



**Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
REGULAR SESSION
of the
SELECT BOARD
March 25, 2024**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: April 8, 2024
TIME: 8:56 AM

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

Approved by the Select Board:
Monday, April 1, 2024

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	Yes	Jennifer Hewitt, ATA/Finance Director	Yes
Mark Paolillo, Member	Yes	Glenn Clancy, Town Engineer	Yes
Others Present		Jay Marcotte, DPW Director	Yes
Sue Shillue, Cook and Company	Remote	David Blazon, Facilities Director	Yes
Clifford Gaysunas, TAC Chair	Yes		
Cassandra Page, Candidate for BHA	Remote		
Sally Sennott, Candidate for BHA	Yes		

II. COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS. Ms. Dionne made the following announcements:

- a) Dancing with the Belmont Stars – April 5, 2024 at the Beech Street Center
- b) Eclipse Watch Party – April 8, 2024 at Town Field
- c) Political Signs: The Police Department issued a statement about stealing political signs from people’s yards being a criminal offense.

III. COMMENTS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

- Judith Feinleib: Thanked the Board and Police Department for commenting on political signs being stolen.
- Bill Anderson: Spoke about signs he had seen that evidently had been stolen.

Discussion and Possible Vote to Accept the Recommendation from the Transportation Advisory Committee on a Crosswalk Policy. Click [HERE](#) to see the proposed policy.

Mr. Clancy provided a history of this issue and the need for and development of the policy. He then explained how the policy would work.

Mr. Gaysunas confirmed that Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) had approved the policy. He explained that the policy draws on the lessons learned while drafting the original Traffic Calming Policy. He also explained that they are trying to encourage residents to come forward with concerns about crossings.

There were questions and discussion about the proposed policy and the existing crosswalks in Town.

Mr. Clancy reviewed the criteria, such as cars not stopping at a crosswalk, and what would happen if this occurred.

There was a discussion of the policy, including equity across neighborhoods, the situation on Pleasant Street, and other crosswalk and traffic issues.

Mr. Clancy pointed out that the Safe Routes to School program is being revived, and explained what would happen to get this going. He also spoke about possible results from this program.

Mr. Gaysunas spoke about the variables that need to be considered for each crosswalk and encouraged pedestrians to be aware of oncoming traffic.

A Motion was made to accept the Crosswalk Policy as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

36 **Update on Removal and Replacement of DPW Fuel Tanks**

37 Mr. Marcotte announced that the fuel tank removal and replacement project would begin on April 1st. He
38 detailed the neighborhood notifications that were sent, and the timing of the project. He indicated that it should
39 be completed by late August/early September, depending on the contamination that might be found. Mr.
40 Marcotte explained how the contamination and weather could impact the project timeline.

41 There were questions about the project which were discussed.

42 **Discussion and Possible Vote to Award a Contract for Janitorial Services to Compass Facility**
43 **Services, Georgetown, MA**

44 Mr. Blazon explained why the Town and Schools decided to change the contractor for these services, the
45 process that was used to choose Compass Facility Services, and the protections built into the contract
46 regarding performance.

47 There were some questions and discussion about the termination of the previous contract, and the terms of the
48 new one.

49 Mr. Blazon reviewed the details of the contract including dates, buildings covered, and value.

50 *A Motion was made to award a Contract for Janitorial Services to Compass Facility Services, located in*
51 *Georgetown, MA as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.*

52 Mr. Blazon then provided an update on the gas monitoring system at the Winn Brook School. He said Dr.
53 Geiser had been notified. There was a discussion of how the system works.

54 **Discussion and Possible Vote on FY2025 Health Insurance Rates**

55 Ms. Garvin explained that a 4% increase is included in the FY25 budget.

56 Ms. Shillue explained why there is the 4% increase. She also spoke about Belmont's good management of the
57 Health Insurance Trust.

58 The Board asked several questions, which Ms. Shillue answered, and discussed Belmont's plan design versus
59 GIC and other plans.

60 Ms. Hewitt explained that a positive vote would allow the Town to implement new employee rates. She also
61 explained the windows for switching to GIC. There was a discussion of the possible transition to GIC.

62 *A Motion was made to approve the FY2025 Health Insurance rates as presented. The motion was*
63 *seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.*

64 **Discussion on Potential Articles for the 2024 Annual Town Meeting**

65 Community Preservation Committee Recommendations: Mr. Epstein said that a vote on this would be held
66 after the election.

67 Ms. Dionne spoke about the work of the CPC in recent years. She had asked Ms. Hewitt to create a list of
68 potential project requests for the next five years, in line with the long-term capital planning work being done by
69 the Comprehensive Capital Budget Committee. Ms. Dionne then explained the current projects, outlined
70 below:

71 **Open Space/ Recreation:**

- 72 • Chenery Park Design and Engineering - \$300,000: This project will fund a conceptual design and
73 engineering for the Chenery Parks complex. It will include public meetings, community engagement,
74 and project design.
- 75 • Chenery Park Funding - \$1,000,000: This project will set aside funding for the Chenery Park Complex
76 Construction phase. The estimated cost of this project is up to \$3,000,000. In anticipation of this high
77 project cost the applicant would like to set aside funding in preparation for the project. It is assumed
78 that the rest of the funding will be requested in the FY2026 funding cycle.

80 **Housing:**

- 81 • Fund to Support New Affordable Housing - \$275,000: The purpose of this project is to create more
82 affordable housing in town. The Housing Trust is establishing regular funding rounds for developers to
83 apply for in order to create more affordable homes and/or more deeply affordable homes in new
84 developments.

85 **Historic:**

- 86 • Homer House Exterior Paint Restoration - \$99,000: This project is necessary to preserve the integrity of
87 the Homer House structure, to prevent interior water damage, and to prevent exterior rotting of the
88 wood trim that has been recently replaced through another CPA grant. This goal of this painting project
89 is to restore the structure to its original condition and preserve the historic nature of the Homer House.

90 Ms. Dionne reviewed the financials for the requests, and there was a discussion of the potential projects, the
91 housing plan, available funding, recreation facilities, and other issues that impact the CPC.

92 Ms. Hewitt said that the Recreation Department was going to do a master plan for what their needs will be, and
93 there was a discussion of how this might impact the CPC.

94 **Discussion and Possible Vote on Increasing the Senior Tax Work-Off**

95 Ms. Garvin explained that the work-off program had previously been accepted by Town Meeting, but Town
96 Counsel has determined that a Select Board vote is sufficient to increase the amount of the benefit.

97 Mr. Epstein pointed out that the program is means-tested and that eight individuals participate currently. The
98 proposed increase in the work-off from \$1,500 to \$2,000 increases the total cost by \$4,000..

99 Mr. Paolillo asked if there was anything else the Town could do to provide senior tax relief. Ms. Dionne
100 explained that a Home Rule Petition would be required, and described the process that would be needed to do
101 this. There was a discussion about pursuing this.

102 Ms. Dionne explained the Tax Deferral Program, which is under-utilized.

103 Ms. Epstein explained that the Senior Tax Work-Off program is funded by the overlay, which effectively means
104 the source is free cash.

105 Ms. Hewitt explained how the funds are tracked, that the hourly rate cannot be higher than the State minimum
106 wage or lower than the Federal minimum wage, and how it is accounted for. There was a discussion about the
107 program and associated pay and funding, as well as how well-publicized the program is.

108 Siobhan Gallagher suggested there be an information sheet on the program and that it should also be on the
109 website. She pointed out that Federal Taxes must be paid on earnings from this program.

110 *A Motion was made to increase the Senior Tax Work-Off threshold from \$1500 to \$2000 per year. The*
111 *motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.*

112 **Discussion and possible vote on committee appointments and reappointments:**

- 113 • Disability Access Commission

114 There was a discussion about Ms. Barberio being an appointed employee of the Town, and if this is a
115 problem for the appointment. Ms. Garvin said she would ask Town Counsel for his opinion on the
116 definition of an appointed official as indicated in the bylaw.

- 117 • Belmont Housing Authority (BHA)

118 Mr. Epstein reviewed the questions about this appointment that were raised at a previous meeting.
119 Cassandra Page and Sally Sennott are both candidates from the Belmont Tenant's Association for the
120 open position and have been invited to attend this meeting to share their qualifications for the position.

121 Ms. Dionne explained that the BHA had to nominate a minimum of two candidates according to State
122 law.

123 There was a discussion of how the Select Board should proceed and the actions of the Belmont
124 Housing Authority and Belmont Tenant's Association.

125 Ms. Page shared her experience and qualifications for the appointment, pointing out why she feels it is
126 important for her to continue on the Authority.

127 Ms. Sennott explained why she is interested in being part of the Belmont Housing Authority, and
128 outlined her skills and experience that would qualify her for the appointment.

129 The Board discussed the candidates, and which one should be appointed and why, and what options
130 might be available to the candidate who is not appointed at this meeting.

131 *A Motion was made to appoint Sally Sennott to the Belmont Housing Authority for a five-year*
132 *term starting April 2, 2024 and ending on April 3, 2029. The motion was seconded and passed*
133 *unanimously by 3-0 vote.*

134 **Other Business Not Anticipated by the Chair - None**

135 **Approval of Minutes**

136 March 18, 2024 Regular Session: This vote was delayed until the next meeting.

137 **Next Meetings & Upcoming Topics**

- 138 1. Monday, April 1, 2024 – 7:00 PM – Regular Meeting
- 139 2. Friday, April 5, 2024 – 8:30 AM – Reorganizational Meeting
- 140 3. Monday, April 8, 2024 – 7:00 PM – Regular Meeting
- 141 4. Monday, April 22, 2024 – 7:00 PM – Regular Meeting
- 142 5. Monday, April 29, 2024 – 5:30 PM – Pre-ATM Meeting
- 143 6. Wednesday, May 1, 2024 – 5:30 PM – Pre-ATM Meeting

144 **Adjournment**

145 *A motion was made to adjourn the meeting of the Belmont Select Board Committee, and the*
146 *motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08pm.*

147
148 Respectfully submitted by,

149
150 Susan Peghiny
151 Recording Secretary
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