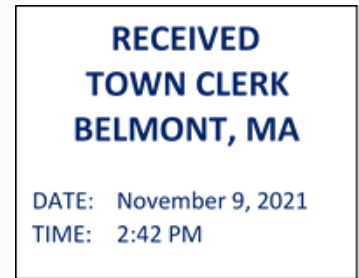


Approved by
the Select Board on:
10/25/2021

SELECT BOARD
REMOTE MEETING
Monday, October 18, 2021
7:00 PM



CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Select Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Adam Dash. Vice Chair Roy Epstein and Select Board member Mark Paolillo were present, along with Town Administrator Patrice Garvin, Assistant Town Administrator Jon Marshall, Town Labor Counsel Brian Maser, Director of Health Wesley Chin and Director of HR Shawna Healey.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Beech St. Center:

- The Virtual Salem Witch Trial, presented by the Salem Witch Museum, October 20th at 1:15 pm. Call Dana Bickelman at 617-993-2977 for more information.
- Paint with Me, Fall themed project, Oct. 28th at 1:15 pm. Call 617-993-2976 to register. Cost is \$11.

Other Events:

- Halloween House Decorating Contest sponsored by the Belmont Recreation Department. Submission and photos need to be submitted to recreation.belmont-ma.gov by October 21st.
- Belmont Women's Club and the Belmont Library will hold a Halloween Pumpkin Fest and Movie Night October 29th from 4:30 to 5:45 pm. Movie will be shown at 6:15 pm.

COMMENTS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

[NONE.]

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

a. 91 Beatrice Circle Update

The Zoning Board of Appeals submitted an update on 91 Beatrice Circle. There are a large number of conditions and waivers that need to be approved. Epstein said he read the report and was pleased it addressed the issues identified in the letters the Select Board sent to Mass. Housing last year.

Paolillo thanked the Zoning Board of Appeals for their efforts. He found it to be a comprehensive written opinion.

b. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Update

Garvin said they are getting \$7.8M for total ARPA money (we received half of that funding). She said the schools have requested for the Town to match the \$1.4M of the ESSER Fund over the next two years. Garvin said because we have until 2024 to spend, she doesn't want to model scenarios now and have to make changes later. She will be meeting with the financial modeling team to see how far ARPA and Free Cash can be stretched. She is also looking for state money for additional funds.

Paolillo said he supports the concept of waiting until we can model.

c. Town Administrator Office Hours

Garvin will be holding office hours next Friday. She will be putting information on website.

ACTION BY CONSENT

Proclamation in honor of Transgender Awareness Month and Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20, 2021

Chair of the Belmont Human Rights Committee, Brian Nadeau, Vice Chair, Kim Haley Jackson and Rev. Jablonksi are here to discuss Transgender Awareness Month.

Bryan Nadeau said Transphobia is very real and creates discrimination in housing, health care, and employment. The proclamation designates November as Transgender month. It confirms the Town's stance on transgender awareness and pledges to work to ensure the safety of all residents in Belmont.

Rev. Jablonksi serves on the Belmont LGBTQ+ alliance. He asked permission to set up an interactive installation with names of the 40 people who have died due to transgender violence in the days leading up to Nov. 20th. He asked for permission to set up the walkway on the Town Green near the Unitarian Church for this installation.

Dash read the proclamation. The Select Board proclaims that November be designated Transgender Awareness Month.

Motion was made to approve the proclamation as read. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Motion was made to approve the Day of Remembrance on November 17 and 18, 2021 from 6:30 pm to 8 pm at the Town Green. (Installation will be active between November 16 and 20, 2021). Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

COVID Update

a. Discussion and possible vote on vaccine mandate

Shawna Healey, Wesley Chin, and Brian Maser are here to discuss the mandate.

Lindsey Sharpe, Belmont's contract Public Health Specialist, presented a chart about COVID trends in Belmont. Belmont had between 10 and 25 new cases per week from June to August 2021.

