Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 5, 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, Police Chief Steve Akerstrom, Police Captain Evan Boulanger, Assistant Fire Chief Matt Famolare, DPW Director Brian Jackes, and General Assistance Director Donna Cilley. Also present was Budget Committee Member Susan Roache and Conservation Commission Member Tyson Morrill.

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

Review & Approve Minutes:

Minutes of Meeting 07/15/2026:

Selectman Jon Pike moved to approve the minutes of the meeting held 07/15/2026; seconded by Selectman Mark Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Minutes of Joint Selectmen's & Budget Committee Meeting 07/23/2026:

Selectman Travis O'Hara moved to approve the minutes of the meeting held 07/23/2026; seconded by Selectman Sharon Ciampi. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Minutes of Special Meeting 07/30/2026:

This special meeting was held because signatures were needed for our COSSAP grant.

Selectman Ciampi moved to approve the minutes of the special meeting held 07/30/2026; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

New Business:

Fire Department New Hire – Firefighter Zac Hunter:

Assistant Fire Chief Matt Famalore introduced Firefighter Zac Hunter, who comes to us with one year of experience. He has already signed up for AEMT training and is a great addition to the department.

Bank Building Demo Quotes:

TA Jipson presented two quotes for consideration for demolition of the bank building at 154 Main Street: Spears Brothers at the same price as 2022, with the building at $36,000, the retaining wall at $2,000, and asbestos abatement not to exceed $20,000; and DeFranzo

Demolition Corp. at $45,000 without an estimate for asbestos abatement. Asbestos sampling costs are $2,500.

Selectman Ciampi does not want to tear the building down. She questioned spending the money when we want to work on the Mill building and money is tight. We don't know yet if the bank building is sound, or if it has a historical purpose. She would like more information.

Selectman Lewandoski explained some of the history of the Mill and the bank buildings. The original intention was to move Town Hall to the Mill and have it be a focal point for the Town, but the bank building is in the way, and the retaining wall is falling down. It will cost a lot of money to bring in an engineer, and a new wall would likely have the same fate. The library is going to improve and add on and there will be more activity in that parking area, so it would be important to have Center Street as a two-way street for access to Town Hall at the Mill building. The bank building was built as a post office with a small sublet on the top floor and it has been unoccupied for a long time. No one has come to rent or lease the building, and the Town does not want to be a landlord. We keep kicking things down the road and then it costs more money to rehab things. Lots of grant money was spent on the charette to enhance our downtown area the Mill is our focal point, and it is hiding behind the bank building. In Selectman Lewandoski's opinion, the building is not usable, and we are keeping it for no reason.

A suggestion was made to vote on the asbestos testing first and then make a decision. Public Works has enough sand and gravel to slope things off and put in a loam bed. Changes to the road would only require moving a sign, some trees and a telephone pole. Costs are increasing every year. Chairman Mooney mentioned that we have to insure the bank building every year and construction costs for rehab are very expensive. The building would need a roof, windows, doors, HVAC and handicap accessibility if it was rehabbed.

TA Jipson noted that the 2010 charette intended for the bank building to be demolished and the area turned into green space. After the charette, voters opted to purchase the bank building.

Selectman Ciampi asked if anyone studied the library expansion plans because it doesn't come this way. Selectman Lewandoski stated it will generate more traffic, cars and pedestrians.

Selectman O'Hara said he is always asking what the voters would want, but they want us to keep things but not spend any money on them. He was not on the Board when the charette and the bank purchase happened, but we have to deal with what we have right now. The timing is unfortunate, but the bank building is an eyesore. If we keep the building, there will not be any money to spend on it and it will continue to rot away.

Resident Laura Moore of Pine Gardens raised concerns about tax increases and residents on fixed incomes. Chairman Mooney noted that the Town portion of the tax bill supports fire, police and highway and is minimal compared to the school budget. Most of the tax bill is for the school and the Board has no control over it. Ms. Moore recommended putting the bank building demolition question on the ballot.

