

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MARCH 1, 2003
SPECIAL BUDGET SESSION**

The Board of Selectmen met in a special budget session on Saturday, March 1, 2003 at 9:00 AM in the Chenery Middle School. All members were in attendance.

The Town Administrator presented his analysis of the Governor's budget as it relates to state aid, and reviewed an update of the overall budget projects.

The School Committee and School Superintendent presented information on their FY 2004 school budget proposal.

There was substantial discussion and debate among the participants and the public.

The Board discussed generally the allocation of Town resources for the FY 2004 school budget. Various indicators, including "level services", restoration of reduced positions, etc. was identified for discussion.

The issue of additional health insurance projections for the school budget was discussed.

It appeared that there was consensus in the Board to allocate a minimum of \$29,615,000.

Mr. Solomon moved that the Board support an FY 2004 budget level of \$29,615,000.

Mr. Brownsberger expressed support for this motion and indicated support for additional budget capacity to the capital budget.

Ms. Mahoney expressed some reservations about the expectations of the school budget given the labor obligations.

Mr. Solomon addressed the timing and need for a vote at this time, particularly given the needs for municipal budgets and the capital budget.

It was determined that a formal vote would not be taken at this time.

The Board included its discussion about the school budget.

Mr. Brownsberger addressed the issue of the Chief of Police position in the event the position is removed from civil service. He recommended the Board commit to hiring from within the department at this time but is opposed to any policy that would limit the Town's discretion in the future. He identified the political support of the Superior Officer's union for the civil service question is an important factor in this proposal.

MOVED: That, in the event the voters of Belmont act to remove the position of Chief of Police from civil service protection, the Board of Selectmen shall limit its selection of the next permanent Chief to qualified candidates from within the ranks of the Belmont Police Department, provided that there are at least three qualified candidates from the ranks of lieutenant and captain. Further, the Board shall enter into an employment agreement with the new Chief that governs the terms and conditions of employment including, but not limited to, the ability to return to his/her former civil service rank upon termination of the contract in good standing. Finally, the Board expresses its preference that future appointments to the Chief of Police position be made from within the ranks of the Belmont Police Department unless, in the judgment of a future Board, the Town and the Department would be better served by hiring from outside the department.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Special Budget Session adjourned at approximately am/pm.

Melvin A. Kleckner, Town Administrator
Clerk, Board of Selectmen