

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Town Hall Auditorium
Monday, April 11, 2011
7:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 7:04 pm by Chair Jones in the Town Hall Auditorium. Selectmen Firenze and Paolillo were present. Town Administrator Tom Younger was present.

QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

[There were none.]

ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

Naming Rights for Town of Belmont

Chair Jones began this topic by informing Board members that the School Department has also expressed an interest in this area as well. Mr. Younger noted that the Naming Rights conversation needs to be in the Policy Book that is being created. He noted that many things can be “named” and that in some towns, it has to go before Town Meeting for approval, but not in Belmont. The Board of Selectmen will decide who gets naming rights in Belmont for rooms, buildings, parks, etc. That which is named, he said, can be memorialized with or without remuneration. However, the Board will want a policy where remuneration is involved. Naming rights can be given to an organization who contributes money or to a philanthropic individual.

Mr. Younger noted that the funding can go toward building upkeep, for example. Selectman Firenze noted that the policy can state what happens to the funding (building upkeep or the operating budget). He suggested that Mr. Younger research this area more fully and come back to the Board with a proposal.

The Board discussed various types of sponsorships, e.g., corporate, honorary, “in memory of”, etc.

The Board agreed that this was an area that should be pursued, as the acquisition of new revenue was an important goal for the town.

ACTION BY CONSENT

Junk, Old Metals, and Secondhand Articles Licenses

CTC Gold Refinery, 5 Williston Road, Belmont

Ms. Class, appeared before the Board and spoke on behalf of the owner of CTC Gold Refinery (Mr. Yeghishyan, who was also present). She briefly explained how the refinery functions.

The Board moved: To approve the license requests of the CTC Gold Refinery.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Fancy That, 4 Trapelo Road, Belmont
A. Sacca Junk, 51-53 Baker Street, Belmont
As Tyme Goes By, 97 Trapelo Road, Belmont
Marcou Jewelers, 46 Leonard Street, Belmont
Stories, Inc., 89A Trapelo Road, Belmont

The Board moved: To approve the license requests of the establishments listed above.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

ACTION BY WRITING

Approval of Belmont Town Day – Saturday, May 21, 2011

The Board moved: To approve Town Day for the date of Saturday, May 21, 2011.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Common Victualler License and Vote – Comella’s, 43 Leonard Street

The Board moved: To approve the license request noted above for Comella’s.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Committee Term Limit Discussion and Possible Vote

Mr. Younger based this policy on other communities, with Belmont’s particularities in mind. He said potential term limits need to be clearly stated in the town’s Policy Book – e.g., how it is done, the appropriate deadline, and the process by which the Board will vote on committee appointments. Mr. Younger reviewed the specific term limits that would be stated as policy.

Selectman Firenze thought that it’s possible that the term limitations are too specific and that perhaps more general guidelines are required. He said that the specific limits needed will vary depending on the committee, and that flexibility would be required. Selectman Paolillo said that he felt there was sufficient discretionary language in the policy.

Mr. Younger suggested that the Board fine-tune the wording and send it to him.

National Grid Petition MN-#144-8502-768464 for Country Club Lane

Mr. Dennis Regan, from National Grid, appeared before the Board to discuss the petition requested for 41 Country Club Lane. This would involve 30 feet of new gas main to install gas service for this residence.

The Board moved: To approve the petition noted above.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

FY12 Budget Discussion

Chair Jones began by outlining some of the changes to the revenue picture. He noted that more state aid would be available, but that the state aid specifics will not be confirmed until later in the week. He reviewed other sources of funding for the schools (various grants). He said he was pleased by the identification of additional funds to help close the gap in the school's budget. He said, though, that even \$2M more in funding, may not be enough funding to cover what is needed for all the programs, salaries, etc. He said the entire community (not just parents) would need to stand behind any override attempt. Selectman Paolillo asked for a total additional revenue amount. Chair Jones said it totals about \$1M. But, there is still a \$1M gap from the level service to the "revised" available revenue.

Mr. Younger said that state aid looks higher than expected based on the state's March revenues and based on historical trends. It could be a minimum of \$330K in additional funds.

The Board discussed possible state revenue scenarios, as well as the impact of this on the school and town budgets. Chair Jones reviewed the revenue changes to the "cuts/adds" budget sheet: retiree health care savings, overlay, electricity. However, the following are not yet reflected on the "cuts/adds" sheet: solid waste and state aid.

Mr. Younger reviewed that the overall budget (town and schools) is still \$1.6M under level services. Selectman Paolillo requested more specific budget numbers from the Town Accountant to review.

Budget Discussion

Mr. Demetri Moustakas, from Pleasant Street, asked if the budget numbers could be published on the town's website. Chair Jones replied yes.

Chair Jones said an override decision will need to be made in the next two weeks or so in order that if an override is put on the ballot, it is not too late in June.

Ms. Debbie Hartman asked about when teacher contract negotiations would be known. Chair Jones said that it is difficult to know this.

Ms. Ellen Schrieber said she is concerned about the trend in the schools for cuts. She said she is concerned that cutting art will be pitted against cutting AP courses. She said an override will address the deep cuts. She said the schools need to be put in better shape and that some past cuts need to be restored. The present school system is vulnerable from many years of previous cuts. The system is broken; it needs to be brought back to whole.

Mr. Steve Evans asked: what happens next? What happens with the gap? Chair Jones said an override decision would be made by April 25 and that he hopes to work with the SPED budget as it is much increased. He wondered if the numbers are estimated too high. Selectman Paolillo said he appreciates that more revenue is needed but that the budgets need to stop bleeding first. He said he wants to understand the budget numbers better. He also added that there is not a lot of support in the community for an override this year, but that next year might be the better year. Selectman Firenze said that he does not support an override for this year and that if it doesn't pass, it would be the third straight defeat, and that would be detrimental. He said that the right to ask residents for more money needs to be earned.

Ms. Poole, Louise Road, asked about the consequences of a failed override. Selectman Firenze replied that the Moody AAA rating would be in jeopardy. He also noted that 25% of the population lives on a fixed income and cannot afford new taxes.

A student (BHS sophomore) asked Selectman Firenze when an override would be supported. Selectman Firenze said when the town continues to take the steps to earn an override. There are competing interests in town that are only looking out for their own best interests, he said. He wants the best interest overall in Belmont to be analyzed.

Mr. Greg Stone asked: why would next year be any different than this year with regard to an override? Selectman Firenze replied that the consolidation pieces would have finally been implemented that that is something concrete that could be pointed to. If we show we are making the right decisions, he said, we would be trusted in asking for more money. Selectman Paolillo said that there is a palpable division in town and that the budget process needs to be unified. The budget gaps are really one gap.

Ms. Sandra Rosenblum said that she is interested in maintaining real estate values and is concerned that the schools need support now.

Ms. Ellen Schrieber noted that certain claims can be made now, e.g., town/school consolidation. There is still a one million gap – what will be done? Selectman Firenze replied that the school has to learn to live within its means. Chair Jones said it would be helpful to know what another million dollars get at the school level?

SC Chair Graham commented that an additional \$500K in funding constitutes 8-10 employees.

Mr. Moustakas, Pleasant Street, said he is shocked at the impact of this budget at the high school level, as these cuts will impact the future preparation of kids. Chair Jones said he would like to see the additional school funding to be announced, and that what will be put back in be announced.

Superintendent Entwistle noted that the SPED budget is not a “high guess”, but that SPED is increasing rapidly. Regarding the numbers, there is a \$2M gap in what is available and what is needed. As a result, positions will be reduced (up to 40). The level services budget is already reduced and this has had a severe impact on the school system. Belmont is on the tipping point of a disaster.

The Board discussed SPED increases and the impact of this on the budget.

Recess/Comella

The Board took a 10-minute recess.

Mr. John Paul Comella, from Comella’s Restaurant, appeared briefly before the Board and said that the restaurant will be opening within seven days. The Board welcomed him to Belmont.

Committee Appointments

Human Rights Commission (HRC)

The Board moved: To appoint Ms. Nan Donald and Ms. Regina O’Brien to the HRC. The motion passed (2-1).

Selectman Firenze said that the HRC has reached a point where it is no longer necessary in town.

Belmont Representative to the Regional Transportation Advisory Council for the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

The Board moved: To appoint Mr. Robert McGaw to the Regional Transportation Advisory Council for the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Warrant Articles

The Board discussed scheduling a meeting to vote on the Warrant Articles. The date of Wednesday, April 20 at 6:00 p.m. (hopefully at the CMS) was put forth (i.e., prior to the Warrant Committee meeting that evening).

Goals and Objectives Update

Mr. Younger reviewed and updated several of the goals and objectives, including the parcels of town-owned land for sale, the installation of the smart meters near the Lion's Club, controlling non-discretionary costs, and regionalization updates.

The Board then discussed the Warrant Article that was to create a revolving account to hold the ambulance increase fees and would be used for fire department expenditures. The WC, noted Chair Jones, had concerns about this article. The Board agreed to discuss this article at a later time.

Also highlighted was the promotion of economic development, Belmont Center traffic routes, and improved communications.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Younger reported on the following items:

- The Trapelo Road project is 17th in the state's queue.
- WBC – Mr. Barrel will update the Board in May.
- Unfunded mandates were discussed with Rep. Brownsberger on April 1.
- Underwood Pool – there is an attempt to make the pool cost neutral.
- The Winn Brook tennis courts go out to bid soon.
- In touch with Watertown regarding removing the poles on the electric buses.
- In touch with the Vets regarding the hanging of signs.
- There may be federal (FEMA) reimbursement for the severe winter storm in January. The town could receive (if approved) \$82K for the FY12 budget (but not for this fiscal year).
- The health balance trust is currently over \$5M.
- The Fire Department was thanked by a resident for superb service

OTHER

Selectman Firenze Other:

- An MBTA budget meeting was held to discuss its operating deficit.
 - The MMA met on April 5 regarding engineering contracts, procurement, etc.
 - The Annual Report – the review process needs to move forward.

Selectman Firenze than asked Selectman Paolillo for a summary of his recent meeting with the Library Trustees.

Selectman Paolillo summarized that there are SC concerns that remain regarding the field that will be taken away, which could impact future MSBA reimbursement, accreditation, and the softball and practice space. Selectman Paolillo said that the field that will be

taken will need to be replaced, somewhere in town. Selectman Firenze said he is frustrated because, if the school is made whole, it should be able to live with this proposal.

The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:51 p.m.

Thomas G. Younger, Town Administrator