

**MINUTES**  
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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2005**  
**REGULAR SESSION**  
**SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM, TOWN HALL**  
**7:00 PM**

**Call to Order**

A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order in open session on Monday, November 21, 2005 at 7:00 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room of Town Hall. All members were present. Town Administrator Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Conti were also present.

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**Questions from Town Residents**

There were no questions.

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**Action by Appointment**~~~~~

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*Discussion of Overnight Parking Ban*

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Police Chief Andrew O'Malley, Lt. Chris Donahue and Public Works Director Peter Castanino appeared before the Selectmen.

At the request of Town residents, the Board of Selectmen reviewed the continuation of the Town's overnight parking ban. Chief O'Malley stated that the Police department uses the ban as a law enforcement tool and has been able to solve one or two breaking and entering cases by tracking down cars parked in the area. Multiple tickets on a car can also give leads to crime. O'Malley would be in favor of continuing the ban.

Lt. Donahue added that there is a safety aspect. Ending the ban could create problems with public safety personnel being able to access locations on narrow roads.

Mr. Castanino noted that in the winter, there would be trouble with parked cars in plowing and sanding operations.

Chief O'Malley also noted that it is easier to see cars backing out of driveways if there are no cars parked on the street.

The Board of Selectmen expressed its unanimous opinion in favor of preserving the ban and decided to take no action in the matter.

The Board asked Chief O'Malley about whether the Town should reconsider its policy not to allow retired police officers over the age of 65 to work details.

Chief O'Malley explained that the rule was established a few years back. If the age is fixed for this issue at the same as the retirement age (65) then there are no potential age discrimination issues.

The Board asked if anything has changed that would support a review of this policy.

Chief O'Malley responded that there are a lot of details that need to be worked. But there is a liability issue.

The Board asked the Chief to formally review the policy and make a recommendation to the Board on whether or not to maintain it.

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### **Action by Consent**

*Approval of BOS Minutes (10/19/05; 10/24/05; 10/28/05)*

*Approval for Liquor License Change of Manager, Asai Restaurant*

*Approval of Criminal Offender Record Procedures (CORI) for the Belmont Youth Commission*

*Support and Verification of Council on Aging's Grant for Medi-Car Funding from Executive Office of Transportation*

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The Board of Selectmen noted that the town must approve funding 20% of the cost of a new van in order to qualify for a grant from EOTC for the remainder. This does not require approval by the Capital Budget Committee. Mr. Younger confirmed that the necessary funds will be found.

The Board moved: to approve all four of these items.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board noted the progress the Town has made on CORI checks and making sure that all Town employees and volunteers that need to be checked are being checked.

### *Discussion of Budget Options*

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Warrant Committee Chair Ralph Jones, Town Accountant Barbara Hagg, School Superintendent Peter Holland, School Business Manager Gerry Missal, School Committee Chair Elizabeth Gibson and members John Bowe, Kathy Miller, and Ann Rittenburg appeared before the Board of Selectmen.

There was discussion of some issues related to the budget process. Selectman Firenze stressed his desire to see the Town looking at and thinking about zero-based

budgeting rather than level budgeting. Selectman Brownsberger agreed and stressed the importance of controlling costs while ensuring that the departments are adequately funded. It is especially important to focus on cost control given the possibility of an operational override. Selectman Firenze added that instead of trying to cut a percentage across the board, we should be focused on fully funding the core critical activities and eliminating some of the things that are not so critical in order to not strangle core programs.

Chairman Solomon noted the need to be clear about the timeline. For example, will the Board be doing regular Saturday morning budget sessions?

Mr. Younger noted that should it become apparent that an override is necessary, it is important that the public understand what the outcome would be either way and what would be in the budget.

Superintendent Holland reported that the school budget will be presented on Tuesday, January 10, 2006.

Barbara Hagg reported that the raw figures for town departments will be given to the Warrant Committee in a couple of weeks, but the Town Administrator will be making his recommendations on January 9, 2006.

Mr. Younger informed the Board that preliminary dates available for the Board's Saturday budget meetings are: January 21 and 28, and February 4 & 11 in 2006.

Ralph Jones noted that the Warrant Committee will not make any recommendations until it has heard from the Town Administrator and the School Superintendent. The increase in revenue from Proposition 2 1/2 and new growth will pay for some of the things that will have to be in the budget like debt service and health care increases.

The Board noted that there are no union contracts outstanding.

School Committee Chair Elizabeth Gibson said that the Committee may need to wait until the first weekend in March to come before the Board because they need to clarify budgets within each of the departments.

Chairman Solomon recommended that the Board set January 21, 28, and February 4 to discuss the Town budget and March 4 for the school budget.

The Board discussed whether to have an early public meeting to discuss the possibility of an override and decided to revisit this question as the process evolves.

There was discussion of the process between the Town Administrator and the School Superintendent in working to achieve a balanced budget recommendation comprised of both areas. There was agreement that it is better to look at needs and

develop the relative percentages from there rather than head toward a somewhat arbitrary “split” which may not be based on actual needs. The Board noted with approval the cooperative process between the Town and the schools.

The Board noted it plans to have an extensive conversation about the roads’ budget at its next meeting on Nov.28<sup>th</sup>.

There was discussion of “free cash” and where it comes from, and why it often cannot be spent because of legal restrictions.

The Board of Selectmen asked Ms. Hagg if there will be a delay between getting a check from the sale of the Woodfall Road property and being able to appropriate the money. Ms. Hagg said it goes into a special revenue account and essentially will be available for appropriation right away. The Board then discussed possible uses for the money, including defraying debt costs on the Senior Center project and putting more money into the roads.

There was discussion of the Senior Center building and the possibility of substantially reducing the \$6.3 million cost with Woodfall Road money, and if cost escalation ends up being less than was estimated.

#### *Discussion of Selectmen’s Schedule*

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The Board discussed whether it should continue to meet every week. Chairman Solomon noted that it has already been agreed for the near future to have regular business in the first and third weeks and special subjects in the second and fourth weeks. He noted the agendas for the last few weeks have been relatively thin.

Selectman Firenze noted that other communities get by on two meetings a month and so has Belmont in years past. The Board of Selectmen needed to meet weekly because of the turnover in town administration, but now that the management team is in place, it may be possible to distribute a number of issues. He recommended that the Board consider meeting twice a month.

Selectman Brownsberger stated that he thought it would be preferable to meet every week and be done by 9 than to meet twice a month until 11.

Chairman Solomon said that Mr. Younger and he will look at the schedule. It may be that the Board does not need to meet December 20. There may be an occasional Monday when the Selectmen will not meet, but for now the agreement was to continue to meet weekly.

#### *Town Administrator’s Report*

- Mr. Younger reported that the goals package for the Board is completed and he will be putting it out to the Board with Chairman Solomon's comments on Wednesday.
- A traffic count is being done at White and Beech on November 22 to determine if a 4-way stop is warranted.
- Snake Hill Road sewer will be worked on over the winter. Also, Pleasant Street subsurface work will continue through the winter.
- Woodfall Road agreement work continues with Town Counsel on finalizing the Memorandum Of Understanding with the Country Club.
- Closure on the Waverley Fire Station sale is proceeding and should be completed with "check-in-hand" within a couple of weeks.

### **Other**

Selectman Brownsberger reported that he met with the Deputy Commissioner of the state Department of Conservation and Recreation on stormwater and sewer flooding and received a commitment from DCR to address issues in the Alewife basin. He is also working on scheduling a meeting with Purecoat.

There was discussion about an editorial in the paper claiming that the Town could have spent less on the Burbank oil spill remediation. Perhaps the Town should have a peer review of the process and get a "peer review", or independent professional third party assessment of how well it did on this if that speculation is out there. This could be helpful in dealing with future incidents. The Board agreed that this would be worth a small investment. The Board asked Mr. Younger to look into this and how much it might cost.

There was discussion of convening the "Mega Group" in the spring and the need for a better name for that body.

There was discussion of the proposed Wellington School project and the state's changing rules concerning school building assistance and what the timelines are. Mr. Younger noted that an expert in the state's SBA rules will be speaking to the Warrant Committee in January. If the state is not accepting projects until 2007 we need to know what that means for our timeline.

There was preliminary discussion of the issue of the building committee process in advance of the Board's upcoming meeting with the Permanent Building Committee. Building committees are appointed by the moderator, have budgets and complete authority to dispose of them, and are not answerable to the Board or the Town Meeting. We need to review and understand this process. There was discussion of

the need to be careful in addressing specific examples in cases where individuals involved may not be present to defend decisions that were made.

Mr. Conti noted that the issue arose during the Senior Center motion drafting of how to allocate the contracting authority – with the Committee solely as in the past or with the Board and that this should be addressed as part of the discussion.

There was discussion of Purecoat testing. Chairman Solomon had a discussion with Dick Betts to get a historical perspective and learned that the Town has a sewer and storm easement under the Purecoat property which none of us were aware of. There may be pipes under the property. This should be looked at more closely to see how it might affect the issue.

The Board asked Mr. Conti to summarize the parking problem on Sycamore Street. Mr. Conti explained that there has been a problem here for some time. Residents have difficulty parking on their own street due to overflow parking from Wheelworks. He noted this is a business that sees a lot of traffic on weekends, which makes it a 7-day a week problem. The Board asked about a possible solution involving two-hour parking with an exception for residents. The Board asked Mr. Conti to try to come up with a solution for this.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 PM.

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Thomas G. Younger  
Town Administrator