

Approved by Select Board:
September 28, 2023

**Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
REGULAR SESSION
of the
SELECT BOARD
September 18, 2023**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: October 10, 2023
TIME: 8:59 AM

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

Call to Order: Mr. Epstein called the meeting to order at 7:01pm.

Select Board Members	Present	Staff Members	
Roy Epstein, Chair	Yes	Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator	Yes
Elizabeth Dionne, Vice-Chair	Yes	Jennifer Hewitt, ATA/Finance Director	Yes
Mark Paolillo, Member	Yes	Chris Ryan, Town Planner & Director of Planning and Building	Yes
Others Present		Glenn Clancy, Town Engineer	Yes
Dante Muzzioli	Yes	Jay Marcotte, DPW Director	Yes
Ellen Schreiber	Yes	James MacIsaac, Chief of Police	Remote
Kerry Morris, Comcast	Remote	Jeff Hansell, Belmont Media Center	Yes
Jennifer Zoppo, Stantec Stormwater Consultant	Remote	Susan Peghiny, Recording Secretary	Remote
Bill August, Attorney, August & Epstein	Remote	Kelli Hill, HR Director	Remote
Mark Carthy, Cable TV Advisory Committee	Yes	Others Present	
Jonathan Birge, Cable TV Advisory Committee	Remote	Elisabeth and Graham Allison, Donors	Yes
Chester Messer, Cable TV Advisory Committee	Remote	Paul Morgan, Family Bike Ride Organizer	Yes

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS. Chair Epstein made the following announcements:

- Public Input Session on Grove Street Improvements, 7:00 PM, September 21, 2023
- Select Board - Public Input Session on the FY2025 Budget, 7:00 PM, September 28, 2023

COMMENTS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

- Joan Horgan, Wiley Road, explained that the Hope Welcome Circle is sponsoring families from Ukraine and held a fundraising event which required a PA system. She thanked Jeff Hansell and his assistant from the Belmont Media Center for attending the event and running the sound system, and for waiving the fee and donating his and his assistant's time to help the cause. Mr. Epstein praised the work of Mr. Hansell and Belmont Media Center.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT.

- Town Administrator's Bulletin: Ms. Garvin provided a summary of the contents of the current bulletin.
- Update on status of green space in front of the Underwood Pool: Ms. Garvin said the Library Building Committee asked the Town what they wanted done to the green space once construction is complete, and Ms. Garvin asked that it be returned to its original condition.
- Update on High School Debt Summary: Ms. Hewitt provided a detailed update, as requested. There was a discussion of the debt following Ms. Hewitt's presentation. Ms. Dionne emphasized that the potential override has been expected for several years.
- Update on Rink Public Input Session, September 14: Ms. Garvin outlined what happened at the session. There was a discussion of next steps and timing.
- Update on Family Campout at Rock Meadow: Ms. Garvin said the campout was last Friday and had 125 people in attendance, and she expects there will be another campout next year.

PUBLIC HEARING – Storm Water Management and Erosion

Mr. Epstein opened the public hearing.

Mr. Clancy read the bylaw regarding updating bylaws and rules & regulations. He then provided a history of the Storm Water Bylaw and updates that have been made to it.

Ms. Zoppo explained why there is a need for revisions to the rules & regulations.

Mr. Paolillo asked if Belmont would be compliant with current EPA regulations if these changes are approved. Mr. Clancy explained that the Town is already compliant, but these recommended changes will allow the Town to keep up with the EPA's regular changes to the regulations. There was a discussion of what the new Rules & Regulations will accomplish.

Mr. Epstein asked if the fees outlined are adequate, and how they are determined. Mr. Clancy explained that they are based on what it would probably cost for staff to do the hookups. He said he believes the fees reflect the costs. [missing something here]

Mr. Epstein closed the public hearing.

A Motion was made to adopt the Rules & Regulations as presented by Mr. Clancy. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

PUBLIC HEARING & Joint Session with Cable TV Advisory Committee – Comcast Cable Television License Renewal

Mr. Epstein opened the public hearing.