Resident Sharon Tremblay of Sargent Lake Road recommended brainstorming to get residents more involved and get information out. The Selectboard uses their own FaceBook account, the newspaper, the website, the newsletter email group and the sign at the Park & Ride for notices but are open to other suggestions. The Board has been very conservative about keeping costs down and it has hurt us. We need to keep our fire, police and DPW personnel and if the budget doesn't pass, we are not going to be able to provide some of those services. Selectman O'Hara mentioned that after the school budget was created, Canterbury voters showed up at the Deliberative Session and voted to add teachers back into the budget against the School Board's recommendation. Belmont was outvoted because people don't show up.

Resident Barbara Binette of Main Street said she voted to buy the bank building because she wanted Town Hall to move there. But now she would like to see if it could be made into a teen center. She is concerned that we don't maintain our buildings, but she would rather see us spend money to get into the Mill building than tearing down the bank building. Selectman O'Hara said we have been stuck in a default budget, so we don't do small repairs on buildings we don't use because we need to fund the buildings that are in use. It is poor timing, but the building is a nuisance, and we are liable for it.

Resident Tyson Morrill of Federal Street agreed that the bank building should be torn down.

There was additional discussion about the limited budget to maintain Town buildings, that the bank building has been compromised so it would not qualify for historic status, parking and making Center Street a two-way road.

Selectman Lewandoski made a motion to move forward with the demolition and cleanup of the bank building owned by the Town at 154 Main Street and accept the demo proposal and quote from Spears Brothers in an amount not to exceed $38,000 and an additional amount not to exceed $20,000 for abatement of hazardous material if said material is found after survey, with funds to come from the Municipal Facilities Capital Reserve Fund; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed (4-1). Selectman Ciampi voted against the motion because she does not want the building torn down.

Resident Laura Moore stated she disagreed with moving forward and requested it be put on the ballot for voters to decide. Selectman O'Hara responded that he is the biggest proponent of putting things in front of the voters but if we go to the voters for everything the Board would not be needed. The Board has permission to expend these funds.

Budget Committee Member Susan Roache asked about the reserve account and future requests for funding the account. Chairman Mooney suggested that it is important to fund capital reserve accounts, such as in the case of the recent unexpected water main break.

Selectman Lewandoski moved to accept the asbestos survey proposal from Accurate Environmental in an amount not to exceed $2,500 for the testing of asbestos at the bank building

with funds to come from the Environmental Contingency Fund; seconded by Selectman Pike. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

The motion could be amended later if there is asbestos found during the survey.

HB 1300 – School Tax Cap:

Board members received a copy of HB 1300 and highlights from an article about the school tax cap ballot item. The School may also do some publicity on it. It was signed into law by the governor and requires ballots on November 3rd ask a mandatory question about a school tax cap. It requires a 3/5 super majority in favor. The previous tax cap method required a warrant article but now every municipality in New Hampshire must ask the question in 2026 to be adopted for 2 years, and again in 2028 to be adopted for 2 years. The cap is only for administrative costs and not educational costs. Both Belmont and Canterbury will vote.

The Board will meet with the School at a future meeting. They did not attend the last meeting because they had not started their budget process.

Main Street – Water Main Break Update:

DPW Director Brian Jackes reported that he is still waiting on the final bills, but they were able to get some assistance from the City of Laconia with personnel and equipment for the most recent water main break on Gilmanton Road. Belmont has always tried to save money, and it would have been nice to have a few more shutoffs installed so that water could be kept on for more residents. Records show that line is only 15 years old but other municipalities have reported similar problems with pipe in that timeframe, so there may have been some defective pipe from the same manufacturer. DPW Director Jackes thanked Busby, the City of Laconia, the Fire Department, and the Police Department. He said that we don't have the type of equipment needed for that type of break. The Fire Department worked to get a donation from Coca-Cola for pallets of water in case residents were in need. We borrowed parts from Laconia. We have a good community around us.

Resident Tom Murphy asked about concerns with water and sewer stations being hacked. DPW Director Jackes said that we received an NHDES grant last year for the Overwatch Foundation so our stations are secure and cannot be compromised. There are fail safes in place and our drinking water will be safe.

