

MINUTES
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DECEMBER 13, 2004
REGULAR SESSION

Call to Order

The Board of Selectmen convened in regular session at 6:30 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of Town Hall. All members were in attendance.

Questions from Town Residents

Mr. Richard Omohundro and a few other residents commented on the holiday decorations throughout the Town Center. While supportive of the representation of various religious faiths in these decorations, he specifically inquired about the lack of Christian symbols and decorations.

The Board moved: to assist Mr. Omohundro in identifying those responsible for the holiday decorations in order that Mr. Omohundro can communicate his concerns to the appropriate individuals.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Action by Appointment

Discussion of Collective Bargaining (Executive Session)

Discussion of Negotiations with Non-Union Personnel (Executive Session)

The Board moved: to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing strategy related to collective bargaining and negotiations with non-union personnel; and further that the Board shall return to open session at approximately 7:30 p.m.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0), by roll call vote.

The Board of Selectmen returned to open session at 7:25 p.m.

The Board of Selectmen moved: to approve the BPSOA, IAFF and AFSCME Union contracts for fiscal years 2005-2007.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board convened as Municipal Light Board.

The Board moved: to approve the IBEW contract.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Dr. Solomon announced the upcoming resignation of Assistant Town Administrator Joyce Munro who will be relocating to North Carolina in the spring. Joyce Munro's last day working for the Town will be January 10, 2005.

Dr. Solomon announced that Selectman Firenze recommended Rebecca Vose temporarily serve as Acting Assistant Town Administrator upon Ms. Munro's departure and further thanked Joyce Munro for her five years of service and contributions to the Town.

Board of Assessors re: Tax Classification Hearing

The Board of Assessors presented before the Board their tax rate recommendation for FY2005 as well as other matters.

The Board moved: to set the tax classification at 1.0 to retain a consistent tax rate for both residential and commercial properties.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: to not adopt a residential exemption at this time.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: to approve the proposed tax rate of \$10.69 per thousand for Fiscal Year 2005.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Fire Chief re: Request to Fill Firefighter Vacancy

Fire Chief Frizzell appeared before the Board to discuss his need to fill two firefighter vacancies.

The Board moved: to approve Chief Frizzell's request to fill two firefighter vacancies.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Library Director re: Request to Fill Circulation Vacancy

Library Director Maureen Connors appeared before the Board to discuss her need to fill a 25-hour library assistant position vacancy.

The Board moved: to approve the Library Director's request to fill a 25-hour library assistant position vacancy as documented in her memorandum dated December 9, 2004.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Electricity Supply Study Committee re: Committee Report and Recommendations

The Belmont Electricity Study Committee appeared before the Board of Selectmen to present and discuss its report and recommendations on the future of Retail Choice in Belmont.

The Board voiced its general support for the recommendations made by the Committee as articulated in its Report and Recommendations dated December 6, 2004, and summarized below:

1. Belmont should not pursue retail choice at this time.
2. The Belmont Municipal Light Department should monitor developments in the markets for indications that the retail choice questions should be revisited.
3. The Belmont Municipal Light Department should proceed with proper planner and procurement of power supply for the entire community's needs. The status of retail choice issues like the state of the market should be revisited as the Department plans for its new contract in 2006.
4. A new, single purpose Light Board should be formed to provide direction and governance consistent with the current risks in power supply and related financial markets.

The Board of Selectmen requested that the Electricity Study Supply Committee develop a draft charge for a new Belmont Municipal Light Advisory Board for the Board's consideration in mid-January 2005.

Resident re: Marlboro Street Petition

Marlboro Street residents appeared before the Board to discuss Marlboro Street traffic restrictions and to discuss a recent neighborhood petition initiated by residents Stephen and Stephanie Kelly. Traffic Advisory Committee Chair and Vice-Chair and members of the Police Department also attended.

TAC Chair Mary-Jo Frisoli expressed her desire to revisit her recommendation relative to the existing traffic restriction sign on Marlboro Street.

The Board of Selectmen expressed its support towards any decision the Traffic Advisory Committee is prepared to make on this issue.

The Board moved: to refer this matter to the Traffic Advisory Committee for its final disposition.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Transition Period Administrative Issues

There was none.

Action by Consent

Correspondence re: Revised Board of Selectmen's Schedule

The Board of Selectmen discussed revisions to its existing meeting schedule for December 2004.

The Board moved: to cancel its scheduled sessions of December 30, 2004 and January 3, 2005 and to schedule two new sessions on December 28 at 3:00pm and 7:00pm.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Other

A few Baker Street residents shared with the Board their growing concern about ongoing gas leaks on Baker Street in spite of numerous conversations they've had with Keyspan.

The Board moved: to send a letter, under the Board of Selectmen's signature, to the President of Keyspan to communicate this problem and to seek remediation of the gas pipe leakage along this roadway.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board commented on the 2004 annual water and sewer rates as recently published by the Massachusetts Water Advisory Board and expressed concern about Belmont's high rates relative to the other communities. The Board requested the Water Advisory Board to provide insight as to the factors contributing to these high rates.

The regular session adjourned at 9:23 pm.

Dr. Paul Solomon, Chair
Board of Selectmen