

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
Wednesday, February 20, 2013
8:00 AM**

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CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 8:11 am by Chair Paolillo in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Selectmen Jones was present, Selectman Rojas was not present. Town Administrator David Kale and Assistant Town Administrator Kellie Hebert were also present.

ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

Budget Meetings with Departments

The Board proceeded to meet with various departments regarding the FY14 Budget: Health, Treasury, Library, Accounting, Council on Aging (COA), Community Development, and Department of Public Works (DPW).

Health Department

Mr. Russakow, Public Health Director, and Ms. Angela Braun, Assistant Public Health Director, appeared before the Board to address the FY14 budget. Mr. Russakow reviewed the department's mission and staffing. He then reviewed that the department is spending a significant amount of time meeting state regulations and mandates. He noted that most of the department's budget is spent on salaries and personnel costs. He stated that the Veteran's Service line item has increased from \$24K to \$28K.

Mr. Russakow said that the department is taking advantage of available technology to perform its inspections. He reviewed other department programs that have been expanded: tobacco control, hazardous waste, and expanded educational outreach by utilizing the Belmont Media Center. He said he would like to have a full-time outreach coordinator to be responsible for public health education efforts and initiatives. The estimated additional cost to expand the existing part-time position is \$35K annually.

Treasury

Mr. Carman, Town Treasurer, appeared before the Board to address the department's FY14 budget. Mr. Carman explained that the Treasurer is the cash manager of the town, and that tax collection and utility payments are responsibilities of the Treasurer's office as well. He updated the Board about the recent initiatives to offer tax-payers new paperless electronic tax-billing options. This form of payment is not mandatory. It is still early in the implementation phase of this payment method. To date, very few residents have voluntarily signed up for the paperless

payment option. The Board discussed the issue of participation and inquired as to the ways the Town can encourage more people to use this option.

Mr. Carman noted that a new OPEB Policy was developed and that the Community Preservation Act Committee activities have been implemented. He noted the Town's recent debt refinancing efforts, noting that this will save Belmont tax-payers about \$1.4M over the next 10 years.

Mr. Carman then reviewed the department's expenditures and revenues. Parking fee collections are down. Parking ticket fines have not been adjusted in eight years. The Board discussed the philosophy of raising parking ticket fees. Mr. Carman said that fees in the parking lot were raised three years ago. Mr. Carman reviewed the town's debt service commitments for the Senior Center, Chenery Middle School, fire stations and Wellington Elementary School, etc.

Mr. Carman concluded his presentation by noting the department's strengths (managing debt, providing accurate data), its opportunities (centralizing the utility billings in the Treasurer's Office), and its challenges (to maintain the AAA bonding, to increase online bill paying).

The Board discussed the need to prioritize the next set of major capital projects going forward, e.g., library, pool, high school, etc. Mr. Carman said he can do some analysis to see what these projects would cost and how they would impact the tax rate.

Library

Library Director Ms. Maureen Connors and Ms. Mary Keene, from the Board of Trustees, appeared before the Board to address the FY14 budget. Ms. Connors reviewed the Library's key accomplishments: One Book One Belmont, the full-time young-adult Librarian, circulating Book Kit Bags, and technology updates, e.g., 31 Kindles, upgraded WiFi, instructional classes for portable devices, library website app, and the eBook circulation increases.

Ms. Connors reviewed the supplemental budget as well as the regular budget. She noted that the maintenance of the building line-item was increased. The Board discussed the increase in the cleaning contract which has increased by \$10K due to the impending bid process and anticipated cost increases since the last contract was negotiated a few years ago. She indicated that other budget changes are due to health insurance reallocations and other contractual obligations.

For FY14, Ms. Connors reviewed the key goals, focusing on collection development and library services. She said the library is collaborating with both the Recreation Department and School Department. Regarding opportunities, she said she would like to add a permanent year-round evening in the children's room, which would cost \$6K. An additional \$10K would allow the library to continue to build its collection of electronic resources. An additional \$4K in funding would allow the Library to maximize staff resources by hiring "call-in" staff who can work during peak times when employees are out sick.

The Board reviewed the Library's overall budget numbers. Chair Paolillo noted that it would cost \$6.6M to repair the library should the new library project not go forward. Ms. Connors replied that the \$6.6M does not include repairing/replacing the elevator or the purchase and

installation of a new boiler – both of which are now obsolete and very cumbersome and expensive to locate new parts when there are maintenance issues and equipment break downs.

Chair Paolillo informed the Board that fundraising is going forward for the proposed new library. He reviewed the project budget numbers, noting that, after the state grant, approximately \$11M will be needed from the Town, depending on fundraising efforts.

Council on Aging (“COA”)

Council on Aging Director, Ms. Nava Niv-Vogel and Ms. Penny Schafer, COA member, appeared before the Board to address the FY14 budget. Ms. Vogel reviewed the level service budget numbers. She said there are no significant budget increases. In terms of accomplishments, she noted that the Belder Bus is well utilized. She seeks outside funding wherever possible and reviewed various grants received in FY13. The rental income from the facility has remained about the same. The Board discussed the facilities rental issue, noting that it would be beneficial to the Town if the facility could be rented as often as possible.

Ms. Vogel reviewed several other program accomplishments, e.g., ethnic events, fitness classes, transportation outreach, and additional grant opportunities. She has requested \$6K in her supplemental budget to add a social worker position at 20 hours per week during the summer. Ms. Vogel explained the history of this position.

The Board took a 10-minute break.

Community Development

Community Development Director, Mr. Glenn Clancy appeared before the Board to answer questions about the department’s FY14 budget. Mr. Clancy said that the budget was basically level service. He noted several of the community development projects and road improvements being coordinated throughout the Town, highlighting the Trapelo Road Improvement Project. He acknowledged Senator Brownsberger for his work with the state Department of Transportation to keep the project moving forward.

The Board discussed the incinerator site’s potential uses going forward, including an athletic field, a solar farm and public works uses. Mr. Clancy updated the Board regarding the proposed Stormwater By-Law. He stated that development in Belmont remains robust. He then explained that the Town’s Wiring Inspector responsibilities will be regionalized with Watertown and coordinated with his department. He acknowledged that there is a current vacancy in the Planning Division, and that this is a good opportunity to analyze the existing planning processes and staffing within the department since there is a need for long-term planning efforts in the Town.

Regarding challenges, Mr. Clancy said there will be a significant impact to Belmont as a result of the mandates required by the “MPDES” Stormwater Discharge Permit. This is essentially an unfunded mandate from the federal government to manage the Town’s Stormwater discharge. The Board discussed this issue and its economic impact on Belmont.

Mr. Clancy then touched on the topic of the parking management plan for Belmont Center. He explained that he is seeking grant funding for the project, but that there are significant challenges to obtaining funding for the project because of a recent change in grant guidelines. The Board briefly discussed pavement management with regard to sidewalk repair. Mr. Clancy explained the sidewalk issue with regard to the area surrounding the Butler School. He has submitted a capital budget request to the Capital Budget Committee to fund sidewalk construction necessary for public safety reasons.

Department of Public Works (DPW)

Mr. Peter Castanino, DPW Director, Mr. Michael Santoro, Assistant Director, and Mr. Michael Bishop, Water Director, appeared before the Board to address the departments' FY14 budgets.

Mr. Castanino reviewed the department's key accomplishments in FY13, noting the Underwood Park Feasibility Project, the Underwood Pool maintenance issues, coordination with the Community Development Office, hiring a new Part-time Recycling Coordinator, activities at the the Incinerator site, work with the Energy Committee to install bike racks around town, the sidewalk program, and his work with the Stormwater By-Law.

Mr. Castanino updated the Board regarding the Underwood Park activities, feasibility study, pool maintenance issues, as well as what needs to be completed for the pool to open this summer.

Regarding key changes, Mr. Castanino explained the rationale for the changes in the FY14 budget, including contractual salary increases, increased costs for electricity and various capital needs.

Mr. Castanino stressed the importance of continuing to invest in sidewalks. He discussed how the pavement management plan intersects with the sidewalk plan. The Board agreed to consider this going forward.

Chair Paolillo asked if centralizing the Town's vehicle requests should be coordinated with DPW before new equipment requests go to the Capital Budget Committee for funding.

Regarding tree replacement, Mr. Castanino has requested \$10K (in FY14) to maintain trees around town. He said about 100 trees a year are removed and that he'd like to be able to replace the trees that are removed. He thanked the Garden Club for their generosity in helping to fund tree replacement.

Mr. Castanino said he would like to replace the staff that have been eliminated over the years due to budget constraints. Due to a lack of available staffing, some public works service delivery requests cannot be completed in the most timely fashion, e.g., litter removal, street sweeping. Additional funding for forestry services, e.g., tree trimming, would be very beneficial to the department and also for a timely response to residents when there is an issue with public trees. The rates for providing this service were raised quite considerably due to new state regulations, and therefore, additional funding needs to be allocated for this purpose. His final request would

be for additional funding to provided necessary overtime within the "Streets" division in order to meet the increasing level of service demands from residents without having adequate staffing to respond to those requests in the most timely fashion.

Mr. Castanino summarized his main goals for the coming year, including the Underwood Pool Project, the creation of the Stormwater By-Law and a new Storm-Water Enterprise Fund, former Incinerator site, Joey's Park, and the continued water main construction work.

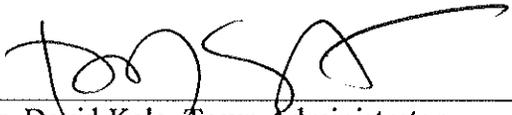
Recreation Department

Recreation Coordinator, Ms. June Howell, joined Mr. Castanino to address the Board and to answer any questions regarding the FY14 budget. The staff of the Recreation Department was recently reorganized and reports to the Department of Public Works.

NEXT MEETING:

The Board will meet on Thursday, February 21, 2013 to continue the Department Head budget meetings.

The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:15 pm.



Mr. David Kale, Town Administrator