Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 17, 2026 6:00 pm
Belmont Mill, Tioga Meeting Room

Present were Chairman Ruth P. Mooney, Selectman Travis O'Hara, Selectman Jon Pike (6:16 pm) Selectman Sharon Ciampi, Selectman Mark Lewandoski, TA Alicia Jipson, Executive Assistant/Assessing Administrator Colleen Akerman, Town Planner Karen Santoro, Police Chief Steve Akerstrom, Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz, Assistant Fire Chief Matt Famolare, DPW Director Brian Jackes, and General Assistance Director Donna Cilley. Also present were Budget Committee Members Ron Mitchell and Susan Roache, Zoning Board Member Dana Silcock and Donna Lane of Lakes Region Community Developers.

The Chairman opened the meeting at 6:00 pm and those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Review & Approve Minutes:

Minutes of Public Meeting 05/20/2026:

Selectman Mark Lewandoski moved to approve the minutes of the public meeting held 05/20/2026; seconded by Selectman Travis O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Minutes of Non-Public Meeting 05/20/2026:

Selectman O'Hara moved to approve the minutes of the non-public meeting held 05/20/2026; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Public Hearings:

a) **A 2020 $500,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Public Facilities Grant for Lakes Region Community Developers towards renovations to the Gale School building into a daycare and life skills center**

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 6:01 pm.

Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities through the NH Community Development Finance Authority. Up to $500,000 annually is available on a competitive basis for public facility projects, up to $500,000 for housing projects, up to $500,000 for economic development projects, and up to $350,000 annually is available for emergency activities. Up to $25,000 is available per planning study. All projects must primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons.

This public hearing is to update the public on, and accept public comment on, the progress of the Lakes Region Community Developers (LRCD) project of renovating the Gale School at 60 Concord Street, into a service center. The project was slow to start as costs were higher than expected and additional funds needed to be secured. Originally expected to be a $2,000,000 project, the project cost is now $4,500,000.

The project is almost complete, with completion expected shortly. A ribbon cutting is scheduled for 6/30/2026.

The Boys & Girls Club expects to start childcare operations in mid-July.

Lakes Region Community Services is no longer going to locate in the Gale School as they built a facility in Meredith. LRCD is looking for a new tenant for the location that meets CDBG requirements of serving at least 51% low- and moderate-income persons.

Resident Woody Fogg commented that we finally got here after 40 years with no local tax money spent. There have been donations of materials, labor and discounts, and LRCD funding. It's been a struggle since inflation hit after Covid, but LRCD has been tenacious. The JH Spain company is doing a beautiful job.

Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz noted that the contractor went to every length to keep things as original looking as possible, including sending limber to be recreated.

Resident Susan Pilliod asked if we are going to meet the 51% requirement. Donna Lane from LRCD replied that the Boys & Girls Club will, and they are looking for another tenant who will meet the 51%. If the grant is not met because no suitable tenant is found, the lien will repay the grant, but the funds would not come from taxpayers. CDBG would satisfy it.

There being no additional public comment, the Chairman closed the public hearing at 6:08 pm.

b) A 2025 up to $210,000 CDBG Economic Development grant for the Boys & Girls Club of Central and Northern New Hampshire to construct a playground at the Gale School building for the new daycare center. The amount of the CDBG is based on the jobs created at the daycare

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 6:08 pm.

This public hearing is to update the public on, and accept public comment on, the progress of the Boys & Girls Club project of installing playground equipment at the Gale School, 60 Concord Street. This is a grant under the CDBG Economic Development program and is based on the creation, or retention, of jobs. BGC originally anticipated creating 6 new jobs at the Gale School but is now creating 2 jobs while transferring other jobs from a location that recently closed in Concord. Therefore, the scope of the playground CDBG project is reduced to closer to $70,000

(from $230,000) and some of the playground, and other equipment will be moved from the Concord location. The Boys & Girls Club expects to start childcare operations in mid-July.

Donna Lane from LRCD responded to some questions about the reduction in job creation. They Boys & Girls Club closed a location in Concord, and they are moving people and equipment from that location to Belmont. They can't get the full Economic Development Grant for job creation, so it was reduced from $230,000 to $70,000. Handouts are available for anyone who would like more information.