Mr. Carthy called the Cable TV Advisory Committee to order at 7:31pm. Present were Michael Carthy, Jonathan Birge, and Chester Messer.

Mr. Epstein read a statement regarding the requirements for the license renewal.

Ms. Morris expressed her pleasure to be attending to hear about the needs and wishes of the community.

Anne Mahon thanked Comcast for providing funding and community television and praised the work of BMC

Kathryn Bonfiglio also thanked Comcast for their contributions to the community.

Paul Joy spoke about Mr. Hansell and Belmont Media being a tremendous asset and encouraged continuation of the partnership.

Joan Horgan asked that her comments during the Public Comment portion of this meeting about Belmont Media be included in the public hearing record.

Ellen Schreiber also thanked Comcast for helping to provide the important services in Belmont. She also spoke about Belmont Media's work with students.

Ms. Dionne acknowledged the Belmontonian and the Belmont Voice for their work in sharing information with residents.

Angus Abercrombie spoke about the importance of the archives and thanked Belmont Media for their work.

Ned Snow said his son is a communications major and interned with Belmont Media. He spoke about his son's experience during the internship.

David DeStefano, Fire Chief, spoke about Belmont Media's important role in sharing information from his department.

Mr. Paolillo asked if the Cable TV Advisory Committee has any issues with Comcast's service. Mr. Carthy said there was nothing major and provided some examples of Comcast's good work.

Mr. Carthy explained that public comment will be accepted until October 2, 2023, and read a statement about the process for renewing the license.

Mr. August thanked the Committee, the Select Board, and the Town Administrator's team for their work and organization.

Mr. Carthy outlined the next steps that will create a recommendation for the Select Board.

Ralph Jones, Treasurer of BMC, outlined the report created to consider future plans for the BMC. He then shared a slideshow of the history of the BMC and the service it has provided over the years. He also spoke about the dedication and work of the BMC staff and outlined their accomplishments in the past year. He discussed the work BMC did during the Covid19 pandemic, and the collaborations it has with other departments and organizations. He then explained the challenges being faced by the BMC and how they are being addressed.

Mr. Hansell outlined the status of the proposed legislation and shared a video of supporters of BMC.

There was a discussion of next steps and timing.

Mr. Carthy moved to adjourn the meeting of the Cable TV Advisory Committee. The motion passed 2-0 by a roll call vote, with Mr. Messer having left the meeting.

A Motion was made to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Recognition of work done by D. Muzzioli Associates at Joey's Park

Mr. Epstein spoke about the work that was done by Mr. Muzzioli and his team at Joey's Park, and his contributions to Belmont.

Mr. Muzzioli outlined the work that was done at Joey's Park and his commitment to the park.

Ms. Dionne thanked Mr. Muzzioli for his work, and also acknowledged Ellen Schreiber for her contributions to the effort.

Mr. Paolillo also thanked Mr. Muzzioli for the work on the park, and recognized Ellen Schreiber for her role.

There was a discussion of the success of the park.

Ms. Schreiber thanked Mr. Muzzioli for his work and announced that the 10th Anniversary of the park is coming up.

Discussion and possible vote to accept donation in the amount of \$9,525.00 from Elisabeth and Graham Allison for the purchase and training of a service dog for the Belmont Police Department

Ms. Allison explained that the purpose of the comfort dog, which will be a Labrador, is to create a less stressful and more welcoming environment at the police station.

Ms. Dionne thanked the Allisons for their contribution and spoke about her experiences with service dogs and their level of impact.

Chief MacIsaac thanked the Allisons for the donation and spoke about the history of this type of program. He then explained how the dog would be used in the community as well as in the police station.

Mr. Paolillo also thanked the Allisons and expressed his pleasure at the addition of the dog.

A Motion was made to accept the donation of \$9,525.00 from Elisabeth and Graham Allison for the purchase and training of a service dog for the Belmont Police Department. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Reorganization of the Office of Community Development to the Office of Planning and Building

Mr. Clancy introduced Mr. Ryan as the new Town Planner. Members of the Board welcomed Mr. Ryan and Mr. Ryan spoke about his hopes for the role. Mr. Clancy spoke about Mr. Ryan's credentials and how he is looking forward to working with him.

Mr. Clancy outlined the issues he encountered trying to hire personnel and provide services. He spoke about the importance of the Director and Assistant Director of Director of the Planning and Building Department roles as well as his role, and how these concerns led him to consider a reorganization of the department.

Mr. Clancy explained that he could have let the issue “ride” or begin creating a succession plan but decided to be more proactive, and how he went about creating a recommendation. He outlined the structure that he is recommending:

- Director of the Office of Planning & Building
- Maintain the role of Town Engineer
- Create an Engineering Department within the Department of Public Works.
- Eliminate the Office of Community Development.

Mr. Paolillo asked if the positions are filled. Mr. Clancy said Planning & Building is fully staffed but there are openings in the Engineering Department.

There was a discussion of the recommendation and how it would work, and Mr. Clancy clarified which services various employees would provide.

Ms. Dionne asked if someone in this new organization could liaise with local businesses, and Mr. Clancy said that although this would no longer be his department, he outlined how this might happen if certain responsibilities are removed from the staff planner.

Mr. Clancy said he would still be leading the Community Path effort as it is an engineering issue. He then shared the open positions in the Engineering Department and how those roles would work. There was a discussion of this and the overall understaffing of the Town and succession planning.

Mr. Marcotte asked a question about budgeting which was not audible on the recording. This prompted a discussion of the budget.

There was a discussion of the various impacts and questions about this reorganization.

Mr. Clancy said he wants to be clear that he has no plan to retire anytime soon, and he is not being forced out by the Town Administrator as was rumored on social media. There was a brief discussion of the issue of comments on social media.

Discussion and possible vote to award Pequossette (PQ) Park Basketball Court Renovation contract to Cataldo, Inc., Littleton, MA, in the amount of \$168,600.00

Mr. Marcotte explained that there was only one bid for this job, why this level of funding is being requested, and reviewed the total funding plan. There was a discussion of the bid process and the timing for the project.

There were questions and discussion of the funding for the entire project.

A Motion was made to award Pequossette Park Basketball Court Renovation contract to Cataldo, Inc., Littleton, MA, in the amount of \$168,600. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

FY2025 Budget Discussion

Ms. Garvin outlined the proposed calendar for the upcoming budget process. Mr. Epstein asked if there was a page on the website about the budget override, and Ms. Garvin explained when and how that would happen.

There was a discussion of the budget and override processes and to communicate the schedule and issues.

Open Special Town Meeting Warrant scheduled for November 6, 2023

Ms. Garvin reviewed the current proposed list of Warrant Articles for the Special Town Meeting, which were discussed.

A motion was made to refer any possible amendment of the zoning bylaw for Section 4.1, Section 3.3, and Section 6 of the Belmont Zoning Bylaws to the Planning Board. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

A Motion was made to open the Special Town Meeting Warrant on September 19, 2023 at 8:00am and close it on September 25, 2023 at 5:00pm. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Discussion and possible vote to approve a new Common Victualler license for Teddy's Kitchen, 462 Common Street

A Motion was made to approve a new Common Victualler license for Teddy's Kitchen, 462 Common Street. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Discussion and possible vote to approve one day liquor license (beer and wine only) for a private event at the Beech Street Center, September 23, 2023 from 6:00 PM to 11:00 PM

A Motion was made to approve one day liquor license (beer and wine only) for a private event at the Beech Street Center, September 23, 2023 from 6:00 PM to 11:00 PM. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Discussion and possible vote to approve Family Bike Ride Halloween event for Sunday, October 22, from 10:40 AM to 12:20 PM

Mr. Morgan explained the details of the Halloween event. There was a discussion of the rain date and possible conflict with another event in town, and Ms. Garvin explained that after speaking with the Police and Recreation departments there is no expectation of a conflict. There was a discussion of the details of the event including police details.

There was a discussion of the event and route.

Jarrold Goentzel of the Friends of the Belmont Community Path spoke about the group's enthusiasm for the event.

A Motion was made to approve the Family Bike Ride Halloween event for Sunday, October 22, with a rain date of October 29, 2023 from 10:15 AM to 12:20 PM. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Discussion and possible vote to accept committee resignations:

- a. **Youth Commission – Zhenzhen Zhang:** *A Motion was made to accept the resignation of Zhenzhen Zhang from the Youth Commission. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.*
- b. **Youth Commission – Chris Bauge:** *A Motion was made to accept the resignation of Chris Bauge from the Youth Commission. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.*
- c. **Shade Tree Committee – Christine Arthur:** *A Motion was made to accept the resignation of Christine Arthur from the Shade Tree Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.*
- d. **Recreation Commission – Joshua Gould:** *A Motion was made to accept the resignation of Joshua Gould from the Recreation Commission. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.*

Discussion and possible vote on committee appointments and reappointments:

- a. **Education Scholarship Committee**

Zhenzhen Sun: *A Motion was made to reappoint Zhenzhen Sun to the Education Scholarship Committee for a three-year term to expire June 30, 2026. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.*

Aurora Sanfeliz: *A Motion was made to appoint Aurora Sanfeliz to the Education Scholarship Committee for a three-year term to expire June 30, 2026. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.*

- b. **Transportation Advisory Committee**

David Coleman: A Motion was made to reappoint David Coleman to the Transportation Advisory Committee for a two-year term to expire June 30, 2025. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Ken Lind: A Motion was made to reappoint Ken Lind to the Transportation Advisory Committee for a two-year term to expire June 30, 2025. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Jeffrey Roth: A Motion was made to reappoint Jeffrey Roth to the Transportation Advisory Committee for a two-year term to expire June 30, 2025. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Mr. Epstein explained that he had delayed this next appointment in the hope that more candidates would apply, which is what happened. He then explained why he supports the appointment of Katherine Baratta. There was a discussion of Ms. Baratta's qualifications.

Katherine Baratta: A Motion was made to appoint Kathrine Baratta to the Transportation Advisory Committee for a one-year term to expire June 30, 2024. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Discussion and possible vote to approve advance of funds in lieu of borrowing for the skating rink.

Ms. Hewitt explained that this request is being made because the Rink Project is progressing quickly and needs funds temporarily prior to the completion of borrowing in order to continue moving forward. She reviewed the overall funding structure for the project, which was discussed.

A Motion was made to approve the advance of funds in the amount of \$4,358,000.00 in lieu of borrowing for the Skating Rink. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A Motion was made to enter Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel; Fire Chief and Police Union. The Select Board will return to Open Session. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously 3-0 by a roll call vote.

The Select Board went into Executive Session at 8:48pm

A motion was made to return to Open Session. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously 3-0 by a roll call vote.

The Select Board returned to Open Session at 10:40pm.

Discussion and possible vote to ratify contract for Fire Chief

Mr. Epstein summarized the contract discussions for Chief MacIsaac explaining that his new salary will be \$180,000 starting July 1, 2024 and will run through March of 2027.

Ms. Hill outlined the other details of the new contract with Chief MacIsaac.

Ms. Dionne commented that the Select Board's goal is to pay the median level even though the Chief and other department heads are top talents.

Mr. Paolillo agreed with the goal of paying at the median level and that Belmont has a very talented group of department heads.

A motion was made to ratify the employment agreement between the Town of Belmont and Fire Chief David DeStefano for a three-year term effective March 15, 2024 through March 15, 2027. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously 3-0 by a roll call vote.

Approval of Minutes

August 30, 2023 Community Path Working Session:

A Motion was made to approve the date, August 30, 2023 Working Session minutes as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

September 7, 2023 Civil Service Public Input Session: Ms. Dionne that Line 25 should read: “*He clarified that Civil Service does not address compensation, health benefits, or pensions and...*”, and that Line 32 should read “*Ms. Dionne explained that she is concerned about pressure to reduce the size of the police force and that she supports a fully staffed police department.*”

A Motion was made to approve the September 7, 2023 Civil Service Public Input Session minutes as amended. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

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 10:46pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary