

Approved by
the Select Board on:

6/9/2021

AGENDA SELECT BOARD JOINT MEETING WITH THE CABLE TELEVISION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, MAY 17, 2021

REMOTE MEETING

7:00 PM

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: September 2, 2021
TIME: 2:15 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, Assistant Director of Health Department Diana Ekman, and Director of Community Development Glenn Clancy. The members from the Cable Television Advisory Committee were also present for the joint meeting.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Beech St. Center:
 - Meet and Greet with Police Officer Taylor and K9 Barron held on May 20th at 10 am.
 - Virtual Trip with National Women's History Museum, Part 2, held on May 20th at 11 am.
- Town of Belmont is looking for applicants for Town committees. Applications due by June 11, 2021.

QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

[NONE.]

ACTION BY CONSENT

COVID Update and possible vote to update Belmont's Temporary Emergency Regulations to mirror the State Mask Guidelines

Diana Ekman, Asst. Director of Health Department summarized in mask guidelines:

- Governor stated today that as of May 29th, face covering order will reflect the new CDC guidelines. Those not vaccinated should wear face coverings, except in special group settings (indoor school settings, transportation, congregate settings). Belmont will be following the State guidelines and will rescind Belmont Temporary Order 3.
- Epstein said we should rescind Temporary Order 3 so there's no gap between State and Town rules and Diana agreed. The governor may also roll back the emergency measures for Town Meetings on June 15th.
- Garvin talked with Wes Chin and they think that the Town Hall should open when the emergency order is lifted. If meeting law changes on June 15th, then we will have to start meeting in person again.

Motion was made to rescind Temporary Emergency Order 3. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

- Diana said industry restrictions will be lifted as well on May 29th with no capacity restrictions. All retail places will still require masks. As of May 11th, 51% of Belmont residents were fully vaccinated; 66% of Belmont residents have had one dose. There is a good uptick rate in older teenage groups.
- Dash said we will talk about the opening of Town Hall. Maybe we can bring public in by Zoom.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Bill Anderson said the Hynes Convention Center has many vaccines and they take walk-ins.

Accept Committee Resignations

- a. Natasha Klemek, Community Preservation Committee (Select Board appointee)
- b. Andres Rojas, Community Preservation Committee (Select Board appointee)
- c. Haixi Liu, Belmont Cultural Council.

Motion was made to accept committee resignations as outlined by Chair. Motion approved by a vote of 3-0.

Start Joint Meeting with Cable Television Advisory Committee

- Mark Carthy, Chair, called the Cable Television Advisory Committee to order with quorum (Chet Messer, Jonathan Birge).
- Dash said we will hear testimony from the committee and the public and Verizon has been invited to make a brief statement.
- This hearing is mandated by the Federal Cable Act and focuses on Verizon's renewal. The current Verizon license expires on July 30, 2022. The Town is currently involved in the ascertainment process. Tonight's hearing 1) Identifies future needs and 2) reviews performance of Verizon under their current license.
- The Select Board can't regulate rates, commercial programming and internet services for Verizon. These are important issues, but they are not the focus of tonight's discussion.

Public Hearing – Belmont Cable Television Public Ascertainment Hearing for Verizon New England, Inc.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

William Brownsberger said he appreciates the services that the Belmont Media Center (BMC) provides.

Jillian Jenkins spoke in support of the BMC during COVID. Any agreement that best supports the media center would be appreciated.

Kathryn Bonfiglio (Belmont Against Racism) thanks the BMC for all their help especially during the pandemic: including the vigil for Asians, MLK breakfasts, program on environmental justice. She hopes the Select Board tries to get the best deal for BMC to continue their vital services.

Maryann Scali (Women's Club and League of Women's Voters) said the BMC produced candidates night. She requests that the Select Board get the best deal possible from Verizon for contract renewal.

Clare Cox has been a reader on the talking radio. She enjoys bringing news to the blind. She is grateful to BMC for tracking down interesting events. She asked the Select Board to secure their continuing service to the community.

Tomassina Olson spoke on behalf of the COA, and said the COA would like to see a discount for seniors for Verizon. Seniors use Verizon services more than internet services.

Matt Ruane, school counselor and high school coach, said BMC was extremely important for live streams when parents couldn't attend games in person.

Janice Darias said BMC was a great partner with live streaming this past year at the Belmont public schools. She hopes they can continue to be funded.

[Public portion of hearing is now closed.]

COMMENTS FROM TOWN EMPLOYEES and COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

- Mike Tymm (Chair of Board of Directors of Belmont Media Center) offered a testimony. BMC was founded 15 years ago. The primary funding comes from provisions in the Verizon and Comcast agreements. BMC plans to work with new High School and Middle School daily maintenance with little cost to the school department. They have been trying to seek out efficiencies and find more diverse sources of capital support.
- Nava Niv-Vogel (COA Director) reported that in last year and a half, BMC provided equip, in multi-purpose room, they reinstalled PA speakers there, installed monitor in the lobby. They help us manage AV equip. We share a technology specialist with the BMC. She feels during pandemic they played a key role in keeping seniors active and engaged through TV. Some seniors don't get online and can't afford cable. The COA Board is asking that people consider joining on June 1 when we will take up a senior discount for cable.
- Paolillo asked who is the person who negotiates the contract for discounts with Verizon? Counsel Peter Epstein replied that Federal law allows for senior discounts, but both parties have to agree. Verizon does not offer senior discounts, but the Town can still request a senior discount. You can add that to the document presented to Verizon.
- Mark Carthy said that the Cable Advisory Committee works on behalf of the Select Board. We have tried to get senior discounts before. The number of people who qualify in Belmont is very small. He said he will send the details to the Select Board.
- Jeff Hansell from BMC thanks the Town for a great working relationship across all sectors. He shared a chart showing subscriber history. Comcast has held steady and Verizon has gone down a bit.
- Peter Epstein commented on the graph. He said that many cable companies are losing subscribers. Many customers continue to subscribe, but only with internet services, and municipalities cannot share in those types of revenues. The Cable Advisory Committee will want to discuss this with Verizon.
- Chet Messer said when he retired, he chose to volunteer at BMC and he served as Chairman of the Media Center. He has been proud of Jeff Hansell and the staff during the pandemic. He feels that we should be getting maximum revenues from the cable companies.
- Diana Ekman, Assistant Director of the Health Department said that BMC has gotten important information out in a timely manner.

- Jeff Hansell said they plan to resubmit a revised report before the end of the hearing period. He's trying to integrate COVID restrictions and with the recent State guideline changes, he has to revise the plan again. In the last quarter there was sharper decline from Verizon. BMC has to review the plan for last 10 years and reconfigure our technology and staff in the coming years in respect to that review. The decline in Verizon services, will affect our operations adversely and we may have to replace revenue with fund raising. We need to work closely with the schools and Town departments in order to continue their effectiveness. He sees this change as an opportunity to find new sources of income for support. The pandemic revealed that we had better outreach when we were locked down. We have uncovered new community needs during this period. In the next year or two, we want to be an even better conduit between the Town and residents.
- Stephen Rosales (active town resident) said that he feels strongly about cable TV. You can never have enough money for local cable TV. BMC is a vital part of the community and a window into the community.
- Jirair Hovsepian (BMC Board member) said the only visual medium in town is BMC. They are involved in a wide berth of topics. They increased their impact during COVID.
- Paolillo reflected on the financial report from BMC and said it is projected to have an operating deficit. Hopefully BMC can come back and talk about their fund raising needs. Hansell said they are scheduled to present at the Select Board in June.
- Juliet Jenkins asked since people are cutting the cord on cable, will the cable companies be able to continue to support BMC?
- Frederique Rigoulet (news director at BMC), confirmed that volunteers are very important. There are three more volunteer hosts currently available for new shows.
- Jon Marshall said BMC has been a strong, responsive partner and he met with them to talk about strengthening communication.
- Verizon had been invited to this hearing, but did not attend.
- Dash concluded tonight's hearing. Written comments may be submitted until June 15, 2021 to the Office of the Select Board at Belmont Town Hall. The Select Board office phone number: 617-993-2690.

The Belmont Media Center adjourned with a quorum of members.

End Joint Meeting with Cable Television Advisory Committee

Presentation and possible vote of the Hazard Mitigation Plan by Weston & Sampson

- Glenn Clancy gave a summary of the plan and announced he is joined by Weston and Sampson engineers who developed the plan. Belmont received a grant from the state in 2019 to develop a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) plan. Through that opportunity, we elected to update our Hazard Mitigation plan. The last plan was developed in 2013 and it lapsed in 2018. He worked with Jon Marshall who helped him pull events together. The Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved by Mass. and Federal Emergency Management. Tonight they are asking the Select Board to approve the plan.

Amanda Kohn from Weston and Sampson presented on: Hazard Mitigation Update.

- Kohn explained that the MVP is a statewide program and nearly 90% of communities have taken advantage of the program. It was good to update the Mitigation Plan because there were overlaps with the MVP. The completion of the plan will save Town resources and allow for grant eligibility. The first phase is a planning grant and the second phase is an action grant. By completing the plan, Belmont will be eligible for FEMA funding. Weston and Sampson held day long workshops, and received input from community members and stakeholders. After synthesizing, the plan was sent to MEMA and FEMA for approval and then was approved for adoption by the Town. The plan included strengths and vulnerabilities to the environment and safety in Belmont and prioritized action items. An update to this plan will be needed in 5 years. By completing this process, Belmont can apply for an MVP action grant for storm water reduction.
- Epstein asked for more details on the actual plan. Kohn said the plan is about the steps we can undertake to prevent risks tomorrow, for instance building a floor barrier, updating infrastructure to remove environmental hazards. Kohn said that one of the top actions recommended creating a model for potential flooding in Belmont, for instance where do we need to update pipe structure when redesigning a park in order to prevent flooding?
- Paolillo asked who worked on this and who can assure that the action outlines in Section 6 and 7 are managed? Glenn said that it was a collaborative effort between various Town departments. and that with the help of knowledgeable consultants there should be enough staff to manage future activity.
- Paolillo noted that we only have one emergency shelter at the Middle School. Do we need more than two? Clancy said that was one of the issues raised. Paolillo said the high school could maybe provide us another one.
- Adam Dash read the Resolution adopting the Town of Belmont Hazard Mitigation Plan – Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan 2020 as signed on May 17, 2021.

Motion was made to approve the Hazard Mitigation plan. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Discussion and possible vote on the Order of Taking related to the Roger E. Wellington Elementary School Safe Routes to School Project

- Glenn Clancy said that this Order of Taking is related to access of private property for the construction of sidewalks. Federal Highway requires permission from property owners, even for temporary work. There are 12 properties included in this project. Two properties required them to hire an appraiser and come up with a monetary figure on impact of access. One of the two properties required a permanent utility easement. At this stage, the Select Board needs to accept the permanent and temporary easements in order to complete the work. He has worked with Jillian Barger from Anderson Creaver on the legal aspects of these easements, and she is here today.
- Jillian Barger said there are documents she has prepared to vote on tonight. She said once the Select Board adopts the order of taking, then it is submitted to the registry of deeds and then a notice is issued to property owners before the infrastructure project can begin.
- It was decided that Patrice Garvin should take the lead on any responsibilities associated with this project.

- Epstein asked about the monetary amounts associated with the process? Clancy said there are two properties that require monetary action: 32 School St. (temp easement of 121 sq. feet; estimate of damages is \$1350) and 54 School St. (temporary and permanent easement: area of temporary easement is 614 sq. ft., estimate of damages is \$10,700; permanent easement is 122 sq. ft., estimate of damages is \$11,400). Mass DOT is responsible for managing the work for the Safe Routes project. Clancy said that Belmont Light met with the designer and tried to reroute some of the design plans but the attempt was unsuccessful because of challenges with the utility poles placement. The project should not take more than one to two years, but easement was taken for three years in anticipation of unseen challenges.
- Epstein asked if there is any payment to other properties affected? Clancy said that the other properties have signed a certificate of donation to give the Town and State the permission to do the work necessary. The appraisal is done according to Federal Highway guidelines. The Town is responsible for compensating the property owners.
- Adam Dash read the Order of Taking vote for the temporary and permanent easements at Wellington Elementary School.

Motion was made to approve the Order of Taking. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Town Administrator's Report

Collins Center proposals:

- Garvin met with the Director of the Collins Center to discuss grant money for summer projects. She is bringing two proposals to the Board tonight. She also sent the capital improvement ideas under discussion to Ann Marie Mahoney, Chair of the Capital Budget Committee and Jenny Fallon, Chair of the Long Term Capital Planning Committee.
- Ann Marie Mahoney commented that the capital planning piece looks similar to projects that the two committees were getting ready to bring to the Select Board in June. She feels the Capital Budget Committee has already addressed the majority of the Collins Center steps. Capital Budget has worked with the Town Treasurer, to look at short term and long term borrowing.
- Garvin said she reached out to the Collins Center because they would have the ability to look at all the Belmont departments and see what the capital needs are for each. She explained that the goal is to support the various Town committees.
- Epstein said right now it's hard to discern the level of overlap between the work of the Collins Center and the Capital Planning Committees. He thinks it would make sense if the Long Term Capital Planning group finished their work and then the Collins Center could review their report.
- Ann Marie Mahoney wants to submit the final report and then determine what needs still exist. The Long Term Capital Planning Committee has researched capital plans from other towns and are prepared to come forward with that report soon. Garvin agreed there is merit in giving the Collins Center the opportunity to review the Belmont Capital Planning Committees' report in the Fall.
- Paolillo said that the Financial Task force talked about the possibility that the Collins Center could provide guidance about the optimal software to use for the Town's new financial model. Excel may not be the best tool.

*Motion was made to make Paolillo the Select Board representative for the Human Rights Commission.
Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- May 3, 2021 – Regular Meeting
- May 5, 2021 – Regular Meeting
- May 10, 2021 – Regular Meeting
- November 9, 2020 – Regular Meeting

1. Motion to approve amended minutes from May 3, May 5, May 10, 2021 was approved by a vote of 3-0.

2. Motion to approve amended minutes from Nov. 9, 2020 was approved by a vote of 2-0. Paolillo abstained.


SELECT BOARD COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

- Warrant briefing is May 10th at 7 am.

Next special meeting is May 24, 2021.

Motion made to adjourn was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Respectfully Submitted,



PATRICE GARVIN, Town Administrator

Update on FY22 Budget

Garvin outlined changes for the final budget for Town Meeting.

- She said there have been small changes since the preliminary budget was submitted in February. The changes were made in the attempt to support services despite the unsuccessful override vote. She wants to utilize the additional revenues from the new billing amounts for ambulance receipts. Since this is recurring revenue, she would like to put the additional \$200K towards the Systems Manager position for the new high school. Since the schools wanted a Diversity Coordinator, she also wants to put \$40K of that revenue towards a diversity training or equity audit.
- Garvin said that after discussion with Glenn Clancy, it was decided that the Resident Engineer position would be eliminated at the Office of Community Development. The person in that position and the union were notified about the elimination of the position. This would reduce the Community Development Office by one full FTE.
- With the elimination of the position in Community Development and the redistribution of the work, she would like to put the savings towards a new Finance Director position in the Town Administrator's office. This position was strongly recommended by many boards and committees.
- Epstein asked if it is possible to have a new position at Community Development and Garvin replied that a Code Enforcement Officer may be added if the budget allows.

Accept Donation on behalf of the Recreation Department from Mark and Angie Gregor in the amount of \$17,000 to be used for Recreation Community Events

- Ellen Schreiber presented a \$17K check to the Town of Belmont on behalf of Mark and Angie Gregor, Belmont residents. The Gregors wanted the money to be used to promote a growing sense of optimism and normalcy this summer in Belmont. The gift was earmarked for the Garden Club and the Belmont Center Business Association. The Gregors also directed the money to be used to support outdoor movie events through the recreation department.
- Jon Marshall said that the Town is excited to receive this. This donation will enable the department to upgrade the outdoor movie project in Belmont. He added, with the new State guidance he hopes this donation will help expand the number of residents participating in this event.

Motion was made to accept the donation on behalf of the Recreation Department from Mark and Angie Gregor in the amount of \$17K to be used only for the items specified. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Accept additional donation of \$263 to cover increased cost of memorial bench for Narine Van Hal

Motion was made to accept the additional donation of \$263 to cover the increased cost of the purchase of memorial bench for Narine van Hal.

Discussion and possible vote on Select Board Liaison for the Human Rights Commission

- Mark Paolillo volunteered to be the Select Board liaison to the Human Rights commission.