



**,Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
REGULAR SESSION
of the
SELECT BOARD
January 8, 2023**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: February 7, 2024
TIME: 8:45 AM

Approved by Select Board:
Monday, February 5, 2024

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

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

| Select Board Members | Present | Staff Members | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---|--------|
| Roy Epstein, Chair | Yes | Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator | Yes |
| Elizabeth Dionne, Vice-Chair | Absent | Jennifer Hewitt, ATA/Finance Director | Remote |
| Mark Paolillo, Member | Yes | Wesley Chin, Health Department Director | Yes |
| Others Present | | Brandon Fitts, Recreation Department Director | Yes |
| Hal Shubin, Belmont Farmers Market | Yes | Ellen Cushman, Town Clerk | Yes |
| Tom Gatzunis, CHA | Remote | Michael Santoro, DPW Retiree & Tree Warden Candidate. | Yes |
| Kevin Treanor, Conley's Pub & Grille | Yes | David Blazon, Director of Facilities | Yes |
| Kathleen Keohane, Library Trustee | Yes | | |
| Adrienne Allen, Board of Health | Yes | | |
| Stephen Fiore, Board of Health | Yes | | |
| Julie Lemay, Board of Health | Yes | | |

II. COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS. Chair Epstein made the following announcements:

- MLK Breakfast, January 15, 2024 - Virtual Only
- Coffee with the Fire Chief, January 16, 2024
- Select Board Public Forum on Assessors – Elected to Appointed, January 18, 2024 – 7:00 PM – Hybrid
- Mr. Paolillo acknowledged the passing of Joe O'Donnell, a longtime resident of Belmont, and spoke about his contributions to the town.

III. COMMENTS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

- Matt Taylor spoke about creating a unified budget process and made suggestions on how to do this.
- Joe Bernard spoke about the Belmont Human Right's Commission approving a call for a cease-fire in Gaza and expressed his support for the effort.
- Ron Sacca acknowledged Michael Santoro's service to the Town. He also acknowledged the people who have ensured that items from the White Field House will be relocated to the new rink. He went on to speak about the Belmont Historical Society being located in the new library and emails he sent to the Select Board. Ms. Garvin explained the status of the town's review of the emails, which was discussed as well as the Historical Society being located in the library.
- Stephanie Liu spoke about the town hiring CHA as the OPM for the library and her view that there is a conflict of interest in this. She asked that the Town reconsider the contract with CHA, and Mr. Epstein responded that the town will not do this.
- Norma Massarotti asked that the DPW properly clear HC parking spaces in town, and specified how this should be done.
- Lisa Pargoli agreed with Ms. Liu's comments.

IV. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

A. Updates:

- Legal Fees: KP Law rates are increasing by \$10.00/hour, and Ms. Garvin explained what services KP provides to the town.
- Library move into Senior Center: Ms. Keohane provided an update on what had been done to ease the transition, including working groups and their roles. She reported that staff has moved into all 3 locations and they are up and running, and encouraged residents to go to the website for hours of operation. She then spoke about surplus items and the process being used to disburse them.
- Demolition Ceremony: Ms. Keohane outlined the status of the demolition process and announced a Decommissioning Ceremony the week of January 22, 2024. She then updated the status of the construction project.

There was a discussion of some of the challenges being faced during this time of transition.

V. ACTION BY CONSENT: Proclamation for Michael Santoro

Mr. Paolillo thanked Mr. Santoro for his service to Belmont, and then read the following proclamation:

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS: Michael A. Santoro, Sr. has been a valued employee of the Town of Belmont for over 42 years, working in the Highway Department and most recently the Department of Public Works; and

WHEREAS: Michael was first hired by the Town of Belmont on June 15th, 1981 as a Laborer of the Highway Department; and

WHEREAS: On November 4, 1989, Michael was promoted to Assistant Highway Superintendent; and

WHEREAS: On January 24, 2005, Michael became the Town of Belmont's first Assistant Director of Public Works where he, working with the new Director of Public Works, Peter J. Castanino, was instrumental in the successful consolidation of the Highway, Water, Cemetery and Parks & Recreation Departments into one unified Department of Public Works; and

WHEREAS: Over the course of his career, Michael has taken a leadership role in numerous projects and has been a member of many Boards and Committees in the Town of Belmont. His dedication is notable through the long, tireless hours he has worked for over 42 years; and

WHEREAS: Michael has decided to retire from the Town of Belmont, effective December 31, 2023. In his retirement, Michael will have the opportunity to spend more time with Susan, his wife for over 38 years, his children Jennifer, Michael Jr., Ryan and Kayla and his grandchildren Ava, Liam and expected granddaughter in May of 2024.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Select Board of the Town of Belmont joins with the Town in paying tribute to Michael A. Santoro, Sr. for his many years of dedicated service. Michael has set a high standard of commitment dedication that serves as an inspiration to the citizens of the Town of Belmont. We are grateful for his 42 years of service to this community and wish him the very best in retirement.

SELECT BOARD: Roy Epstein, Chair; Elizabeth Dionne, Vice Chair; Mark Epstein, Member.

Mr. Epstein and Mr. Paolillo then presented Mr. Santoro with a golden shovel to thank him for his service.

Mr. Santoro thanked his staff and spoke about the quality of the DPW Department and thanked the Town for this recognition.

Discussion and possible vote to appoint Tree Warden

Ms. Garvin explained Mr. Santoro's qualification for the role.

A Motion was made to appoint Michael Santoro, Sr. as the Tree Warden. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.

Ms. Allen called the Board of Health to order at 7:38pm.

Discussion of Off Leash Program with the Board of Health

Mr. Epstein explained that off-leash dogs have attracted a lot of attention recently, and the Recreation Commission and BOH worked to create a policy for the dogs.

Mr. Fitts outlined the challenges that caused this issue to come to light, explaining that there has been feedback about dogs in the parks over the years. Recently a resident was bitten, which caused the Recreation Commission to take a deep look at the issue.

Mr. Fitts then presented on the issue (click [HERE](#) to see the slides) which included the bylaw (§ 60-200. Pets and other animals) that states:

C. Except as the Board of Health may otherwise permit, no dogs, except those dogs that serve as service animals as defined by regulations issued pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, 28 CFR 35.104, will be allowed in the following areas of the Town: all cemetery land, all public-school playgrounds and athletic fields and all Recreation Department playgrounds and athletic fields. Nor may any dog be allowed inside food establishments, retail businesses or public buildings.

He then reviewed the history of the off-leash program, and the process used to review and improve the program. Mr. Fitts spoke about athletic events being interrupted by off-leash dogs and how off-leash dogs are licensed. He also explained that there is a lack of awareness about the program and how the working group has tried to address this.

Mr. Fitts presented the updated "Paws in the Park" program including information on registration, fees, training, available parks, and other program components. He also compared the previous program with the new one and spoke about the difficulty enforcing these types of programs. He explained that the Recreation Commission voted unanimously in favor of the "Paws in the Park" trial program at their December meeting.

There was a discussion of the Board of Health's involvement with the issue and how to reconcile the demands of different park users.

Mr. Epstein explained that he believes there is not enough information about the trial program for the Board to vote on, and outlined some of the missing information.

There was a discussion of the program and challenges of the issue as well as how to proceed. Mr. Chin proposed that the property stakeholders work together to create rules for the Paws in the Park Program to propose to the Board of Health for review and approval. Ms. Garvin recommended that rules & regulations be in place before there is a vote. There was a discussion of how to proceed.

Mr. Epstein proposed that representatives from the Schools, Select Board/Town Administration, Recreation Department, and Board of Health meet to discuss this issue with the goal of having a proposal within 6 weeks.

Ms. Allen asked if there were other specific considerations the Select Board would like the group of representatives to look at. Recommendations included potential funding sources to create fenced areas and where to place this type of facility, better signage, better outreach, and extending the timeline of the trial period.

Mr. Epstein spoke about the large number of emails received from the public on this topic and opened public comment.

Joanne Adducci expressed her support for the off-leash program and she spoke about the residents of Winn Brook being unaware of the working groups and activities around this issue and her concerns about a new policy. She offered to join the working group.

Michael McNamara suggested that a group of dog owners participate in setting rules and then self-police which would be an effective way to ensure enforcement.

Ira Morgenstern outlined what the working group has already done and spoke about the problems with fenced-in dog areas as well as the goals and benefits of dog areas.

Nancy Reppucci expressed support for a fenced-in area and recommended discussions before taking action. She also shared her concerns about dogs jumping on her. She asked that liability also be considered.

122 Jung Yueh explained that he is a soccer coach and expressed concern for residents whose dogs are not
 123 permitted and who do not follow the rules, especially out-of-town dog owners.

124 There was a brief discussion of next steps.

125 *Ms. Allen moved to adjourn the Board of Health. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The*
 126 *Board of Health adjourned at 7:21pm.*

127 **Discussion and possible vote to temporarily change the voting location for Precinct 1 to Temple Beth**
 128 **El during the reconstruction of the library.**

129 Ms. Cushman explained that Precinct 1 normally votes at the library, so a new location is needed during the
 130 construction of the new library. She reviewed the process and criteria the Board of Registrars of Voters used to
 131 find a new venue and why they are recommending Temple Beth El. Ms. Garvin asked about liability for the site,
 132 and Ms. Cushman said she will look into this.

133 *Mr. Paolillo moved to temporarily change the voting location for Precinct 1 voting to Temple Beth El*
 134 *during the reconstruction of the library. Mr. Paolillo tabled this motion in order to move a more*
 135 *comprehensive version.*

136 *Mr. Paolillo moved to designate Beth El Temple Center, located at 2 Concord Avenue, as a temporary*
 137 *polling place for Precinct 1 voting during the entire period of demolition and construction of the Belmont*
 138 *Public Library effective January 9, 2024 until the opening/availability for voting at the new library*
 139 *building.*

140 *The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.*

141 **Discussion and possible vote to authorize the use of electronic pollbooks during elections in Belmont.**

142 Ms. Cushman explained why the Board needs to authorize the use of electronic pollbooks. She then outlined
 143 how they work and the benefits of using them.

144 *A Motion was made to authorize the use of electronic pollbooks during elections in Belmont effective*
 145 *January 9, 2024. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.*

146 **Discussion and possible vote to approve the Belmont Farmers' Market 2024 season.**

147 Mr. Shubin provided some highlights of the previous season and outlined the plans and programs for the 2024
 148 season which will be the 19th season.

149 *A Motion was made to approve the use of the Claflin Street municipal parking lot for the Belmont*
 150 *Farmers Market for the 2024 Season June 6, 2024 – October 31, 2024 as presented and to block off*
 151 *the market area late at night on Wednesdays, around 11:00pm, to use the space during the market*
 152 *hours on Thursdays and to be out by about 7:30pm. The motion was seconded and passed*
 153 *unanimously by 2-0 vote.*

154 Ron Sacca asked for clarification about the term “discussion” in agenda items. Mr. Epstein said it refers to
 155 discussion by the Select Board, and whether or not to open it to public comment is at the discretion of the
 156 Chair.

157 **Discussion and possible vote to approve proprietary items – Library Construction**

158 Mr. Gatzunis explained that there are certain items that the Town may choose to be proprietary, i.e. only one
 159 item may be used for a particular scope of the project. He then outlined the items that are being recommended
 160 to be proprietary which were requested by the Facilities and IT departments:

- 161 • Security cameras, card readers, intrusion alarming, HVAC controls and Telephone switchgear will be
 162 selected to match pre-existing systems in town that allow integration within current systems.
- 163 • The telecom switchgear is to be compatible with the rest of Belmont's soon-to-be installed municipal
 164 and school buildings telephone system. The switchgear manufacturer is Alcatel /Lucent.

165 • The Building Automation System (HVAC) is: Tridium Niagara JCI FX AD product line, excluding
 166 Metasys.

167 • The Security Camera System is: Exacqvision Enterprise System

168 • The Security Access System (Card Readers) is: Lenel.S2 Onguard

169 He explained why using a non-proprietary item and a specific manufacturer of the item would be incompatible
 170 with existing systems.

171 There was a discussion of the recommendations with Mr. Blazon answering some questions from the Board.

172 *Mr. Epstein moved to authorize the Rink Building Committee and the Library Building Committee to*
 173 *proceed with specifying proprietary systems for security cameras and related equipment, telecom*
 174 *switch gear, HVAC systems, and security access systems as described to the Select Board.*

175 There was a discussion of whether or not the Select Board has the authority to authorize these items.

176 *Mr. Epstein modified the first sentence of the motion to read: "...moved to support the Rink Building*
 177 *Committee and the Library Building Committee...."*

178 *The modified motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.*

179 **Discussion and possible vote to accept the donation from Conley's Pub & Grille**

180 Mr. Treanor explained that when the Board approved the outside patio he offered to donate a percentage of
 181 their profits to the town and this donation reflects that commitment.

182 There was a discussion of how these funds could be used. Mr. Treanor will give the Town Administrator some
 183 recommendations.

184 *A Motion was made to accept the \$2,000.00 donation from Conley's Pub & Grille. The motion was*
 185 *seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.*

186 **Discussion of FY2025 Override: Discussion of Town No Override Budget Cuts**

187 Mr. Epstein explained the development of a spreadsheet to model various override scenarios, going out 3
 188 years. He then explained the benefits of this tool and how it can be used.

189 Mr. Epstein then explained that he has used the tool to try to determine what size of an override is needed for
 190 Level-Services Funding (i.e. preserving existing FTE headcount). He went on to outline other factors in this
 191 type of budget and the relative assumptions.

