Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 19, 2026 6:00 pm
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, Police Chief Steve Akerstrom, DPW Director Brian Jackes, and General Assistance Director Donna Cilley. Also present were Budget Committee Members Ron Mitchell and Susan Roache, Conservation Commission Chairman Pauline Tessier, and Zoning Board Member Dana Silcock.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6:00 pm and those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Attendees were requested to refrain from whispering during the meeting because the acoustics are not good in this room.

Review & Approve Minutes:

Minutes of Meeting 08/05/2026:

Selectman Travis O'Hara moved to approve the minutes of the meeting held 08/05/2026; seconded by Selectman Mark Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Public Hearings:

Water & Sewer Ordinance:

The Chairman opened a public hearing to hear public comment on the proposed changes to the Water & Sewer Ordinances at 6:02 pm.

DPW Director Brian Jackes reminded the Board that the changes were primarily "housekeeping" such as removing some obsolete language and updating definitions. Another change will update how we bill for multi-unit properties. Recent research determined that 55 properties are not being charged correctly for multiple water units. Those corrections will be made and there will be no changes necessary for the water or sewer unit or usage rates at this time. The Silver Lake Area bond payments have decreased, and the bond ends in 2033.

Resident Pauline Tessier of Sawicki Lane asked some questions about seasonal rates. TA Jipson answered that a lot of research was put into looking at the historical billing for the Silver Lake area and no records can be found for a seasonal rate. There is a seasonal designation with regards to the bond payment, however. Mrs. Tessier suggested some properties may not be properly charged but TA Jipson has made updates to some of the accounts based on information made available to the Town and those updates will show in the next quarterly billing. Fifteen properties have already been removed from the seasonal designation.

There being no additional comment, the Chairman closed the public hearing at 6:12 pm.

Selectman O'Hara moved to approve the Water and Sewer Ordinances and all proposed fee schedules and changes as presented; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Preservation Easement – White Silo 2025 Revocable Trust – Map/Lot 116-022:

The Chairman opened a public hearing to accept comments and discuss the proposed 10-year Discretionary Preservation Barn Easement per NH RSA 79-D for Joyce Keegal Trustee of the White Silo 2025 Revocable Trust at 463 Union Road, Map/Lot 116-022 at 6:12 pm.

TA Jipson provided the application and documents to the Board in their packets and read some of the information about these easements from the RSA. Ms. Keegal explained that the easement would provide tax benefits while requiring maintenance of the historic agricultural structure, which has been a local landmark since the 1820s. The Board and Ms. Keegal discussed who monitors the status of the property, what happens if the property is sold, or if maintenance requirements are not met. Ms. Keegal stated there are not many silos in the area, or many in the state that are in decent condition. There is extensive maintenance to be completed on the barn, and she is working with a number of contractors to determine the best solutions. The building inspector will perform inspections of work completed, and there is a penalty of 15-20% if the easement is revoked prior to the end of the 10-year term.

There being no additional comment, the Chairman closed the public hearing at 6:27 pm.

Selectman Pike moved to accept the proposed Discretionary Preservation Barn Easement for Joyce Keegal Trustee of the White Silo 2025 Revocable Trust at 463 Union Road, Map/Lot 116-022 for a period of 10 years; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (4-0-1). Selectman Ciampi abstained because she serves on the Cemetery Trustees with Ms. Keegal.

Preservation Easement – Marshall Ford – Map/Lot 226-027:

The Chairman opened a public hearing to accept comments and discuss the proposed 10-year Discretionary Preservation Barn Easement renewal per NH RSA 79-D for Marshall Ford at 539 Province Road, Map/Lot 226-027 at 6:29 pm.

Mr. Ford is renewing this easement for a third term of 10 years. He included a picture of his barn that was in a calendar. This easement has already been in place for 20 years.

There being no additional comment, the Chairman closed the public hearing at 6:30 pm.

Selectman Pike moved to accept the proposed Discretionary Preservation Barn Easement renewal for Marshall Ford at 539 Province Road, Map/Lot 226-027 for a period of 10 years; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Unanticipated Revenue – Police Cruisers:

The Chairman opened a public hearing to hear public comment and accept unanticipated revenue per RSA 31:95-b from the sale of municipal property in the amount of $10,225.00 with funds to be earmarked for the upfit of police cruisers at 6:30 pm.

Police Chief Steve Akerstrom said they sent four old cruisers to auction and this is the proceeds, which they will use to upfit new cruisers with lights and sirens, etc.

There being no additional comment, the Chairman closed the public hearing at 6:31 pm.

