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**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
Tuesday, March 17, 2015
8:00 AM**

CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Board (working session) was called to order in open session at 8:12 a.m. by Chair Rojas in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Selectman Paolillo was present; Selectman Baghdady was not present. Town Administrator David Kale and Assistant Town Administrator Marshall were also present. The purpose of this meeting is to review Department FY16 Budgets with Department Heads.

Ms. Nava Niv-Vogel, Council on Aging (COA)

Ms. Niv-Vogel, Director of the COA, as well as Dr. Michael Cahalane, the Chair of the COA, and Ms. Penny Schafer, former COA Chair, appeared before the Board to provide a departmental budget overview. Ms. Niv-Vogel began by stating that the COA has continued to grow in terms of people served and center programming. More people are now riding the Belder Bus. Regarding funding sources, grant sources remain a vital part of the budget. The website and newsletter are upgraded and are more user-friendly. She said the Center continues to collaborate with other Town departments.

Regarding the budget increase, Ms. Niv-Vogel noted that these were attributable to an employee moving from a single to a family health plan, as well as standard COLA raises and a copy maintenance fee increase. Departmental needs include adding COA summer hours for a social worker. The current social worker does not work in the summer.

The Board discussed utilization rates of the Center and rental rates – both of which are up from last year.

The Board thanked Ms. Vogel for her work with the COA.

Mr. Floyd Carman, Town Treasurer

Mr. Carman, Town Treasurer, Tax Collector, and Parking Clerk, appeared before the Board to provide a departmental budget overview. He reviewed the numerous responsibilities of his office, e.g., debt issuance, deposits, investment activity, parking violations, tax collecting, etc. He reviewed the staffing and budget numbers, which are largely the same.

Mr. Carman then reviewed the debt service that is issued, noting that the town maintains its AAA rating. Regarding the department's goals, he noted that, while online payments are used, this is not saving the town much money currently, but will in the future. He noted that is part of the consolidated utility billings and the collection system implementation team.

Challenges include continuing to maintain the AAA rating, as well as dealing with online security challenges to prevent hacking and banking security breaches. He raised the concern of the town's debt capacity, given the number of major capital projects that loom for the town. The Board discussed the debt capacity issue and the town's pension obligation and health care obligation, which are concerns for the town. The idea of bonding for the pension obligation was explored.

Selectman Paolillo asked about establishing a plan for the debt issuance of the major capital projects. Mr. Carman explained the notion of staging or phasing in the debt, over a period of time, as it is needed. Prioritizing the pending projects (BHS, Police Station, DPW, Library, Rink, etc.) is also a challenge the town must consider. The Town's investment income and interest rates (on the debt) was briefly discussed.

Mr. Carman raised the impact of the Uplands Project, and after decommissioning the former Belmont Municipal Light Building what will be the plan for this site to include the Police Department Building and Royal Road space, as other major concerns.

The Board thanked Mr. Carman for his report.

The Board took a one-minute recess.

Ms. Angela Braun, Health Department

Ms. Braun, Director of the Health Department, appeared before the Board to provide a departmental budget overview. Ms. Braun reviewed the responsibilities of the department. She noted the contributions of the Board of Health. She reviewed the departmental staffing and the department's accomplishments, which include changing the minimum age for nicotine products, implementing a summer intern program for sanitation issues, and several partnerships – both with other towns and within Belmont.

She apprised the Board of grants that have been pursued as well as new technology that is being implemented – notably, the use of Skype for the nurse to monitor infectious patients.

Regarding goals, she stated that she would like to implement a family flu clinic, a smoke-free housing initiative, programs concerning housing issues (hoarding), and an increase the town's Veteran's Services. Mr. Kale noted that the town will need to do an amendment to the FY16 budget for Veteran's Services.

Challenges include finding the time for grant writing (hiring a professional grant writer was briefly discussed), housing issues (income concerns, over-occupancy, etc.), and the need for more support around inspections. The Board discussed areas where more staffing would allow the town to be proactive on these issues, as opposed to just responding to complaints.

The Board thanked Ms. Braun for her report.

Chief Frizzell, Fire Department

Fire Chief Frizzell and Assistant Fire Chief Angus Davison appeared before the Board to provide a departmental budget overview. He began by introducing several new firefighters; the Board welcomed them to the force. Selectman Paolillo thanked the Fire Department for their outstanding response to vulnerable residents who are in need.

Chief Frizzell began with the ALS program, which has reached more ALS patients and, even with the reduction of mutual aid to Watertown, is still on target to meet revenue projection. The Department has been the recipient of two Federal SAFER Grant firefighter positions, which have restored staffing. He said the Senior SAFE grants that the department received have been helpful for fire prevention programs aimed at senior citizens.

He spoke to the new engine/fire truck, noting that the firefighters are receiving training and it will be placed in service in the near future. The crews have been busy shoveling out hydrants with all the recent snow. The Chief thanked the residents and the Belmont High Hockey Team for their efforts in shoveling out the fire hydrants.

Challenges include maintaining the staffing levels, given the departmental turnover. The department is expected to lose over a dozen employees over the next few years. Mr. Kale spoke to measures that will be taken to smooth out these retirements and resignations. Chief Frizzell agreed that the department is fully engaged in succession planning.

Other challenges, which dovetail into the department's goals, include modernizing technology, increasing fire prevention education, addressing the opiate rise in addictions, and the need to regionalize. The Board discussed these challenges with the Chief.

The Chief explained the FY16 budget increases and noted that he submitted no capital requests for FY16.

The Board thanked the Chief for his report concerning the Fire Department.

Ms. Emily Reardon, Library

Ms. Reardon, Interim Director of the Library, and Kathy Keohane, Library Trustee, appeared before the Board to provide a departmental budget overview. Ms. Reardon began by noting several personnel changes that have occurred at the Library. The FY16 budget is up only 0.7%, somewhat due to the salary savings based on these staffing considerations (filled with staff at lower paid grades).

Ms. Reardon touched on the new Plant Operations budget cost center, which Mr. Kale further explained that this change is part of the Library's plan to join the consolidated Facilities Department.

She noted that downloadable materials have been increased and are being well utilized. She added that the Library has applied for a CPA grant, which would put older records online. She

reviewed many of the Library's programs for residents of all ages. Over 15,000 residents have Library cards.

Regarding challenges, Ms. Reardon stated that the building remains the major challenge. It is 50 years old this year and has heating system, AC, asbestos tiles, fire suppression, and roof issues. The Board briefly discussed that the Library would like to undertake another feasibility study in order to be ready for the next state grant cycle. The ADA accommodations that are needed were briefly discussed. Lack of dedicated meeting space and the need to repair the water-damaged asbestos tiles was noted.

Ms. Reardon reviewed some of the Library's FY16 investments (\$14,663). She noted that a small shed is needed to house a snow blower.

The Board thanked Ms. Reardon and Ms. Keohane for their work on behalf of the Library.

The Board took a two-minute recess.

Mr. David Kale, Town Administrator/BOS

Mr. Kale provided the budget summary report for the Town Administrator Office and the Board of Selectmen. He began with several accomplishments, e.g., hiring a new DPW Director, three Precinct Meetings in the fall, staying within the available revenue, the FTF report, annual Town Meeting preparation, working with the Underwood Pool Building Committee, overseeing license renewals, upgrading the committee appointment process, Belmont Center Reconstruction Project, web page upgrades, Logan Airport Advisory Committee, Cable TV Advisory Committee, Green Communities, Trapelo Road project, Stormwater Bylaw, new collections for water and sewer, adopting a new Free Cash Guideline, implementation of the new Smart 911 system, Harris Field Complex, and the Grove Street Master Plan process.

Mr. Kale then outlined projects that the department will continue to pursue and make progress with, e.g., Minuteman, overseeing various construction projects, Community Path Implementation Committee, and exploring a public/private partnership for the rink.

Regarding the budget increase of 7.3%, he explained that salary increases and health benefit coverage are contributing to this, as is an increase in the legal budget. Labor and legal counsel requirements are increasing and will continue to be necessary.

Regarding the needs for the department, Mr. Kale said he will look at what resources are needed to implement the FTF recommendations, for example.

The Board thanked Mr. Kale and he in turned thanked the staff.

NEXT MEETINGS

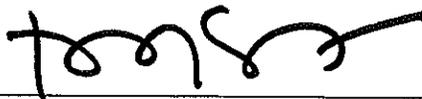
Friday, March 20, 2015 at 3:15 p.m.
Monday, March 30, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Precinct Meeting (Beech Street Center)
Precinct Meeting (Beech Street Center)

Wednesday, April 8, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

Board Meeting
Board Meeting

The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:57 a.m.



Mr. David Kale, Town Administrator

APPROVED
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
DATE: 5-28-2015