192 He explained that the override needed to achieve a Level-Services budget is \$7,550,000. He went on to talk
 193 about the impacts of a lower override or no-override.

194 There was a discussion of the override amounts, impacts on services, contractual obligations, Free Cash
 195 usage, etc.

196 Ms. Garvin pointed out that this override amount was projected back in 2022 during *those* override discussions
 197 and said future more significant shortfalls have already been projected if the 2024 override fails.

198 Mr. Epstein then spoke about what level of override would be accepted by voters and said that more than
 199 \$8,000,000 would be a big ask and that he believes that a double-digit override would be unsuccessful.

200 He then presented a scenario with an override of \$8,400,000 and outlined what the benefits of this amount
 201 would be to the Schools and Town.

202 Mr. Epstein explained why both override scenarios show net surpluses.

203 There was a discussion of various override amounts including what is *needed* and what could be *approved*, as
 204 well as next steps to decide on the amount, educate the public on the issue, and decide on an amount by the
 205 end of the month.

206 Mr. Epstein spoke about the Warrant Committee's work on creating a "Fiscal Compact", whose goals are being
 207 worked out. There was a discussion of the benefits of creating a compact.

Ms. Garvin reviewed the potential reductions totaling \$800,000 that are being proposed in the event of a non-override vote (click [HERE](#) to see the document). She pointed out that this proposal is still fluid, outlined some items that are in this category, and the timing challenges of some of these reductions.

There was a discussion of the proposal and the impacts of these cuts, even beyond FY25.

Bill Anderson asked that the Select Board be open to the fact that the range of the override may have to change.

Angus Abercrombie spoke about the work the School Committee is doing to “bend the curve” and added that this works better when there are adequate resources. He added that it is helpful to have aspirational goals which will help motivate people to support the override and the need to build trust to help get the override passed.

Discussion and possible vote to accept the following committee resignations:

- Transportation Advisory Committee – D. Coleman and L. Link

A Motion was made to accept the resignation of Dave Coleman from the Transportation Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.

A Motion was made to accept the resignation of Lawrence Link from the Transportation Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.

- Cultural Council – E. Corsini

A Motion was made to accept the resignation of Evelyn Corsini from the Cultural Council. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.

Discussion and possible vote on committee appointments and reappointments:

- Recreation Commission

A Motion was made to appoint Marissa Marcos to the Recreation Commission for a two-year term to expire June 30, 2025. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.

- Human Rights Commission

A Motion was made to reappoint Mike MacGillivray to the Human Rights Commission for a three-year term to expire on June 30, 2026. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.

A Motion was made to Appoint Kenneth Gray to the Human Rights Commission for a three-year term to expire on June 30, 2026. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.

A Motion was made to Appoint Finnian Wiegand to the Human Rights Commission for a two-year term to expire on June 30, 2025. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.

A Motion was made to Appoint Golshan Zaheri to the Human Rights Commission for a three-year term to expire on June 30, 2026. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.

- Vision 21 Implementation Committee

A Motion was made to appoint Joe Bernard to the Vision 21 Implementation Committee for a two-year term to expire June 30, 2025. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Implementation Committee

A Motion was made to appoint Richard Waruingi to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Implementation Committee for a two-year term to expire June 30, 2025. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Mr. Epstein reviewed the problem of getting committee members to comply with Ethics Training. He said there is a similar problem with committee members being knowledgeable about the Open Meeting Law. He recommended that, starting with tonight's appointees, the Select Board require all applicants to a committee or board to submit proof of completion of Ethics Training and Open Meeting Law Training within a month of being appointed. For tonight's appointees the deadline will be March 1, 2024.

There was a discussion of the value of volunteering on town committees and the need for them to understand open meeting requirements, and how to proceed and enforce with this requirement.

Discussion and possible vote to approve a new Common Victualler license for Butternut Bakehouse, 49 Leonard Street

A Motion was made to approve a new Common Victualler license for Butternut Bakehouse, 49 Leonard Street. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 2-0 vote.

Approval of Minutes – No action taken due to Ms. Dionne's absence.

Next Meetings & Upcoming Topics

- a. Thursday, January 18, 2024 – 7:00 PM – Public Forum on Assessors – Elected to Appointed
- b. Monday, January 22, 2024 – 5 :30 PM – Pre-STM Select Board Meeting
- c. Thursday, January 25, 2024 – 7:00 PM – Joint Meeting with School Committee, Warrant Committee and Comprehensive Capital Budget Committee – Budget Summit IV
- d. Tuesday, January 30, 2024 – 8:30 AM – Regular Meeting

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 9:51pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary