

MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MONDAY, APRIL 9, 2007
REGULAR SESSION
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM, TOWN HALL
7:00 p.m.

I. 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.

II. QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

There were no questions.

III. ACTION BY CONSENT

A. Belmont Boosters Club permission to sponsor Fiesta Show Carnival

Chairman Firenze noted this has been an annual event in town for 25 years.

B. Approve Order of Town Warrant Articles

The Board moved: To approve both of these items.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

IV. ACTION BY WRITING

A. Recommendations for Auxiliary Police Officers for the Town of Belmont
Mr. David Kern and Mr. Colby Weston

Chairman Firenze noted that auxiliary police volunteers pay \$1200 out of their own pockets to take up this duty. Mr. Younger added that retiring Sgt. Ken Hamilton has also been recommended to work details.

The Board moved: To approve the recommendations.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

B. Used Car Dealer's License - Class II

It was clarified that this is essentially a name change on an existing license.

The Board moved: To approve the license.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

D. Cable Relicense Letter

A final draft has been prepared of a letter to the Legislature opposing legislation that would take cable licensing powers away from municipalities in favor of the state.

The Board moved: To approve the letter.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

V. ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

Hearing re Verizon Petition

Dan Fitzgibbon appeared before the Board on behalf of Verizon. The petition is to lay conduit across Pleasant Street to Olmsted Drive and what will be the new development at McLean. The goal is to get the work done before the road is paved.

Chairman Firenze noted that Community Development Director Glenn Clancy has suggested a number of conditions for approving this. Mr. Fitzgibbon said Verizon agrees to the conditions.

The Board moved: To approve the petition subject to the conditions outlined by Mr. Clancy.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

Retail Alcohol Licensing Process

Town voters have approved the authority to issue one full liquor retail license and two beer and wine retail licenses. The Board discussed how to go about issuing these and what the guidelines and regulations should be. Suggestions that were made include limiting the percentage of an applicant's sales that can come from alcohol and the floor space that can be devoted to it. Selectman Solomon said the Board needs to know what kinds of restrictions it is not allowed to impose.

Mr. Younger said that the Board can use location as a criterion, in that the Board could refuse to grant two licenses that are both within the same area of town. He said the Selectmen's Office has already had three inquiries about these licenses.

The Board discussed issuing a press release to let the business community know that the Town will be entertaining applications for liquor licenses.

C. Appointment to Project Committee

The Board proceeded to discussion of nominees to serve on the new 7-member Capital Projects Overview Committee (CPOC).

Selectman Firenze noted as an aside that the Planning Board has reached an agreement with the Senior Center Building Committee to resolve outstanding issues and the project should now be able to move forward.

The CPOC needs a Planning Board member and a Permanent Building Committee member as well as 5 others. Jay Szkut will serve as the administrative liaison.

The Planning Board has recommended Andy Rojas. Chairman Firenze nominated him.

The Board moved: To approve the nomination of Andy Rojas to the Capital Projects Overview Committee.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Permanent Building Committee has recommended Bob McLaughlin. Chairman Firenze nominated him.

The Board moved: To approve the nomination of Bob McLaughlin to the Capital Projects Overview Committee.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

Chairman Firenze listed candidates who had been previously suggested by one or more of the Selectmen and have agreed to serve if nominated: Joe DeStefano, Frank Kennedy, Bill Lovallo, Allan Vanderley, Tom Blake, Chris McVay, Lynne Polcari.

The Board discussed whether or not to enlarge the committee to 9 members rather than have to eliminate any of the very qualified candidates. Selectman Solomon noted the Committee has a great deal of work to do in a short period of time and having the extra members would allow the committee to overcome any absences.

The Board moved: To amend the mandate of the Capital Projects Overview Committee from a maximum of 7 members to a maximum of 9 members, and to approve the nomination of Joe DeStefano, Frank Kennedy, Bill Lovallo, Allan Vanderley, Tom Blake, Chris McVay, and Lynne Polcari to the committee.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

Chairman Firenze volunteered to convene the first meeting of the group.

Budget Issues

The Board discussed the appropriate amount of free cash reserves to apply to the FY08 operating budget. Mr. Younger noted that an expenditure of \$1.6 million from free cash, in addition to the \$800,000 already built into the operating budget, would technically balance the budget at level services when combined with the additional local aid just announced by the Legislature. However, a level services budget would not include a number of items the school and Town had requested.

Chairman Firenze reviewed that he had originally proposed spending an additional \$1.2 million from free cash for the operating budget plus \$600,000 for maintenance items, while Selectman Solomon had proposed spending \$2 million. Selectman LeClerc said he would support a figure of \$1.9 million of additional free cash to give the Town and schools the ability to include the most important items they feel need to be added over level service.

Chairman Firenze said his position now is to support the \$1.6 million level which was proposed by members of the Warrant Committee. Selectman LeClerc pointed out the difference between his position and Chairman Firenze's position is \$300,000. Selectman Solomon agreed to recede to the figure proposed by Selectman LeClerc's.

Selectman Solomon asked if the higher figure were spent, what items would this allow the Town and schools to add back into their budget, assuming an even split of the \$300,000 between Town and schools? Mr. Younger said the Town would prioritize its half of the new network administrator position, and an increase in the DPW sidewalk repair budget. Outgoing School Committee Chair Elizabeth Gibson said the School Committee will have to talk about this but probably the schools would also choose to fund the network administrator position, and then have to decide between full-day kindergarten and the guidance position.

The Board agreed to convey to the Warrant Committee that the Board is in agreement to spend \$2.4 million total from free cash to support a level services operating budget and is still discussing the possible use of an additional \$300,000 to support some additional services.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Younger reported that the Capital Endowment Fund Committee needs a Board member to serve as liaison in place of Will Brownsberger. It was agreed that Selectman LeCelerc will serve on this group. Selectman Solomon will continue to serve on the School Health Advisory Committee.

The Board moved: To approve those two appointments.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

Mr. Younger reported on the following items:

" The Selectmen's Office will be working on putting together a newsletter as the Board has asked.

" The financial team is also working on a 12-18 month calendar covering the FY09 budget process. The intention would be to start the budget process in the fall and make recommendations by February 2008. The Board agreed that the FY09 budget will be handled at the April 2008 Town Meeting and not deferred to a later month.

" So far this season, 6 communities have passed overrides and 6 have defeated them. There are 14 more that have been scheduled for votes.

" The Belmont Center Fire Station owner has not filed his historic preservation plan and therefore is in violation and cannot get his building permits. He has about a year to get to his occupancy permit or have to pay the Town an additional \$75,000.

" The Harvard Lawn Fire Station closing is scheduled for April 12.

" The Habitat project is on the Board's agenda to approve the deed of sale on April 23.

" Tim Richardson has signed the contract for the Light Department manager's job.

Chairman Firenze has also signed it and it merely awaits the physical signatures of the other Board members.

" Closing on the sale of the Sherman Street parcel should be in late April.

VI. OTHER

Mr. Conti updated the Board on the status of the proposed bike path from Brighton Street to Alewife. Previously, the project had been held up by concerns in the neighboring communities of Somerville and Cambridge that will host the other portions of the path. Now a right-of-way issue with a private landowner has come up with regard to the Belmont portion. Mr. Conti is working with MassHighway to negotiate with the owner and see if an agreement can be reached that is mutually beneficial to all parties.

Town Meeting Articles:

The Board moved: To approve Article 2.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: To approve Article 5.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: To approve Article 6.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: To approve Article 7.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: To approve Article 8.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

On Article 9, the Board deferred action. Mr. Conti will e-mail another copy of the Position Classification and Compensation Plan to the Board.

The Board moved: To approve Article 11.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: To approve Article 12.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: To approve Article 13.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

Action on Article 14 was deferred pending further information.

The Board moved: To approve Article 15.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: To approve Article 16.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: To approve Article 17.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

Action on Article 18 was deferred until the Board hears the report from the Planning Board.

Article 19: Chairman Firenze and Selectman Solomon expressed their opposition to the Article. Selectman LeClerc made a formal statement that advancing the Library project in this way at the same time as the Wellington School could jeopardize the success of a debt exclusion for the Wellington School project, so while he appreciates the importance of the library project, after much thought at this time he is not willing to support a library building committee. He would be willing to reconsider this position after construction begins on the Wellington School.

The Board expressed general agreement with Selectman LeClerc's statement.

The Board moved: To oppose Article 19.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board adjourned at 10:14 PM.

Thomas G. Younger
Town Administrator