Water & Sewer Ordinance and Rate Changes Discussion:

The Board received marked up copies of the Water and Sewer Ordinances. Draft language was provided for review before we hold a public hearing. The hearing will be scheduled for August 19th at 6 pm to accept ordinance updates and any necessary rate changes. The hearing will be publicly noticed.

DPW Director Jackes said the important part is the change to the unit charges and definitions. Some of it is housekeeping for NHDES updates. We have been enforcing a definition for "unit" without having an official definition. A unit charge will be for a single dwelling with kitchen and bath designed for living, or office space with a break room, etc. Executive Assistant

Colleen Akerman provided a list of the multi-units from a property card report and it was determined that over 50 properties are being billed incorrectly. Some will be upset about the change, but it will provide relief for single families and spread out the costs and keep the usage rates lower. Changes will also be made to fees for initial hookups and billing for costs of equipment with no upcharge. We are moving in the right direction, and this will help stabilize things. TA Jipson noted that the rates and fees will also be removed from the ordinance so that we do not have to readopt the ordinance every time there is a rate change. If the budget changes, rates will be adjusted. The Town is not making any money on this; it only costs the ratepayers what it costs the Town to run the system.

DPW Request to Purchase Dual Drum Roller from Capital Reserve Fund:

DPW Director Jackes said it is hard for him to spend money, but this drum roller is a need for the department. We don't have this size and the one we have is from the 1970s. This would be 2 and a 1/2 tons and could be used behind a grader, and it is small enough to do pavement patches without hiring a contractor. It is multi-use and ensures we keep roadways maintained because compaction is key. A new one is $76,000 but this one is only $31,000 with 358 hours. It would be used often. It doesn't have a full warranty, but this company stands behind their equipment. The Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund has $214,000 and will get an additional $60,000 this fall.

Selectman O'Hara commented that this will provide more and better service to the Town, it won't be a bad roller because we have worked with that company before and our mechanic has already looked at it. It will allow us to do more in-house and not rent or contract out or depend on the weather as much. DPW Director Jackes said it can be hauled with our existing trailers.

Selectman O'Hara asked about the Capital Reserve Fund. DPW Director Jackes said the fleet is new and in good shape and he doesn't anticipate any large expenses. The next big purchase will be a loader, and he intends to lease-purchase that as a budgeted item.

Selectman Ciampi moved to grant the expenditure of $31,517.70 from the Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund for the purchase of a 2020 RD24-100 Tandem Drum Asphalt Roller; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Ordinance Regulating Hawkers & Peddlers Update:

There have been some changes to NH laws that need to be addressed in the Hawkers & Peddlers Ordinance such as removing references to RSAs that no longer apply.

Selectman O'Hara moved to accept the recommended changes to the Ordinance Regulating Hawkers and Peddlers and re-adopt it as written; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Old Home Day Update:

TA Jipson provided an update because Parks & Recreation Director Danielle St. Onge is on a summer camp field trip. Old Home Day started at 7 am, with a parade at 1 pm, the chicken BBQ at the Fire Department in the afternoon, and fireworks in the evening. Thank you to Building &

Grounds and DPW for all of their help. This year's road race had more registrants, and Delta Dental was the big sponsor. There were over 50 daytime vendors and 10 evening vendors. There were a large number of participants for the parade and Atlas was back for the fireworks. Only one volunteer showed up for Old Home Day Committee meetings but there were some volunteers who worked the day of the event. Some activities could not be hosted because we did not have adequate volunteers. We are not skimping; more volunteers are needed.

Selectman O'Hara stated we are trying to separate the taxpayers from paying for Old Home Day. This year the Town only funded the fireworks. We want it to be an independent non-profit but a lot of volunteers are needed.

DPW Director Jackes will be sure that the retaining wall is cordoned off, and a safety barrier is provided.

A resident suggested the committee do more public outreach for assistance. It is hard because it has been posted everywhere. The Selectmen said they were at National Night Out for outreach, and they will be at Old Home Day mingling; just not in a booth.

It was the consensus of the Board to have Selectman Pike drive a convertible with candy in the trunk and the Selectmen would walk behind the car to hand out candy.

Other New Business:

Support Request from Lakes Region Planning Commission (LRPC):

LRPC has asked the Board to sign a letter of support for a New England Heat Pump Accelerator Grant. It will help developers compare costs and options, which is important considering Liberty Utilities' moratorium and rising costs for heating fuel. Town Planner Karen Santoro noted there is no cost to the Town, and we will provide a venue to host an educational session. It was the consensus of the Board to support and sign the NE Heat Pump Accelerator Grant letter.

National Night Out:

National Night Out was well attended and received, and it was our biggest year yet. Officer Somogyi works hard to bring this event together. Major Crimes has never attended a National Night Out before. We get to see community families and employees with their families. It gives first responders and the community a place to come together where they don't normally interact. It was a great success.

Selectman Ciampi suggested some changes to traffic and parking patterns due to someone almost getting hit. Resident Barbara Binette also had concerns about parking and the location of equipment and activities.

Old Business:

PlanNH – It Started with a Charette - Belmont:

TA Jipson reported on the PlanNH event about 1 and ½ weeks ago with a walk around the Village area. Belmont was their first charette in 1996. The information is on their website and

there are some copies at Town Hall. The walk included the Pavilion, the Mill, the Bandstand, the Gale School, Sargent Park, the Police Department and then the covered bridges. The evening ended at the TAP for a meet and greet. The people involved in the engineering and working on the charettes were in attendance. The engineer who designed the streetscape was excited to see how it came out. Woody Fogg was there, and Chairman Mooney mentioned that Linda Frawley was very active in the charettes. TA Jipson was happy with how much that was on the charette has been accomplished, including relocating the Bandstand, creating new green space, moving the Gale School, building the Pavilion and creating the pedestrian bridges for the trail.

Town Wide Notification System Update:

Executive Assistant Akerman proposed signing up for a free New Hampshire Emergency Notification System (NH-ENS) through the Department of Safey that allows emergency and non-emergency communications for residents who sign up for the service, or through databases provided by NH-ENS. Assigning a primary point of contact is the first step in the process.

Selectman Lewandoski made a motion to move forward with authorizing the Town to use the free NH-ENS (New Hampshire Emergency Notification System) for emergency and non-emergency notifications to Belmont residents and to appoint TA Alicia Jipson as the Primary Point of Contact; seconded by Selectman O'Hara. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

A resident suggested posting more information to the community FaceBook page but that is not the appropriate place for a municipality to make information available. There is a Belmont Board of Selectmen's FaceBook page called "Belmont NH Selectmen" where information is posted. A request was made to post Selectmen's meeting agendas to that FaceBook page.

It was also recommended that residents sign up for the Town's newsletter.

Apparel Impact Bin Donation Update:

At a previous meeting the Board supported looking at locations for Apparel Impact Donation bins. The organization's goal is to get people coming in and out of Town. The Town reached out to some private entities such as Lakes Region Casino, Belmont Storage, One Church and St. Joseph's Church to find out if they would host a bin. The bank parking lot is also a good location because there is room, it is visible and has a camera for security. The bins or sheds are custom made and they keep it clean with weekly check-ins. We have not heard back from any of the private entities yet. This is a different organization than the ones we typically see, and the Town will benefit by receiving free outfits for 10-20 people.

WRBP & Route 140 Forcemain Update:

The Phase One task order was received and reviewed by TA Jipson, the WRBP Advisory Board and our engineer, Underwood, and we sent corrections back to the State. They accepted and sent back the corrections, including allowing us to see the plans at 30/60/90% complete and having more input.

WRBP Transition to Regional Wastewater Authority Commission Update:

The Board previously supported establishing a commission to look into separating from the NHDES state run authority to a regional authority. The language of the RSA requires advisory committee approval to move forward. The State can't run the authority anymore and they are happy to give it back to the communities.

TA Jipson highlighted some of the points made in documentation provided to the Board in their packets with regards to ongoing issues with NHDES. There are concerns about current state management, including financial issues, asset management problems, and rising costs for communities.

