

MINUTES
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2006
REGULAR SESSION
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM, TOWN HALL
7:00 PM

Call to Order

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

Questions from Town Residents

There were no questions.

Action by Appointment

Discussion of FY07 Budget

Chairman Solomon reported that the Capital Budget Committee continues to consider the status of items that have been part of the capital budget over the years but should really be part of the operating budget. These items total about \$500,000, of which roughly half falls under the schools' responsibility and half the Town's. That would be outside of the items the Board has been considering as part of the FY07 budget process.

The Board noted that it plans to put off discussion of the budget at Town meeting until May 22 and May 24.

The Selectmen stated that they are looking forward to the results of the election next Monday and hoping for a large turnout to give some direction regarding the override question. They noted that the Board and Warrant Committee members have all agreed to endorse the letter stating the facts surrounding the override question. The letter will be sent out using private funds.

There was discussion of the financial software project. Mr. Firenze reported that one of the vendors seems to be emerging as a favorite in the process, but the central question seems to be to what degree the Town will try to do things in-house and to what degree it might choose to have some of the software administration outsourced. The decision might affect how to fund the project – whether through borrowing or a non-capital

appropriation. It would be good to have a presentation for the Board of the two options. Mr. Younger will make sure this happens.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Younger reported on the following items:

- The RFP for the fire station is out and the due date for proposals is May 15. The hope is to have a recommendation by the end of the fiscal year.
- The Town finally got a check from Roads Corporation for the police details – there is a discrepancy on the amount but they have paid most of it. The Board noted they are supposed to start work again on April 15.
- O'Neill is drafting a response to our letter to them concerning the MOA and it is hoped to have it by the end of the week.
- Granite stairs of Homer building – Facilities Director Kevin Looney does not feel that putting tape on the stairs is a good idea because the tape might come off. He is looking at possibly improving the lighting in the stairwell.
- Woodfall Road: Selectman Firenze said the country club has not yet signed the letter of intent and the issue of the proposed wetlands by-law could now have an impact on this project. There is a meeting Wednesday night of the wetlands by-law subcommittee. It is still hoped to have the letter of intent by the end of the week however. Mr. Younger said that the latest change to the language of the proposed by-law on vernal pools may have resolved any concerns relative to Woodfall Road. Selectman Firenze expressed concern that the by-law seems to be constantly changing.
- The old communication tower is gone from the cemetery and Verizon and Cingular are scheduled to appear before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for permission to provide service from the new tower. The Board asked Mr. Younger to check on an agreement that was reached concerning the height of the fence around the tower and whether it could be raised to provide greater safety and security.
- Red light traffic cameras: The Town is looking to see how this fares at the Chelmsford Town Meeting to evaluate if this should be pursued in the fall.
- Mr. Younger has investigated the allegation by the Belmont Citizens Forum that McLean has been withholding a \$500,000 sewer payment. It turns out ARC will be making a \$450,000 payment to the Town, but only when they receive a building permit. The Board asked Mr. Younger to draft an official response to the Forum and to the newspaper.
- Harvard Lawn Fire Station: There was discussion about putting something on the Warrant for April or waiting till the fall to grant the Board authorization for re-use. It is in a residential area, but what type of housing would it be and what will be the process.

Selectman Firenze noted the property is zoned for a single family or two-family house. A developer would want to put more units in and that would require a zoning change. The Board agreed to push this forward at April Town Meeting by postulating it will be residential use in keeping with the neighborhood, and a committee will be formed including neighbors to help craft the RFP for sale and review the proposals that come in. If a developer wants to change the zoning, the Town will not assist. Mr. Younger will work on a presentation for Town Meeting.

- Mr. Conti reported that he is finalizing an RFP for the Town's non-healthcare insurance coverages and hopes to send it out at the end of the week. The Town has hired a consultant to review the proposals that come in and make a recommendation. The goal is to have a complete insurance program in place by July 1.

Action by Writing

Letter from COA Director re: State DHCD Grant Approval

This is a request to grant permission to sign an application for a state grant to put in an elevator in the senior housing complex.

The Board moved: to approve the State DHCD grant request.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Discussion of Goals and Objectives - Update

Mr. Younger reviewed with the Board the status of the Board's goals and objectives by category:

- 1) Develop new sources of revenue – The Town is looking at a plan for PILOTs (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) but expects minimal opportunity there. A minimal list has been compiled of town properties less than one acre that could be disposed of. The Treasurer has been aggressively pursuing overdue payables. The administration has created a balanced budget for FY07. The Town will be looking at expanding tax mitigation options for seniors.
- 2) Plan for controlling health care costs – The Board has appointed a steering committee to discuss this with the unions.
- 3) Regionalization – Will review shared services and purchasing for FY07. Most departments are checking the state contract list for savings opportunities in purchasing. There was discussion of renewed interest by the MBTA in eliminating one of Belmont's commuter rail stops and whether the Board should look in detail at a possible consolidation.
- 4) Redefine Community Development, Economic Development, Engineering & Planning: The Town has hired a new Economic Development and Planning manager. Town administration is working on developing a process for planning in Cushing Square similar to the Belmont Center Planning Group process. The Planning Board will be

coming to the Board to discuss this. Implemented express permitting process where minor permits can be issued immediately. Plan for road construction program awaiting voter approval. Implemented monthly Board review of capital projects. Working with Belmont Center Planning Group to vision the center – “charrette” scheduled for April 1. Meeting with Glenn Clancy and Jay Szklut to clarify functional areas and work together on projects. Good cooperation with the MWRA on stormwater issues may lead to flooding control measures in Winn Brook area. Working with Conservation Commission on draft revision of open space plan.

5) Town facilities management: Developed plan for centralized school and town building maintenance for FY08. Studying ice rink privatization contracts. Receiving monthly updates on ESCO project. Approved deed for Brighton Street affordable housing – groundbreaking expected in May. Negotiating with Archdiocese for continued use of Senior Center. Coordinated input of department heads to Senior Center Building Committee. RFP for Central Fire Station completed. Preliminary review of re-use of old Light building. Presentation to Capital Planning Group on new DPW facility. Landfill stabilization fund to be created at Town Meeting with NESWC money. Security Committee established and working on a recommendation.

6) Public/private development and conservation: Working with De Milia sisters and interested developer for their property. Survey of properties pending for Trapelo Road project. Submitted recommendations to ZBA regarding Uplands 40B proposal. Selectman Brownsberger will write a letter on behalf of the Board to the ZBA tying the Uplands project to the Winn Brook sewer issue.

7) Improving communications – continuing monthly meetings with seniors. Met with web site vendor to discuss web site overhaul and expansion. Working toward a Town Administrator’s column in the newspaper. Continuing reviewing updated minutes on web site. There was discussion of a periodic newsletter to residents and what content would be included, and how to keep it from becoming too much work. This will be added to the FY07 goals list.

8) Personnel Management & Development – Annual review of department heads in process. Conducting training for department heads at no cost. Reviewing job descriptions from other towns for Chief Financial Officers – this might not be allowed under Belmont’s charter. The Board agreed to discuss the idea of a CFO at a future meeting. Town Meeting article to restructure Recreation Department management.

Other

The Board agreed to have its organizational meeting Monday evening after the election.

Town’s 150th anniversary: The ad hoc committee submitted a proposal to establish a Sesquicentennial Committee appointed by the Selectmen. The Board agreed to move forward and solicit suggestions for appointments to the committee.

The Board moved: to appoint Victoria Haase, Delores Keefe, and Richard Betts to the Sesquicentennial Committee pending their approval.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Proclamation for Retiring Firefighters

The Board moved: to sign the proclamation recognizing a number of retiring firefighters.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Mr. Conti was asked to e-mail the draft warrant for Town Meeting to the Board and Warrant Committee.

Letter from the Wheelwrights on wetlands by-law: Will be forwarded to Conservation Committee and the Board will reply to the Wheelwrights.

Selectman Brownsberger reported on the status of the town audit. The auditors presented their findings to the audit committee this afternoon and the Post Audit Committee reviewed the Town's response. The big issue will be the new accounting standards regarding bookkeeping of post-employment benefits. There will be a Town Meeting article on this. The Board agreed to revisit this after Town Meeting.

There was discussion of the punch list for the Homer Building. The Building Committee's position is that their work is done, but obviously there are items that still need to be addressed such as snow guards and signage. The Building Committee does not have enough money left for these items. Selectman Firenze suggested the Building Committee should report to the Town Meeting on the status of the project. Selectman Brownsberger suggested that it would be most effective for Selectman Firenze to meet with the Building Committee first to get some answers.

The Board moved: to go into executive session to discuss collective bargaining, litigation, and lease of real property and not to go back into open session.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board entered executive session at 10:03 PM.

(During executive session, one substantive motion passed unanimously. The Board adjourned at 10:27 PM.)

Thomas G. Younger
Town Administrator