Selectman Lewandoski moved to accept unanticipated revenue of $10,225.00 from the sale of municipal property per RSA 31:95-b with funds to be earmarked for the upfit of police cruisers; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Amended Highway Safety Grant:

The Chairman opened a public hearing to hear public comment and accept an amended Office of Highway Safety Grant 26-016/27-016 per RSA 31:95-b in the amount of $36,508.50 from the NH Department of Safety at 6:33 pm.

Police Chief Akerstrom stated this grant is received each year for speed enforcement, DUI and distracted driving.

There being no additional comment, the Chairman closed the public hearing at 6:33 pm.

Selectman O'Hara moved to accept the terms of the Highway Safety Grant as presented in the amount of $29,700.00 and the amended grant terms in the amount of $6,808.50 as presented in the Grant Agreement Amendment Notice for an adjusted total grant limitation of $36,508.50; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

The Select Board, in a majority vote, accepted the terms of the Highway Safety Grant as presented in the amount of $29,700.00 and the amended grant terms in the amount of $6,808.50 as presented in the Grant Agreement Amendment Notice for an adjusted total grant limitation of $36,508.50.

Stanton K-9 Grant Foundation Grant:

The Chairman opened a public hearing to hear public comment and accept unanticipated grant funds per RSA 31:95-b from the Stanton K-9 Grant Foundation Grant in the amount of $33,650.00 to establish a K-9 Unit at 6:34 pm.

Police Chief Akerstrom explained that the department applied for and received a grant to purchase a K-9, including housing, vet care, food, cruiser modifications and training. After the purchase has been made, the department can apply for up to $1,100 per week for the officer's training, which will help fund the salary.

There are two other funds that have been established with donations for a K-9 replacement fund and a K-9 maintenance fund. Residents Nate Sweeney and Susan Pilliod had

questions about the K-9 program including officer qualifications and insurance coverage. A K-9 is a sworn Town employee with a badge, and this new K-9 would be our fourth K-9.

Budget Committee Chairman Tracey LeClair thanked the department for pursuing grant funding for the K-9 program because it makes a huge difference having one available in our Town.

There being no additional comment, the Chairman closed the public hearing at 6:38 pm.

Selectman Lewandoski moved to accept unanticipated grant funds of $33,650.00 from the Stanton K-9 Grant Foundation Grant per RSA 31:95-b to establish a K-9 Unit; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

New Business:

Joint Selectmen and Shaker Regional School District Meeting Invite:

The Board received an invitation from Superintendent Tursi for the Board and TA Jipson to attend a school board meeting with the Town of Canterbury on Tuesday, September 22nd at 6 pm at Belmont High School. Topics include the 2027-2028 budget development and the public is welcome.

Belknap County Department of Corrections – Inmates for Town Projects:

DPW Director Brian Jackes is in discussions with the State and Belknap County to obtain some labor for projects around Town. We will need to provide a copy of the Town's insurance and the background checks of employees who will oversee and supervise the inmates. If the Board approves, we can schedule them for next week from the County. Extra hands will let us reduce our overtime and labor costs and allow us to put our employees in other places. Chief Akerstrom agreed with the plan, and it was the consensus of the Board to proceed with using inmate labor for some Town projects because we have never had any issues.

NH Municipal Association (NHMA) Legislative Policy Forum Delegate:

Each year NHMA holds a forum to debate and discuss legislation activities and each Town can appoint a Town Administrator or Selectboard member as the voting delegate for a municipality. In the past, this has been the Town Administrator.

Selectman O'Hara moved to appoint Town Administrator Alicia Jipson as the Town's representative to vote at the NHMA 2027-20278 Legislative Policy Forum; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Employee Appreciation Day:

TA Jipson requested approval to host Employee Appreciation Day on Tuesday, September 29th. It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with the plan.

Jeff Marden in Memory Picture – Request to Store:

Jeff Marden's sister Barbara Binette was looking for this painting, and it was found in the stair well at the Mill building. She asked about taking it home for safekeeping, but the picture is Town property purchased by the Conservation Commission and should remain in our possession. The Heritage Commission and the Historical Society will be putting up some other artifacts in the

building and there is room on the 4th floor for it to be hung where there will be no additional renovations.

Other New Business:

Well 3 Update:

DPW Director Jackes reported that they are cleaning well #3 now that well # 4 is up and running. The pump was encased in 4" of iron. Users are going to see some changes in the water system. The rate has increased from 13 to 24 gallons per minute. The motor was replaced 1 ½ years ago because of a failure but the pump needs a little work. There is lag time and cost to rebuild it and a new one is the same price. It can be primarily paid for with the maintenance line of the budget, but they may need to use a little capital.

Next week the tank will get cleaned by divers. They do a video and vacuum the iron out of the tank to improve the system. Tank cleanings will be put on rotation in the budget because they are mandated every 3 years and that way there are no spikes in the budget. The funds for this cleaning were encumbered from last year because the work had to be delayed due to well #4 being delayed.

Bobcat Failure:

The DPW's Bobcat fuel system is in a catastrophic failure. It is a 2019 with only 1,200 hours. The failure was caught before it could cause additional damage, but it is 2 years out of warranty, and it is a $9,500 repair. We keep the maintenance budget line lean so there is not enough to cover the repair. They are trying to find a more cost-effective repair, but Selectman Pike recommended staying with Bobcat for the work.

Selectman O'Hara moved to approve funds to repair the Bobcat from the Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund in an amount not to exceed $10,000.00; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Old Business:

Former Bank Building Update:

In 2007 a warrant article was approved by the voters of Belmont to allow the Selectboard to buy or sell town-owned property. The RSA was updated in 2021 to include demolition. Next steps include accepting input on the proposal from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Heritage Commission and then hosting two public hearings 10-14 days apart. The Board will take a final vote 7-14 days after the second public hearing.

The Board discussed past history including the last charette that recommended removing the bank building for greenspace in the Village area. They also reviewed concerns about liability and safety, and the purpose and potential cost of renovations if the building is not demolished. The plan has been to move Town Hall to the Mill, and use the current Town Hall for Parks & Rec and a Senior program where it would qualify for some grant funding, and to remove the bank building to make the Mill building the focal point of the Village. Selectman Lewandoski reviewed his reasoning for the demolition as discussed at the last Selectboard meeting (08/05/2026). Belmont puts things off and then it gets more expensive. The library will be expanding in the future, and Center Street should be 2-way traffic to serve Town Hall at the Mill building.

There was discussion about the State taking funds away from municipalities and schools and costs are passed down to property owners. Selectman O'Hara said he is on board to demolish the building because trying to save it will increase taxes, and if we repair or rebuild, we may have no control over what goes there because the State is taking away local zoning controls. Residents want to keep our buildings, but they do not want to put any money into them, so they need repairs and maintenance and it costs money.

There was a rumor that the library may want the bank building, but Library Trustee Samantha LeClair said their plans do not include use of the bank building. They have an expansion project planned that will keep everything in one building. An original idea to annex the Children's Room to the bank building was not practical due to hassles maintaining walkways in the winter, additional required staffing and parents and children being in two different buildings. The library has found a storage unit to be placed at the DPW so they will no longer need the bank building space for storage.

Some residents spoke against the proposal due to increased taxes, which led to a discussion about the lack of town input in school spending decisions and the need for more town residents to show up at school budget meetings.

Residents made requests for additional information about the cost of demolition, engineering data, and moving this decision to the ballot for voters.

The discussion about the bank building continued with concerns about voting procedures and transparency. TC/TC Jennifer Cashman requested additional information about how Town Hall and other departments can better provide transparency to serve residents when the documents and information we have are public information, available on request.

While the Board has had authority to buy, sell and demolish buildings since 2007, the current process needs to follow updated RSA41:14-a requirements, including input from other Town boards and public hearings before final voting. The Conservation Commission did not oppose the demolition at their meeting last week, the Planning Board meets next week, and the Heritage Commission will meet September 3rd.

Other Old Business: None

Public Comment:

Budget Committee Chair Tracey LeClair expressed concerns about accusations made against Old Home Day Committee Members, allegedly made by Selectman Ciampi. Selectman Ciampi stated she did not make those accusations and there was a misinterpretation.

BOS Future Agenda Items: None

Board & Committee Reports: None

Next Meeting: September 2, 2026 @ 10:00 am

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, TC/TC Jennifer Cashman, Lisa Bushey and Nate Sweeney.

Selectman O'Hara moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II c & e at 7:53 pm; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Roll Call 1: J. Pike – aye, M. Lewandoski – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

The Board and TC/TC Cashman spoke with a property owner about a payment arrangement and abatement of interest.

No decisions were made.

The Board received an update on pending employment litigation.

Selectman Pike left the meeting.

The Board received an update on the sale of property at 200 Daniel Webster Highway.

The Board reviewed the timeline for public hearings for the bank demolition and selected Thursday, September 10th and Tuesday, September 22nd with a final vote to be held on Wednesday, September 30th.

Selectman O'Hara moved to exit non-public session at 8:43 pm; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Roll Call 2: S. Ciampi – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, M. Lewandoski – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (4-0).

Adjournment:

Selectman O'Hara moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:43 pm; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Respectfully Submitted By:

Colleen Akerman, Executive Assistant

Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman

Sharon Ciampi, Selectman

Travis O'Hara, Vice Chairman

Mark Lewandoski, Selectman

Jon Pike, Selectman

Approved by the Board: SEP 02 2026