

**APPROVED BY
SELECT BOARD**

June 7, 2023

**Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
REGULAR SESSION
of the
SELECT BOARD
June 1, 2023**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: June 13, 2023
TIME: 8:39 AM

To view the recording of the meeting, please click [HERE](#).

Call to Order: Mr. Epstein called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Select Board Members	Present	Staff Members	
Mark Paolillo, Chair	Yes	Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator	Yes
Roy Epstein Vice Chair	Yes	Jay Marcotte, DPW Director	Remote
Elizabeth Dionne, Member	Yes	Brandon Fitts, Recreation Director	Remote

Public Input Session on the Future Operations of the New Belmont Rink and Sports Facility,

Mr. Epstein provided the background and benefits of the new facility and said input from the public on desired program offerings is needed. He shared a list of potential uses and the services the facility will provide.

Mr. Epstein then reviewed the possible alternative operational models for the facility, including continued managed by the Town. He outlined some of the components and questions of the rink being operated by the Town or by a 3rd party vendor.

Mr. Epstein said there is a year to a year and a half to determine a management structure for the facility.

Matt Taylor, Precinct 1, said he has thought about how to manage this facility and shared some of the messages he has seen around what the facility will provide to the residents. He said he feels it should be run by the Town rather than allowing a 3rd party to operate it. He expressed his hopes for the facility to bring people together.

Mr. Epstein said it is not out of the question for groups to use the facility and cover the costs of operating the rink. He went on to explain his views and concerns on this.

Ms. Garvin explained that staff is studying various models for operating the rink, and shared some of the information-gathering that has been done so far. She outlined some of the pros and cons of both models, and said that Belmont will need to decide what it wants.

Mr. Epstein suggested that potential vendors present to the Board before the bidding process. Ms. Garvin said that is possible, but it will have to be well structured. There was a discussion of this suggestion.

Ms. Dionne shared her views and concerns on using a 3rd party, especially how prioritizing profit can skew decision-making for what the voters intended to be a community asset.

Ms. Garvin spoke about the Town's role is to provide services, and how this facility might fit into this structure.

There was a discussion of what the Board and Ms. Garvin are looking for from the facility.

Mr. Epstein said issues like operating hours need to be addressed, especially due to the early and late hours of hockey practices.

Mr. Paolillo joined the meeting at this time (7:20pm).

Ms. Garvin said issues such as operating hours would need to be decided by the Select Board.

There was a discussion of the pros and cons of each model, and the possibility of mixing the models (contracting out some services while the Town remains as manager).

In answer to a question by Ms. Dionne, Ms. Garvin explained the structures of Town management models she has seen at other rinks.

There was a discussion of the DCR-built rink in Arlington, the Watertown rink, and the Stoneham rink with Mr. Fitts and Mr. Marcotte providing details.

Mr. Paolillo asked how the programs are managed at a year-round rink, and Ms. Garvin shared what she had learned, which was discussed.

There was a discussion of staffing that would be needed for the Town to run the rink.

Ms. Dionne asked if there was any sense of demand from outside groups, and Ms. Garvin said it really depends on the Rink Manager that is hired to determine and influence this. She then explained why this role is so important.

Ms. Dionne asked why there might not be ice for 4 months each year. Ms. Garvin said it's about demand for the facility. Mr. Marcotte said Watertown and other rinks shut down for the summer because the cost for summer electricity was so high. There was a discussion of year-round ice.

AnnMarie Mahoney, Rink Building Committee, said the committee talked about year-round ice and the expense always comes up. She asked if summer activities would be under the Rink Manager or Recreation, and Ms. Garvin said it would be the Rink Manager working with Recreation.

There was a discussion of how to get input from the various stakeholders.

Mr. Fitts said he believes there will be a lot of demand, and having a Rink Manager available will help navigate this issue. This was discussed.

The meeting returned to the use of the rink during the summer and the expense of ice during that time. It remains an open question whether the facility will operate during the summer, and whether summer operation would be skating or non-ice activities.

There was a discussion of concessions and skate rental, and how those services need to be managed.

Matt Taylor said there is a shortage of summer camps in the area, which can be a challenge for families. There is a lot of interest in sports camps, and he thinks there will be demand for the rink facility during the summer.

Ms. Garvin said she would like to continue with her research and then report to the Board in the fall.

Ms. Dionne pointed out that the facility will have solar, and that might influence the issue of year-round ice.

There was a discussion of next steps including establishing a gift fund and other programs to help those who struggle with the expense of skating and other recreation programs.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting of the Belmont Select Board Committee, and the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary