

MINUTES
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BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MONDAY, MAY 8, 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

Application for Licenses and Permits – New

Used Car Dealer II License

Daniel J. Wagner DBA Superior Trading Corp, 345-347 Pleasant Street

Mr. Daniel Wagner appeared before the Board. He is a lifelong resident of Belmont and owns a used car dealership in Acton. He is seeking to transfer a license from an existing business – Belmont Seat Cover – which is selling cars now. He indicated a good part of the business would be wholesale including auctions. The Board asked if there would be more cars stored on site than at present and Mr. Wagner said no, there is not a lot of room for them anyway.

The Board moved: to grant the Used Car Dealer II license to Daniel J. Wagner DBA Superior Trading Corp.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

There was discussion of traffic flow on Horn Road. Steve Carlini of Horn Road appeared before the Board along with two other residents with a proposal to reduce traffic on that street. He said there are 15 nursery school age children living on the street and the residents are concerned for safety. The residents are proposing to make the residential portion of the road one-way westbound. He presented a petition signed by almost all the residents of Horn Road.

It was noted that the proposal will need input from the police and from the Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC), which will want to hold a public hearing.

The Board moved: to refer the issue to the TAC.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Action by Consent

Application for Licenses and Permits – Renewals

Junk, Old Metals and Second Hand Articles License

Richard W. Chandler DBA Dick's Place, 360A Trapelo Road

James and Edith Diamond DBA Fancy That, 4 Trapelo Road

Annette J. Hannon DBA As Tyme Goes By, 97 Trapelo Road

Anthony J. Sacca DBA A. Sacca Junk, 49 Baker Street

George G. Smith DBA Waverly Collectibles, 503 Trapelo Road

Carole F. Toltz DBA Antiques by Olde Mystic, 367 Trapelo Road

Ursula Weaver DBA All That Matters, 400 Trapelo Road

Laundromat License

Adam J. Tocci DBA Belmont Street Laundromat, Inc., 167 Belmont Street

Adam J. Tocci DBA Easy Does It Laundromat, Inc., 507 Common Street

Taxi License

Yellow Cab of Belmont, DBA Keegan Taxi, Belmont Cab, and Morse Taxi, 61R White Street

The Board noted a concern was raised by the Health Department regarding the Sacca Junk license about the amount of material on the side of the house and the importance of preventing items from collecting standing water.

The Board moved: to approve all the rest of the permits.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: to approve Sacca Junk's permit, conditional on the Health Director indicating that her concerns have been addressed.

Fire Chief Dave Frizzell, Assistant Fire Chief Angus Davison, and Capital Budget Committee Chair Pat Bruschi appeared before the Board to discuss a reserve fund transfer.

Chief Frizzell said the Fire Department had scheduled a truck to be replaced in FY08. It is in worse shape than had been thought so it was moved to FY07, but did not make it into the budget. During Town Meeting, the steering broke on the truck and the cab separated from the rest of the vehicle. The Fire Department would like to do an expedited replacement rather than spend money fixing a 20 year old truck and then have to replace it anyway. There is \$147,000 available in the capital budget – the recommendation is to

take the balance of the cost from the reserve fund in FY06. The Capital Budget Committee supports this. The request is for \$138,000 from the FY06 reserve fund.

Selectman Firenze said he asked some tough questions on this during the Capital Budget Committee hearings and does not see any way around this. He is very comfortable with tapping the Warrant Committee Reserve Fund for this – it is an emergency. He is satisfied this is necessary.

The Board moved: to support the reserve fund transfer.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Action by Appointment

Discussion of Roads and Street Programs

Community Development Director Glenn Clancy appeared before the Board.

Selectman Brownsberger discussed the idea of a Pavement Management Committee to allow citizen input into the long-term plan for fixing our roads, the rate to move at and which roads should be addressed. He recognized this would mean more work for Mr. Clancy, but it would create buy-in on the part of citizens who can then talk to other citizens about what is being done.

Mr. Clancy said he would welcome a new perspective. He feels, however, that committee discussions will come back around to what is known now: the roads are in tough shape and there's not enough money to fix them. There is not enough money for a separate funding source to take care of the intersections the TAC has identified as problems. Mr. Clancy has been pushing to co-ordinate the prep work needed to do a road – such as sewer and drain assessments to prevent the necessity of having to come back and dig up the road for these purposes afterward. Mr. Clancy said his priorities for FY07 are Washington and Cross Streets. The Water Department and Keyspan have already been out there planning for this. If changes the plan are contemplated it would be FY09 before the Town can effectively change course.

Selectman Firenze noted that public input is needed on whether to do curbs and design work or just repave the road, sidewalks or whatever.

Mr. Clancy acknowledged that Belmont could save money on consultants by doing no design work and just overlay the roads, but if the roads are going to be re-built is it necessary to know what the subsurface is to know how to re-build it. If this is not done the same problems will just happen again.

It was agreed this is a complex question. The Board felt that given that there are significant differences of opinion in town on this, it would be good to have the public input.

Mr. Clancy explained that it is hard to plan for the future when he doesn't have a certain source of funding for upcoming years. The Board noted the Town has committed to spend at least a million per year on the roads program in addition to Chapter 90 funds.

Mr. Clancy presented a sheet showing the projects he is planning for FY07 and FY08. He noted the work on Washington and Cross Streets focuses on the intersections near the Chenery and Winn Brook Schools to make them safer. The schedule also includes design work for the Trapelo Road reconstruction project. The FY07 projects will be ready to go for construction this summer.

It was reviewed that FY06 and earlier monies have already been allocated for construction on Bright Road and Oxford Avenue which is now getting underway.

Mr. Clancy confirmed that he is meeting with Town Counsel and others next week to develop a new street opening permit. A first draft has been created but it is too bulky and unwieldy.

It was clarified that a Pavement Management Committee would be a temporary and not a permanent committee. The Board was comfortable with the charge that Selectman Brownsberger had drafted. The committee would be tasked with preparing an interim report for the Board in January of 2007 and a final report at the April 2008 Town meeting.

The Board moved: to establish a Pavement Management Committee in accordance with the draft charge as presented and the reporting schedule as discussed.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

There was discussion of the make-up of the committee. It was clear that Mr. Clancy and Public Works Director Peter Castanino must be involved. They will talk to Mr. Younger and come up with some recommendations about who they would like to have on the committee. The Board is doing other appointments in June and might take care of these as well at that time.

The Board moved: to endorse the use of FY07 pavement management funds as outlined by Mr. Clancy and approved by the Capital Budget Committee.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Resident Gretchen McClain asked about the funding for the Grove Street/Bright Road roundabout. Mr. Clancy clarified that the project is being funded by a mix of state and town money. The state funding for Chapter 90 is based on the number of road miles we have. None of the funding for this project is from the FY07 budget – it is all from prior years.

Ms. McClain added that a resident had told her they felt they had little notice before construction started. The Board noted this has been discussed for over a year and publicized on the Town web site and in the newspaper.

Discussion of Police Chief Search / Assessment Center Proposal

Mr. Younger reported that he received 6-7 responses to the RFQ for a search firm/assessment center. He has selected three to recommend to the board. All 3 are experienced. The first is BadgeQuest which is overseen by a former Waltham police chief. This firm did the assessment center when Chief O'Malley was selected. His bid is \$13,400 plus a surcharge for reference checks, with the Town paying the cost to advertise the Chief's position. The second bid is from MMA Consulting Group for \$17,900, with the Town picking up the advertising cost but not the background checks. The third bid is \$18,200 from I/O Solutions, which would include the advertising and the background checks. All three firms had favorable references. BadgeQuest has mostly done smaller communities. MMA and I/O have done some comparable size communities to Belmont. All three met the minimum requirements.

Mr. Younger said BadgeQuest has the most economically competitive bid and has some experience working in Belmont. I/O Solutions has a very good package and reputation, but BadgeQuest is \$3-4,000 cheaper.

Chairman Solomon noted that MMA Consulting's proposal made reference to having a public meeting which the others did not. Selectman Firenze said the cost differences are minimal when one factors in the background checks and advertising. The other two organizations have deeper resources than BadgeQuest, but BadgeQuest has the experience. He noted that Mr. Younger will have to work with whichever firm that is chosen. He said he could be convinced to go with any of the three, but likes the idea of having a fresh look at this.

Selectman Brownsberger noted that I/O has a national perspective and would be free from any biases or connections to anyone in Belmont. He said the Town was satisfied with the quality of the assessment center that BadgeQuest did the last time.