The statistics show that cases have increased every month since June. There have been 233 total new cases; 110 of those cases were breakthrough infections. Only a few breakthroughs required hospitalization. Lindsey said we don't know the percentage of Delta variant cases.

Paolillo said last year in December 2020 we only had 15 cases. We have five times as many cases now. You would think that there would be less cases now. Lindsey said it's attributable to more people going out to work and school, traveling, etc.

Shawna said the polling of Town employees on vaccination rates has closed and out of 300 Town employees, 115 responses were received. The 38% of staff who replied reported full vaccination.

Atty. Maser said that he has not heard anything about the OSHA mandate yet. OSHA sent a draft of the emergency standard to the White House on October 12. Maser confirmed that Select Board could mandate employees to respond to the survey. The Board can also ask that employees show proof of vaccination.

Paolillo asked if we discover that 80% of employees are vaccinated, then what is our next step? It was suggested that if the Select Board mandated that all employees get vaccinated, weekly testing could be imposed for the unvaccinated employees.

Wes said the Board of Health would like to see 90% of employees vaccinated. It may not be possible to get 100% because people can opt out for religious and medical reasons. People who face the public are the ones who need to be vaccinated.

Meg Moriarty from the School Committee said that the School Committee already put in place a mandate that requires all teachers and employees to be vaccinated.

Paolillo said that he would lean towards mandating vaccination or regular testing.

Garvin said the challenge with the mandate is that all seven unions have to be bargained separately. Given that all union contracts are currently open, she said they could try to add this on to the contracts. But it will take time, given the number of unions and given limits of staffing in Belmont.

Dash asked if there are other towns mandating vaccines for non-school employees. Maser said that are more towns are starting to put in place these mandates.

PUBLIC COMMENTS on Vaccination mandates

Joe Kelly pointed out that the vaccines have only been in production for a year. The MRNA technology has never been used on humans yet. There have been Issues of myocarditis in young people. If we only test vaccinated people, they can just as easily get it and spread it. Comparing Town workers to hospital workers is not appropriate. Individuals cannot be coerced to get involved with a medical experiment. We should respect the choices of our residents.

Bill Anderson said we need to be aware that this is a public health crisis. The model for union contract language is out there. The point is to keep those that are unprotected from transferring the disease.

Marie Warner, Town Meeting member, wanted to know the number of tests for the numbers reported by the Health Department. Lindsey said she doesn't have those numbers, but her recollection is that they are testing the same numbers as last Fall. Marie wanted to know the percentage of positives.

Lisa Pargoli, Town Meeting member, thanked Joe Kelly for speaking out with logical facts.

Bill Trabilcy, Town Meeting member, commented on a large defacto study that followed vaccinated people and hospitalization rates are lower in vaccinated people. There is heightened concern that the Delta variant is getting serious. The most prevalent condition for transmission is gathering indoors. Yet,

we haven't said anything about bars where people they sit and talk without masks. To ignore this is not making sense. We need to decide what exceptions should be made.

Maser said the Select Board does not have to bargain the mandate with the unions in order to vote the mandate. However, he said there would be a bargaining process related to the imposed mandate.

Epstein said that if the number of unvaccinated individuals remains significant for whatever reason then a testing program is inescapable.

Maser said that the majority of towns mandating vaccination are providing exemptions but no alternatives, like testing, because of logistics. We will need time to evaluate the possibilities.

Dash asked if we should vote this now. Maser said if you vote the mandate, an effective date needs to be set so the Town has time for meaningful impact bargaining. He would suggest pushing the implementation date out more than two weeks from today. If testing is not implemented, then an alternative could be progressive discipline and termination.

Epstein and Paolillo voiced concerns that the Town is so leanly staffed, that we can't afford to lose employees.

Maser said if the Select Board could take a vote tonight and implement mandate, then the Town Administration and he could get together to determine the specifics of union bargaining. The Select Board could then meet in Executive Session to discuss the proposal.

Motion was made to mandate Town employees to get vaccinated subject to bargaining the impacts of that mandate with the unions. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

b. Discussion and possible vote on use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for regional surge testing events

Wes Chin said the Health Department is planning to use ARPA funding for community-wide COVID testing free of charge after the upcoming holidays.

The Town plans to partner with Lexington in this testing endeavor and have identified the day after Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's as the best dates for testing.

Garvin said they set aside \$150K for the surge testing campaign. This would help limit the spread of the disease. The first test would be held at the Chenery School five days after Halloween.

Chin said there are a lot of calls to our office about booster shots. He has indicated to the State that Belmont Health Department would like to administer shots.

Motion was made to support use of \$150K of ARPA funding for surge testing during the holiday season. Motion was approved by a vote of 2-0. Epstein opposed.

Garvin said that \$93K has been budgeted for contract tracers, three contact tracers for \$30 per hour for 30 hours per week, until June 30, 2022. Contact tracing is no longer covered by the State.

Epstein asked if contract tracing has been effective. Chin said it's a way to identify cases for parents. Lindsey was brought on to help with everyday health department activities and works mostly with the schools. Chin said there is no spread in the schools because of contact tracing. Paolillo supports the use of ARPA money for testing because it helps control the virus.

Epstein agreed to fund contract tracing but requested that the success of the program be evaluated after three months.

Garvin said they would update the Select Board after the holiday testing has been completed.

Motion was made to approve up to \$93,600 of ARPA funds for contact tracing and for the Health Department to issue regular reports to monitor the efficacy of this project. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Discussion and possible vote on request from The Lions Club to host the annual Holiday Tree and Wreath Sale from November 26, 2021 until December 24, 2021

Felix Firenze reported that the Lions Club event will be held outdoors. The inside of the club is closed and club members are fully vaccinated. The group is following all the protocols and the same event was successful last year.

Motion was made to approve the request from the Belmont Lions Club to host the annual Tree and Wreath Sale from November 26, 2021 to December 24, 2021. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Town Clerk - Update and discussion on Federal Census Results and Re-Precincting Plan

Ellen Cushman, Town Clerk, presented a report from the Re-Precincting Team. Starting in 2018, Towns began identifying physical changes in the community using a GIS system. Once the Belmont team and the State were satisfied with joint maps, the local review process was started. This included input from Town Counsel, some residents, Sen. Brownsberger, Chair of the Select Board and voters. Her goal tonight is to produce a summary of the information from this meeting. She confirmed that this does not require a vote tonight, but she needs the Select Board to vote by October 21, 2021 so that the new precincts could be activated as of December 31, 2021. The final submission needs to be submitted to State on October 30, 2021.

The Mass. Gen. Law, Chapter 54, Division 6 state that: 1) Census identified blocks may not be split; 2) If the 2020 current population does not conform to target range, then lines have to be redrawn; 3) Precincts cannot include more than 4000 residents; 4) Borders should include easily observed geographical features.

Belmont had a 10.3% increase in population since 2010. Precinct 6 has not grown that much, but Precinct 8 is above the target so precinct boundaries must be redrawn. The new McLean Development has 100 new residents, but cannot be counted in the current map. The guidance was made to create a committee once we get the new McLean numbers.

The team decided to expand the border of Precinct 6. 1000 people must be subtracted from Precinct 8. The decision was made to take the Hill Estates out of Precinct 8 and add to Precinct 1 and 2. The four

precincts impacted are 1,2, 6, and 8. This means that every Town Meeting member of Precincts 1,2, 6 and 8 will have to run again.

The April 2022 election will use the new precinct lines. We are retaining our senatorial and representative districts.

Award contract for 2021 Roadway Cracksealing Project to Superior Sealcoat of 4/D Wilmington, MA in the amount of \$104,807.78

Ara Yogurtian, Assistant Director of Community Development reported that this project was negotiated on October 16th. He said if the contract is approved tonight, then the job will begin as soon as possible and it will finished before the end of the Fall, weather permitting. The list of areas affected will be posted on the Town website. Each road is evaluated individually for new paving or overlay.

Motion was made to award the 2021 roadway cracksealing project to Superior Sealcoat, Wilmington, MA in the amount of \$104,807.78. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Traffic Mitigation Recommendations

[Item was postponed until November 1.]

Q1 budget discussion

Revenue

Garvin presented a report on Quarter 1 for FY22. She said that to date, the budget is on target for real and personal property taxes, meals and excise tax. She reported that the taxes for local receipts are higher than this time last year. Ambulance receipts appear lower only because they are not reflected yet in the Q1. Ambulance receipts were raised last year so we should see an overall increase in that line reflected in later budget iterations. The Select Board asked Garvin if she could expand on the numbers in the budget and provide a report on the volume and types of ambulance trips. Garvin said she would ask Chief DeStefano about this and get back to the Select Board.

Parking fee revenues are still showing COVID impact because meters were partially closed down. But she said we are on target for the total fees. She explained that the reason for the increase in appeals board fees was due to 91 Beatrice Circle. A decrease in building rentals and recreation revenues was a reflection of the pandemic environment.

She noted that the trash overflow bag revenues have decreased. She is not sure what this is attributed to, but she thinks it could also be a budget related timing issue. Q1 is affected by timing more than any other quarter because encumbrances are often incurred in the next fiscal year.

In general, local receipts are down from FY19 - FY21. Fund receipts are at 25% this year as compared to 27% at the same time last year. The major reason for the decrease in receipts is the earning on investments due to high school borrowing. She also reported that free cash has not yet been transferred to FY22. The Q2 budget will reflect that transfer.

Expenses

Garvin explained that in the Q1 expenditures budget, salaries look higher than they actually are. This is due to encumbrances that were moved from FY21 and expended in Q1. The increase in legal expenses is due to Beatrice Circle and also to the costs of contract negotiations with the unions this year.

Police and Fire salaries are showing an increase in expenditures due to increases in overtime that are a result of vacancies within the departments. Garvin confirmed that unexpended salary lines get transferred to the overtime line, but this does not provide a surplus, because we are paying overtime at time and a half. The Fire Department has nine vacancies. She is working with Chief DeStefano to determine a budget projection for the rest of the fiscal year. A full staff is not expected in the Fire Department until the beginning of FY23 due to the constraints of civil service.

Facilities had encumbrances for contracts in Q1 that will balance out in Q2.

Insurance, workers' comp, life insurance and medical gets expended at the beginning of the fiscal year in order to get a discount. Health insurance expenses are lower than usual because people weren't seeking medical care during COVID, but she said they needed to include the minimum 3% increase in the health insurance expenses because these expenditures may go back to 2019 levels. Garvin said she has a meeting with the health care consultant this week.

Part of the continuing analysis of the budget will include salary expenses in relation to free cash.

Garvin reported that all Q1 budgets will be posted online. She will be presenting them at the next Warrant Committee meeting.

Bill Anderson noted that since the FTE for Police and Fire are down, then salaries and benefits must be underbudget. Garvin said she planned to look at the health line so if they can transfer money from the health surplus to other areas.

Discussion and possible vote on recommendation for RNAV Study Proposed 2D-2 procedure

Myron Kassaraba, Belmont representative to the Massport Community Advisory Committee, brought forth a memoranda for the Select Board to endorse. A recommendation was put out in April and after additional data has been received from FAA, the advisory committee can still not endorse the new plan. The new plan actually makes the impact to the Grove St. area worse. The vote on this study will be deferred until December 2021. Kassaraba said that the committee has waited four years for the study, but this proposal cannot be accepted. They would like the Select Board to write a letter to say that they are not accepting the latest proposal. Arlington and Medford have already voted and sent a letter to that effect. The draft of the letter is in the package sent to the Select Board. The letter would be submitted to local legislators and Massport.

Paolillo said this feels like a zero sum benefit. Whatever benefits Belmont, seems to not benefit anyone else. Kassaraba explained that before the change in flight patterns, no one neighborhood was impacted by concentrated flight paths. Our request would be to rotate procedures so that one geographical area is not overly affected. The FAA switched from radar to GPS radar and this proposal is a product of that change. Right now the FAA is constrained by what they are willing to do and what the aircraft are able to do.

Epstein said that it sounds like 2D-2 has determined a corridor and asked why the letter is not advocating a concrete alternative? Kassaraba said that MIT proposed five alternatives and the FAA rejected all five of them and instead came back with this 2D-2 proposal that did not entail moving the Grove St. path at all.

Kassaraba announced that he will be stepping down from his position, but he is committed to being available for another year while a replacement is being found. Dash said they will put out posting.

Motion was made that the Chair send a letter to the New England Regional Federal Aviation Administration to express the Select Board's opposition to 2D-2. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Accept resignations from the Historic District Commission: Michael Smith and Seth Clarke

The Select Board agreed that Michael Smith and Seth Clarke will be missed and thanked them for their service. The mentioned that it may be best to visit a list of prior appointees to find new candidate.

Motion was made to accept the resignation from Michael Smith and Seth Clarke from the Historic District Commission. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Accept resignation from Catherine Bowen from the Middle and High School Traffic Working Group

Dash is recused from this vote. The chairmanship of the meeting will be turned over to Epstein.

Epstein reported that Catherine Bowen was resigning from the Middle and High School Traffic Working Group.

Motion was made to accept the resignation of Catherine Bowen from the Middle and High School Traffic Working Group. Motion was approved by a vote of 2-0. Dash is recused from this vote.

Discussion and possible vote to revise charge of Middle and High School Working Group

Epstein announced that he and Amy Checkoway, Chair of the School Committee, agreed that it would make sense to remove the School Committee representative from the working group. He explained that issues have evolved so that the School Committee member is not needed as much as when the working group was created. Issues of concern are now related to Town controlled property. But if issues with school property do arise, Amy said she would be available to consult when needed.

This would reduce committee membership to eight members instead of nine members. Epstein said he would like to see the name of the group changed as well. The suggestion is to change the name to the "Traffic Working Group – Middle and High School" so the abbreviation is distinguished from the Middle and High School Building Committee.

Motion was made to approve the change in name of "Middle and High School Working Group" to the "Traffic Working Group – Middle and High School" and to change the charge to remove the School Committee representative. Motion was approved by a vote of 2-0. Dash is recused from this vote.

Dash returned to chair the meeting.

SELECT BOARD'S COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

Vigirola Ice Skating Rink Funding Committee has met twice and is making reasonable progress. They had a robust discussion on potential financial sources for the project.

The Community Path will have a public forum on November 4th at 7 pm. The focus of the forum will be to discuss the 25% design proposal. There has been discussion to change the charge of the group during the Phase 2 of the project. They will discuss the change to the charge with the Select Board after the forum has been conducted.

Epstein said that the Traffic Working Group – Middle and High School will have a public forum about student parking on side streets on Thursday night. The goal is to get input from residents about parking on side streets and from students who park on the side streets.

The Belmont High School Building Committee is having a forum on October 20th at 7 pm on the west of Harris field.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

- a. September 28, 2021 – Special Meeting – Fuel Tank Public Forum
- b. October 4, 2021 - Regular Meeting
- c. October 4, 2021 – Executive Session
- d. November 16, 2020 – Special Meeting
- e. November 19, 2020 – Special Meeting

Motion was made to approve the minutes of the September 28 special meeting, October 4, 2021 regular meeting and October 4, 2021 Executive Session as amended. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Separate motion was made to approve the Special Meeting minutes of Nov. 16 and 19, 2020. Motion was approved by a vote of 2-0. Paolillo abstained because he was not a member of the Select Board at that time.

Motion was made to go into Executive Session and not return to public meeting. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,



PATRICE GARVIN, Town Administrator