WRBP Advisory Board Members are happy to meet with the Board to discuss the situation. Every community would be on the Board of Directors for the Regional Authority and have 100% say in the budget and projects; it would no longer be an advisory committee. Right now, we have no say even though we have very skilled people on the Board, including engineers and public works people. The Board of Directors would hire a company like Pennichuck the run the program and we would have more say and would not need to hire any staff. State budgeting is out of our control, and a regional authority would give us control to be steady instead of having huge spikes. The WRBP is over 60% of our Belmont Sewer budget. Selectman O'Hara has no issues with the transition; however, we will have some changes with state representatives this fall so we will need to wait until elections to garner further support. We have paid for the WRBP assets, so it is community money. The State will sell it to the regional authority for $1. Chairman Mooney had concerns that we are taking on an old system but this way we will have a direct say and it will benefit the Town and the ratepayers.

Selectman O'Hara moved that the Town of Belmont support the transition of the Winnipesaukee River Basin Program from the NH Department of Environmental Services to a member community managed regional wastewater authority owned and managed by the member communities; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (4-0-1). S Ciampi abstained because she does not have enough information to make informed decision.

Selectman O'Hara moved that the Town of Belmont authorize Selectman O'Hara to support the transition with any of the Town of Belmont's State representatives and Senators, and when it is under consideration by the Study Commission, the Legislature and the Governor; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

TA Jipson reviewed the early timeline for this process.

Other Old Business:

Reminder – August 7th National Purple Heart Day:

A flag has been provided for the Town to fly on August 7th for National Purple Heart Day. We are member community with signs on our incoming major highways.

Public Comment:

Resident Laura Moore asked what pushback the Town has on the Route 140 forcemain. The Board has been fighting this for years and some of our pushback has worked because they wanted to replace all of the line but now they are phasing it. We've received $2,000,000 in grants but the project will probably cost more than $10,000,000. The State does the work and we pay for it. The engineering for this project is estimated over $500,000 and the State doesn't want to allow us to see the plans until they are 90% complete but we want our engineer to review. They will allow our engineer see the plans and report back at certain timeframes.

BOS Future Agenda Items:

Selectman O'Hara requested a list of town-owned property with descriptions and the purpose for each property so that we can explore selling some of the parcels. TA Jipson reported that Land Use Technician Rod Cameron has already been working on this list. Departments and committees could weigh in on any up for consideration in case there is a future use for the parcel.

Board & Committee Reports: None

The Heritage Commission will host a military band at the Bandstand on Sunday, August 23rd at 2 pm in honor of our 250th celebration.

Next Meeting: August 19, 2026 @ 6:00 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 TC/TC Jennifer Cashman.

Chairman Ruth P. Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II c at 12:22 pm; seconded by Selectman Travis O'Hara. Roll Call 1: J. Pike – aye, M. Lewandoski – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, S. Ciampi – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

TC/TC Jennifer Cashman presented a list of properties in danger of being tax deeded. She has been working with owners on payment plans, and some payments have already been made to stop the tax deed process.

Tax deeds will be done on August 31st for anyone who has not made sufficient payments to remove their property from the tax deed list. Notices were sent on July 22nd and we used every means possible to reach out to owners. Park owners have also been contacted for any units up for deeding in a park, and some of those park owners will work with us if we take a unit by tax deed.

Selectman O'Hara left the meeting at 12:30 pm.

The Board reviewed some of the specific properties and the consensus was to continue moving forward with the tax deed process if sufficient payments are not made by August 31st.

No decisions/motions were made by the Board. TC/TC Cashman will present a final list at the next Selectmen's meeting for the Board to decide which properties to tax deed if sufficient payments have not been made before August 31st.

Selectman Pike moved to exit non-public session at 12:59 pm; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Roll Call 2: S. Ciampi – aye, T. O'Hara – aye, M. Lewandoski – aye, J. Pike – aye, R. Mooney – aye. Motion passed (5-0).

Adjournment:

Selectman Pike moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:00 pm; seconded by Selectman Lewandoski. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted By:

Colleen Akerman, Executive Assistant

Approved by the Board 08/19/2026:

Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman

Travis O'Hara, Vice Chairman

Jon Pike, Selectman

Sharon Ciampi, Selectman

Mark Lewandoski, Selectman