & Assistant DPW Director Noel Gourley:

Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz informed the Board he has hired an Assistant Fire Chief, Matt Famolare, and two firefighters: Joshua Huestis and Travis Akerstrom. The new Assistant Chief is also a paramedic. One of the new firefighters previously worked for Belmont. They are now up

to full staff, minus the two grant positions. There will be a ceremony at 3 pm tomorrow for the new personnel and those coming off probation.

DPW Director Brian Jackes announced he has hired an Assistant DPW Director, Noel Gourley. He has 15 years' municipal experience and 20 years in the private sector. He will start work May 26th.

Selectman Lewandoski moved to approve the hiring of Assistant Fire Chief Matt Famalore, FF Josh Huestis, FF Travis Akerstrom and Assistant DPW Director Noel Gourley; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Building & Grounds Supervisor Patrick Golden Retirement – June 2026:

The Board received a copy of B&G Supervisor Patrick Golden's retirement letter. As discussed previously, Kyle Dodge will take on his position and a new full-time laborer will be hired, as well as a part-time summer laborer. Ads will be posted by mid-May.

Budget Committee Member Ron Mitchell commented that Patrick has done a beautiful job, and the grounds always look great.

Town Hall Boiler Replacement:

B&G Supervisor Golden updated the Board about the Town Hall boiler, which was recently serviced along with all of the other boilers. The fire box and door are "tender" and could crack any time. Parts for the 31-year-old boiler are no longer manufactured. The job was put out to bid, and we received three bids back from very good vendors who have all done business with the Town. The least expensive option involves a special discount and offers a 2-year warranty instead of a 1-year warranty. The preferred option will "snap in, snap out". There will be no changes to the layout or zones at this time, but there is room for those changes in the future if the use of the Town Hall building changes. They will also save all of the old parts from the Town Hall boiler that could be used on the Mill boiler.

Selectman O'Hara moved to accept the quote from Rowell's in the amount of $15,299 to replace the boiler at Town Hall with funds to be expended from the Municipal Facilities Capital Reserve Fund; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Sunray Shores Staging Area Request & Approval:

Norm Duval, President of Sunray Shores, reported they have been working on a plan to replace their private water system for four years. The main line is currently leaking and tomorrow they will be craning an excavator over the road for repairs. They do not have a place to stage their big replacement project and requested to use Town property at the junction of June Circle, Nancy Drive and Linda Drive. All of the abutters were asked for their blessing and only one opposed out of 11. It is important for the water system to be replaced. They will take photos before and after and their contractor will be responsible for getting the staging area back to its existing condition. Chairman Mooney asked for confirmation that the Town will not be taking on any liability if something happens. Mr. Duval assured us that there would be no liability on the Town's part.

Selectman Pike moved to allow the necessary staging on Town-owned property in the vicinity of June Circle and Nancy Drive for the water line construction project for Sunray Shores Water District, with the condition that the land be restored to its current grassy condition upon completion of the project by the contractor; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Sale of Town-Owned Property – Dump Body Off Decommissioned Grant Truck:

DPW Director Brian Jackes stated they sold a dump body from the decommissioned grant truck for $1,500 and requested $1,500 be earmarked for the purchase of a snow pusher for use in downtown Belmont. It will be efficient, take up less space and be easier and safer for plowing.

Selectman Lewandoski moved to accept funds in the amount of $1,500 as the winning bid from the sale of the DPW dump body that was decommissioned per the Granite State Clean Fleets Grant and moved to allow the proceeds in the amount of $1,500 from the sale of the DPW dump body to be earmarked for the purchase of a push box for the Highway Department in the amount $1,500; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Cemetery Trustees Appointments – Barbara Binette & Joyce Keegal:

Selectman O'Hara asked if it was normal for committees to recommend appointments, and he was referred to the section of the application that shows if a committee approved.

Selectman O'Hara moved to appoint Barbara Binette as a full member of the Cemetery Trustees with a term to expire March 31, 2029, to fulfill the remainder of Katie Eaton's term; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Selectman O'Hara moved to appoint Joyce Keegal as an alternate member of the Cemetery Trustees with a term to expire March 31, 2027; seconded by Chairman Mooney. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Conservation Commission Appointments – Molly O'Connell, Cora Takantjas, Jane Jordan & Pauline Tessier:

Selectman O'Hara moved to appoint Molly O'Connell as a student member of the Conservation Commission with a term to expire August 31, 2027; seconded by Chairman Mooney. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Selectman O'Hara moved to appoint Cora Takantjas as student member of the Conservation Commission with a term to expire August 31, 2029; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Selectman O'Hara moved to re-appoint Jane Jordan and Pauline Tessier as full members of the Conservation Commission with terms to expire March 31, 2029; seconded by Chairman Mooney. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

TC/TC Scholarship Award to Attend New England Municipal Clerk Institute Academy:

This is the second year Town Clerk Jennifer Cashman has been approved for a scholarship for the two-year Municipal Clerk Academy. She has been certified for several years and maintains certification with professional development opportunities. She was unable to attend today's meeting because their office is at a regional clerks' workshop. Both Town Clerk Assistants are in their second year of a 4-year certification program, and they have also applied for scholarships.

Municipal Clerks Week May 3-9:

This week is the 57th Annual Municipal Clerks' Week and the association encourages a spirit week. Town Hall has shown their spirit this week with a different theme each day.

Belmont High School Career Day Update:

The Town Clerks' Office connected with students at the April 23rd Career Fair to promote local government positions. They also held a mock election to vote on the Old Home Day theme, which engaged 189 voters. The winning theme was "Stars, Stripes & Summer Nights". EB2.gov donated "swag" to share with the students. Town Planner Karen Santoro reported Land Use Technician Rod Cameron also enjoyed interacting with the students while presenting information about Land Use and the Conservation Commission. Our Police and Fire Departments were also in attendance, as was Parks & Recreation.

Part-time Building & Grounds Summer Laborer Opening:

An ad has been placed for the part-time Building & Grounds summer laborer position.

2026 Old Home Day Theme, Waivers, & Road Closure:

Parks & Recreation Director Danielle St. Onge stated the theme has been selected by the students, and she requested the same closures and waivers as in prior years so that the Old Home Day committee can accept vendor payments directly and so that they can close roads for the parade. There will be a joint department head meeting on July 1st. There were 11 nominees for the Good Citizen Scholarship but only 3 have submitted their paperwork so far. Awards night will be held on May 21st at 6:30 pm. They are currently looking for judges.

There has been little interest in the Old Home Day Committee meetings, but some people email great ideas. The ideas are great, but one person can't execute everything. The fireworks program will be contracted soon, and they agreed to our budgeted amount of $7,500, plus any donations that may be made. Atlas is returning and they will move to the lower field again.

Selectman Lewandoski moved to waive the Town of Belmont Itinerant Vendor Fees for those vendors participating in Old Home Day and to grant permission to close the following streets for the Old Home Day event on August 8th, 2026: Main Street between Depot Street & School Street and Mill Street between Main Street & Center Street; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Other New Business:

Highway Safety Grant Amendment:

Police Chief Steve Akerstrom reported the department requested additional grant funds for speed and DUI enforcement because they have already used most of the funding they've received. The State approved their request.

The Select Board, in a majority vote, had previously accepted the terms of the Highway Safety Grant Agreement as presented in the amount of $10,700.00, and had also previously accepted in a majority vote the 1st amended grant terms in the amount of $12,309.75, for additional Patrol Enforcements and Speed Equipment as presented in the 1st Grant Agreement Amendment Notice for an adjusted total grant limitation of $23,009.75.

Selectman O'Hara moved to accept the 2nd amended grant terms in the amount of $7,100.00 for the second additional Patrol Enforcements as presented in the 2nd Grant Agreement Amendment Notice for an adjusted total limitation of $30,109.75 and authorized Chairman Mooney to sign any necessary documents; seconded by Chairman Mooney. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

The Select Board accepted in a majority vote the 2nd amended grant terms in the amount of $7,100.000 for the second additional Patrol Enforcements as presented in the 2nd Grant Amendment Notice for an adjusted total limitation of $30,109.75.

Earl Sweeney Memorial Consideration at Police Department:

TA Jipson received a request from Selectman Pike to name the police station after Earl Sweeney. Selectman Pike stated this request was based on calls that he has received. He considered that it would be nice to recognize all of our former Chiefs somehow but not necessarily rename the police station. The Sweeney family has purchased a memorial bench to be engraved and placed near the library. There was some discussion about placing plaques for each of the former Chiefs on the wall at the station to recognize them.

Mr. Mitchell proposed naming the fire station after Chief Albert Akerstrom because of his efforts to build the new station so that the police station could move into the old fire station. Selectman Ciampi liked all of the ideas but suggested placing plaques in a more prominent location.

Road Paving Update:

DPW Director Jackes recommended some projects to take advantage of pricing before it increases more. There is an escrow account to finish the road work in Tioga Ridge, off Brown Hill Road. Most of the development is done but prices are increasing and our contractor has agreed to hold to the 2024 pricing for as much of the project as possible. If there are not enough escrow funds, we will need to use the Highway Block Grant funds.

Another recommendation would be to work on Horne Road because we need to protect the $650,000 reconstruction work that was completed in 2010. It has been 15 years, and the road is due for a shim and overlay.

Westview Drive will also need work when they replace the water line. There are some other small projects like Leslie Roberts Drive as well.

Selectman Pike moved to accept the road work recommendations as presented; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

NH DRA DP-8 Low & Moderate Income Tax Relief Forms Available at Town Hall:

Assessing Administrator Colleen Akerman reported that low and moderate income tax relief forms are available at Town Hall or online at the NHDRA website. The program provides refunds for the state education portion of property taxes paid by low and moderate income property owners. The deadline is June 30th.

NH Humane Society (NHHS) Community Day May 30th:

TA Jipson requested the Board's approval to participate in the NHHS community day which allows the Town to get free pallets of food and pet products through a partnership with NHHS and Chewy. DPW personnel will volunteer their time on a Saturday to get a large load of free pet supplies. It was the consensus of the Board to allow participation in the event.

Old Business:

Well 4 Update:

Work started on well 4 on April 6th but is still not complete. There have been supply chain and manufacturing issues and they are waiting on a part. We are limping on the old well for now. The water quality for the last well 4 testing was phenomenal, and we had triple the volume. All of the permitting is done but there will need to be a testing period once things are connected.

Westview Drive Water Main Break Update:

DPW Director Jackes has received 2 quotes for replacing the water main on Westview Drive. They are waiting to see where finances are at after well #4 is complete. They need to consider that vacant properties in the neighborhood are likely to be developed and there will need to be proper blow off for the line. They are looking for a good cost effective happy medium. There is currently an active leak, but everyone has water and they have tested the hydrant. They have temporary water lines if they are needed before starting the project. The prior developer installed a marginal water line, but we are responsible for it now.

Knotty Way & Leslie Roberts Drive Paving Update:

The Board previously approved a request by a private developer to pave Leslie Roberts Drive. The Town will be reimbursed by the developer for the work. They started the test pits, and the gravel quality is not right. They have samples and photos and will try to keep the project cost effective. The developer requested the build for a heavier specification so that it does not need to be posted in the spring. There is some issue with permits for the area near the railroad, but the project can be adjusted if necessary.

Granite State Clean Fleets Grant Truck #2 Update:

The new truck will be picked up tomorrow. The radio guy will get it next, which is included as part of the grant. After the new truck is ready, they will strip the old truck and decommission it. It will be auctioned after it is decommissioned.

Signs for Display on Grant Funded Vehicles:

Banners were purchased for each of the new grant trucks to show the public what we have received. The banners will be placed on the trucks when parked, in parades, or used for events such as National Night Out.

WRBP Route 140 Forcemain Response Letter from DES:

The Board received a copy of the response letter from DES with a map and projected costs. We have not heard back yet on the Northern Borders $2,000,000 grant. The State is going to start the project and they will phase it. They would like to phase it for 3 or 4 years, but the Town would like to stretch it out to 5 or 10 or 15 years. We will have further discussions after the bid documents and engineering are finished. They anticipate the first phase will be constructed over the next few years.

Other Old Business:

Rabies & Microchip Clinic Update:

The Town Clerks' office hosted a dog licensing, rabies and microchip clinic in coordination with the NH Humane Society. There was positive feedback from the residents about the convenience of a Saturday event. The Clerks appreciated the support of Chief Pickowicz and the Fire Department, who assisted with the venue and setup.

Public Comment: None

Memorial Day Parade & Ceremony:

Mr. Mitchell reminded everyone about the annual parade and ceremony at the monument for Memorial Day on Monday May 25th. On May 16th they will be putting flags on graves of veterans. One of the State's RSAs changed, and they are no longer able to obtain a Town report with all of the names of veterans who have passed during the year. They are trying to find them all but if you know of any please inform the Legion.

Horne Road/Bishop Road/Mile Hill:

Drivers use these roads as shortcuts because of traffic on Route 3; including tractor trailers and heavy equipment. There may need to be more patrols, and there may be grants available for traffic counts.

Building & Grounds Part-Time Summer Position:

B&G Supervisor Golden noted that the part-time position is a great opportunity for someone to get some training and move up to DPW. The young man we've had the last two seasons is now a full-time DPW employee.

Code Enforcement Update:

Town Planner Santoro explained that we are working with the courts on 130 Depot Street and trying to work with the property owner at 545 Depot Street. Our attorney has paperwork for a property on Union Road.

Homeless Update:

General Assistance Director Donna Cilley reported the City of Laconia has posted the entire city for no camping and they are breaking up encampments. That means individuals are moving toward Belmont and the Police Department is going to have their hands full. Franklin is also cracking down, and we are stuck in the middle area. She has concerns about the future and does not know what to do. The department has already spent $76,600 this year and the majority of it is homeless people, not people experiencing a one-time hardship. There are food stamp changes coming and the State is working to update the welfare RSA, and it is going to be worse than the way it was and more complex. What is the solution? In Hawaii they have a park where the homeless can stay in their pop-up tents from 10 pm to 7 am, and they are allowed to return if they don't leave debris.

Barbara Binette considered that it might be better to keep everyone in one place instead of all over.

Selectman O'Hara agreed that we need a county-wide solution. GA Director Cilley said it is going to be expensive, and it is a challenging population. But we are not a city and we should not have to absorb the fallout from the cities who are not managing their homeless.

There was discussion about the responsibility for cleaning up encampments, which fall on private property owners when they are not on state or municipal property. Fire Chief Pickowicz commented that many cook inside woodstoves, which is not considered open burning and not a violation.

Police Chief Akerstrom received some guidelines that Laconia has been using which have gone out to our personnel. They are trying to work with property owners.

BOS Future Agenda Items:

TA Jipson proposed leaving this item and Committee Reports on the agenda permanently to help bring things to each other's attention. Most agenda items funnel through other means, but this would be another time to bring things up for review.

Board & Committee Reports:

Selectboard members are sitting on committees as representatives, but we are not getting information out to the public or advising fellow Selectboard members about those activities. TA Jipson suggested a regular update from everyone.

Selectman O'Hara reported there have not been any Budget meetings yet.

Selectman Lewandoski reported that the Conservation Commission has placed wood duck boxes in the Town Forest and they are looking at other projects that could bring in students. They are also hosting some presentations.

Selectman Ciampi said the Heritage Commission is a fun group and they are planning for the 250th celebration. They are trying to hire a band and host an event at the gazebo at the end of August. They are also working on getting glass cases to preserve artifacts from the Belmont Historical Society.

Selectman Ciampi also reported on the Cemetery Trustees. There was some storm damage over the winter and some huge stones for Colonel Prescott fell in the Prescott Cemetery on Northbrook. They will not be repaired before Memorial Day, but Laconia Monument volunteered to get them repaired properly.

Selectman Pike stated the Planning Board is looking into the development near the Park & Ride with the "dirty" dirt. The water cannot penetrate the soil and it is in a wet area. The developer plans for a subcontractors' yard with 4 bays and some outside storage. It will not be a big building.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 20th at 6 pm

Non-Public Session:

Those present and voting were Chairman Ruth P. Mooney, Selectman Travis O'Hara, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Sharon Ciampi and Selectman Mark Lewandoski. Also present were TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant Colleen Akerman, and Town Planner Karen Santoro.

Selectman O'Hara moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II a, L & D at 11:50 am; seconded by Chairman Mooney. Roll Call 1: J. Pike, M. Lewandoski – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

Town Planner Karen Santoro and TA Alicia Jipson updated the Board on a legal issue.

Selectman Travis O'Hara left the meeting at 12:00 pm.

The Board made a decision.

Town Planner Karen Santoro and TA Alicia Jipson updated the Board on a second legal issue and the Board made a decision.

The Board was informed of an "anonymous" denigrating letter a local organization received that was allegedly from an elected official in Belmont. The situation was investigated and it was determined that the letter was not sent from one of our elected officials and a response was sent to the organization.

TA Jipson proposed that the Board allow some overlap with the new Building & Grounds hire for some cross-training. It was the consensus of the Board to allow the overlap if the hiring situation allows.

TA Jipson informed the Board of an anonymous email received about the reputation of a recent hire. The Board directed TA Jipson to investigate the allegations.

Selectman Ciampi moved to exit non-public session at 12:45 pm; seconded by Selectman Pike. Roll Call 4: J. Pike – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, M. Lewandoski – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

Chairman Mooney moved to seal the minutes of this non-public session because, if discussed in public, it could render a proposed action ineffective; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Roll Call 5: M. Lewandoski – aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

Adjournment:

Chairman Mooney moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:45 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

Travis O'Hara, Vice Chairman

Jon Pike, Selectman

Sharon Ciampi, Selectman

Mark Lewandoski, Selectman