It was noted that this is not a Town of Belmont grant. We are a pass-through required for this grant. The Board has no responsibilities for the grant or the monies.

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

c) In accordance with RSA 31:95-b to accept unanticipated revenue from the USDA Rural Development for a Community Directed Spending (CDS) Community Facilities Grant in the amount of $73,000 for the purchase of a 2025 Chevrolet Tahoe and associated upfit costs to be used by the Belmont Police Department

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 6:12 pm.

Police Chief Steve Akerstrom reported that Captain Evan Boulanger submitted a grant application to offset cruiser replacement costs, and we were awarded this $73,000 grant towards a vehicle and part of the upfit which includes lights, sirens and lettering. It will be Captain Boulanger's vehicle. Our cost share is $23,000. It will replace a cruiser that is being retired and then the retired cruiser may be used by other Town staff or auctioned off.

There being no public comment, the Chairman closed the public hearing at 6:14 pm.

Selectman Lewandoski moved to accept unanticipated revenue from the USDA Rural Development per RSA 31:95-b for a Community Directed Spending (CDS) Community Facilities Grant in the amount of $73,000 for the purchase of a 2025 Chevrolet Tahoe and associated upfit costs to be used by the Belmont Police Department; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (4-0).

New Business:

Stanton K-9 Grant Foundation Grant Acceptance $32,000:

Chief Akerstrom explained that the department applied for this $32,000 grant for a K-9 and we were accepted.

Selectman Jon Pike entered the meeting at 6:16 pm.

The grant includes the cost of the dog and cruiser upfit, vet costs, kennels, vests and training as well as the K-9 officer's salary during training. Chairman Mooney confirmed that at this time we will not be using any of the donations the Town has previously saved for a K-9. The

grant funds will be used before any donated funds. The trainers will help select the proper dog. Today a motion is needed to accept the grant and when the funds are received there will be a public hearing. Documents will need to be signed before we can receive the funds.

Selectman Lewandoski moved to accept the Stanton K-9 Grant Foundation Grant in the amount of $32,000 to establish a K-9 Unit and it is intended to cover the costs associated with such a program, as set forth in the Model Budget as presented, and to designate Chairman Ruth Mooney to sign grant related documents; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Police Department – E-Bike Update:

The department obtained two e-bikes over the winter, and two officers recently went through training school. We will see them around Town and out on the WOW trail. A few arrests have already been made by the bicycle officers. Belmont Marketplace has provided a storage and charging space for the e-bike at that end of Town.

Chief Akerstrom also mentioned the speed board sign they received through a grant is now on Seavey Road. He thanked DPW for helping with setup. Data will be collected from the signs, and a recent data collection caught a vehicle at 67 MPH on Wildlife Boulevard. The solar-powered sign will be moved to different locations to help deter speeding.

Plan NH Belmont Charrette Look-Back Event:

Plan NH is a non-profit for planning and development and Belmont's 1996 charette was one of their first ones. They would like to host a "Look Back" event in Belmont in July with a walking tour of the Mill, the village area and the Gale School. These events have been hosted in Franklin, Littleton and Bristol. The Board had no preference regarding dates or times for the event and recommended the group plan what they would like.

FEMA Violation – 190 Gardners Grove Road:

Town Planner Karen Santoro presented information about a FEMA violation at 190 Gardners Grove Road. The Board received a detailed written report compiled by Land Use Technician Rod Cameron. The problems center around flood hazard maps dated from 1976 that have not been updated and there is no specific base flood elevation for the Town of Belmont. The property owner's surveyor submitted an application for a map amendment to remove their structure from the flood zone, which triggered a FEMA review. That application used a base flood elevation for the Town of Tilton, not Belmont. FEMA is arguing that the Town enforces FEMA regulations by suing the property owners to bring their original structure and addition into compliance, however it is difficult to enforce flood zones and elevations that are not officially in place. Compliance would involve moving their mechanical equipment upstairs and having breakout flood panels for the garage and basement. Failure to enforce the regulations could mean the loss of flood insurance for any Belmont resident. Selectman O'Hara had concerns about the loss of flood insurance and Selectman Lewandoski had concerns that we don't have anything concrete that can be enforced. The property owner received notice from the Town about the issues and has failed to respond. The Town is working with FEMA and the State and there is another meeting scheduled soon, which Board members are welcome to attend.

Selectman Lewandoski suggested tabling the decision on whether to request that legal send the owner another letter until additional information we can use is provided. Resident Woody Fogg stated that he worked in Emergency Management for many years and the maps are notoriously erroneous.

It was the consensus of the Board to table this discussion until after meeting with FEMA and to invite Woody Fogg to attend the meeting.

Primex Return of Surplus:

Every now and then the Town receives a surplus from Primex, who is our insurance carrier. The Board has two options for the return of surplus: designate it as a credit towards FY 2027 or receive it as unanticipated revenue to the General Fund for FY 2026. There was some discussion that it could be earmarked and that we don't know what next year's bill will be. The decision could also be tabled to a future meeting.

Selectman O'Hara moved to designate the Primex return of surplus as unanticipated revenue to go back to the General Fund FY 2026 in the amount of $15,738; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

NH Humane Society & Chewy.com Pet Supply Donation Community Days:

DPW Director Brian Jackes volunteered his time to get a truckload of pet food and supplies from the NH Humane Society, who receives large donations from chewy.com. The items will be available tomorrow and Friday for residents in need.

Complaint from Concerned Anonymous Citizen:

A citizen complaint letter was received from "Anonymous". The Town is unable to respond because a phone number, email address or mailing address were not included, nor were the addresses of the complaint properties included. Chairman Mooney read the letter to those in attendance. Some of the information was vague and the Town can only address concerns that can be identified.

The Town is working with the property owner of the property on Route 140 just beyond the Welcome sign and he is slowly working on it. Enforcement is difficult because the Junkyard ordinance does not apply, nor do Zoning or Solid Waste. The Town has no Property Maintenance Code so there is not a lot of teeth for enforcement without a code. Chairman Mooney mentioned other properties that we have gone to court for again and again, and we are stopped with injunctions and have to keep returning to court repeatedly. Selectman Pike suggested an ordinance for the voters that would give the Town some teeth but there were concerns about over-regulation. The second property was harder to figure out but it is possibly a property that has a demolition permit and is working on asbestos abatement.

2026 Belmont Good Citizen Award Winner:

Riley DeGange is this year's Good Citizen Award winner. She is available for the Old Home Day parade and will receive the $500 scholarship. Selectman Ciampi noted she is also a student member of the Heritage Commission and just graduated.

Other New Business:

New Library Director – Tricia Sturm:

The Library Trustees promoted Tricia Sturm to be the new library director. She was a part-time employee who applied and was promoted.

Parks & Recreation Sargent Park & Beach Bathroom Request:

TA Jipson received an email with a request to consider opening the Beach and Sargent Park bathrooms. The Board discussed issues with vandalism including expensive plumbing damage and graffiti. There is a port-a-potty on site at the beach, but that has also been vandalized in the past. Selectman O'Hara was concerned about the costs because we have a very tight budget. Selectman Ciampi thought residents would be outraged if they saw the level of issues the grounds crew deals with every day. There was some discussion about the use of cameras in the area, but they are costly and likely wouldn't capture enough to prosecute offenders.

Selectman Ciampi moved to not open the Beach bathrooms, and to open the Sargent Park bathrooms during times to be determined by staffing levels; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Request for Consideration of a Late Exemption or Credit Application:

Assessing Admin Colleen Akerman presented an informal request from a property owner to see if the Board would consider a late application for a veteran's credit and an elderly exemption because she was not aware that they were available until last week. Typically circumstances that would qualify for a late application are medical emergencies and natural disasters. Entertaining applications two months after the deadline set by State law could set a precedent.

It was the consensus of the Board to not consider late applications for credits or exemptions.

Gale School RSVP:

Chairman Mooney and Selectman Lewandoski will attend the Gale School ribbon cutting on June 30th. TA Jipson will RSVP on their behalf. There is also an open house from 5-7 pm.

Old Business:

B&G Part-time Summer Laborer New Hire – Michael LaLiberty:

The new part-time summer laborer position has been filled by Michael Laliberty, Christopher Startz has been hired for the DPW truck driver/laborer position and Michael McNamara was hired for the full-time Building & Grounds Laborer position.

Other Old Business:

Decommissioned DPW Truck:

DPW Director Jackes reported that NHDES visited on Tuesday to witness the decommissioning of the old DPW truck that was replaced with a new grant truck. Everything has been certified so that we can accept approximately $200,000 from Granite State Clean Fleets. The rest is only good from scrap and there are no parts left on it for us. They would like to auction the remainder on Municibid.

Auction for Decommissioned DPW Truck - Municibid:

Selectman Lewandoski moved to proceed with the auction of the decommissioned DPW grant truck via Municibid; seconded by Selectman Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Banners were obtained for our grant trucks and the Fire Department showed one off at the meeting. The signs, which show the percentage of grant funding received for each truck, will be used when the trucks are idle/on display such as Old Home Day, National Night Out, etc.

Northern Borders Regional Commission Grant for Route 140 Forcemain - $2,000,000 Award:

This week the Town was notified that we were approved for a $2,000,000 (maximum) grant through NHDES for the Route 140 Forcemain. Sharon McMillin at the State did a great job on the application. This grant is for construction only and will reduce the estimated $10,000,000 costs of the project. This grant was applied for by NHDES on our behalf and will not require a vote from Belmont residents to accept the funds. The State has agreed to phase the project.

BOS Schedule – request for daytime summer schedule:

Chairman Mooney requested the Board consider daytime meetings for July. Selectman O'Hara asked the reason for the request and Chairman Mooney stated she preferred mornings because it is a busy season. Selectman Ciampi had concerns about the need to pay for a babysitter for multiple meetings. Selectman Pike said he liked having one evening and one morning meeting.

It was the consensus of the Board to make no change to the summer meeting schedule.

Public Comment:

Zoning Board Member Dana Silcock commented that he appreciates having one evening and one morning Selectmen's meeting per month.

Selectman Ciampi presented a request from Jack Donovan of the Heritage Commission who would like permission to ring the bell at the Mill on July 4th in recognition of America's 250th anniversary.

It was the consensus of the Board to grant permission.

Selectman Ciampi also made a public thank you to the gentleman who has been cleaning up litter on Belmont's roadsides; most recently on Route 140.

BOS Future Agenda Items: None

Board & Committee Reports: None

Next Meeting: July 1, 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, Town Planner Karen Santoro, Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz and General Assistance Director Donna Cilley.

Chairman Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II c at 7:27 pm; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. 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 discussed Land Use Office staffing with the Board.

Town Planner Karen Santoro provided updates on pending litigation with regards to a code enforcement issue and on other pending litigation with regards to a Zoning Board ruling.

Town Planner Santoro left the meeting and Fire Chief Donald Pickowicz joined the meeting.

Fire Chief Pickowicz discussed staffing at the Fire Department.

Fire Chief Pickowicz left the meeting and General Assistance Director Donna Cilley joined the meeting.

GA Director Cilley requested a part-time employee to assist the General Assistance Department with ongoing general assistance functions. The Board discussed the request with GA Director Cilley.

Selectman O'Hara moved to exit non-public session at 8:43 pm; seconded by Chairman Mooney. Roll Call 2: S. Ciampi – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, M. Lewandoski – aye, J. Pike – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

Selectman Pike moved to hire a part-time employee for the General Assistance Department for 10 hours per week at $31 per hour for a trial period of 12 weeks; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Roll Call 3: M. Lewandoski – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, J. Pike – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

GA Director Cilley and Executive Assistant Akerman left the meeting at 8:44 pm.

Selectman Lewandoski moved to re-enter non-public session at 8:44 pm; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Roll Call 4: T. O'Hara – aye, J. Pike – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, M. Lewandoski – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

The Board spoke with TA Jipson about rumors that she had applied to an outside position with another Town.

Selectman Pike moved to exit non-public session at 8:50 pm; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Roll Call 5: M. Lewandoski – aye, J. Pike – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

Adjournment:

Selectman Pike moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 pm; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted By:

Colleen Akerman, Executive Assistant

Approved by the Board 07/01/2026:

Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman

Travis O'Hara, Vice Chairman

Jon Pike, Selectman

Sharon Ciampi, Selectman

Mark Lewandoski, Selectman