Chairman Solomon and Selectman Firenze felt that I/O's presentation was sloppy and represented a cookie-cutter approach to the Town's needs. It was noted that MMA is familiar with Massachusetts but also represents an independent organization.

Mr. Younger said if I/O is taken out of the running and one looks at where the others have done external/internal assessment centers, MMA has greater qualifications. His recommendation is to keep the process as open and as possible, and for that reason would go with MMA.

The Board moved: to select MMA Consulting to conduct the search for a new police chief, including administering an assessment center.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Discussion of FY 07 Budget

The Board reviewed that last week it had tasked the Town Administrator and School Superintendent to come up with \$500,000 in additional funding for the school budget. This was done and presented to the Warrant Committee last Wednesday. The Board noted that Mr. Younger and Dr. Holland did a fine job coming to this agreement.

Mr. Younger reviewed the details of the agreement. He said the Town should be able to increase the building permit revenue projection by \$170,000. The health insurance budget item will be decreased by \$100K, because the Town is seeing an 11% and not a 12% cost increase. Belmont received \$65,000 extra in Chapter 70 local aid from the state. The \$40,000 that was saved in the Senior Center lease will be shifted to education. Finally, the schools will come up with \$124,905 from extended use of their revolving funds or other revenues. The total of these items is \$500,000. This has been agreed to by Mr. Younger and Dr. Holland on behalf of the Town and school administration.

The Board noted the Warrant Committee has approved this unanimously.

The Board moved: to approve the plan.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0). Board members repeated their congratulations to Mr. Younger and Dr. Holland.

Mr. Younger stated that the final total appropriations in FY07 for Town and school will be \$82,068,089, and this represents a balanced budget.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Younger reported on the following items:

Finalizing the Senior Center lease extension: This should be ready for next Monday's Selectmen's meeting.

Pleasant Street: Roads Corp. is back at work today and the Town will be monitoring them closely.

Harvard Lawn Fire Station Re-Use Committee: The Committee had their first meeting last week. Andy Rojas was elected chair.

Central Fire Station: Development proposals will be due Monday at noon.

Software project: Negotiations with the vendor are in the final stage.

Woodfall Road: Belmont Country Club is reviewing the land exchange agreement for Woodfall Road. Selectman Firenze said let's start preparing the RFP and have it ready to go out in 30 days if possible. This needs to move forward. It was noted that there will be fewer non-monetary considerations in reviewing the proposals than for previous development projects. There was discussion of considering an auction, provided the Town can reserve the right to reject all offers if the price is too low.

Tax collection: Mr. Carman gave notice that his tax demand letters for those who failed to pay by May 1 will be mailed out this week. There will be 312 demands for unpaid FY06 real estate taxes totaling approximately \$900,000. The Board agreed it supports the Treasurer's diligence in pursuing this and it is good fiscal policy for the Town.

Action by Writing

Solid Waste Collection and Transportation with Recycling and Yard Waste Contract

The Board moved: to sign the contract.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0).

Other

Selectman Brownsberger discussed Warrant Article 26 relative to senior property tax deferral. He said that if the Town defers taxes for someone in FY06, no changes that are subsequently voted to the deferral interest rate would apply to that, as a previous year's principal. So one person could have different fixed rates for different principal amounts. There are financial products that seniors can use to address this need such as reverse mortgages and lines of credit. Instead of going into this business, the Town could let the private sector handle this. Town Administrator Younger could talk to Assessing Director Dick Simmons about putting out an RFP to banks to be listed with the Town and shared with seniors. This might provide better service to seniors and serve greater needs and a broader population.

Mr. Younger said he had spoken with Mr. Simmons and the Assessors are looking at this. The Board deferred further discussion until next week.

The Board moved: to approve a technical change in the charge for the Town's 150th anniversary committee.

The motion was passed unanimously (3-0).

There was discussion of a ballot for municipal representatives on the Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The Board expressed its desire to have a joint meeting with the Warrant Committee and the School Committee to discuss some of the long-term budget ideas presented at the

Warrant Committee's last meeting. Chairman Solomon will discuss this with Warrant Committee chair Ralph Jones.

The Board moved: to enter into executive session to discuss litigation and not to return to open session.

The motion was carried unanimously (3-0). The Board entered executive session at 9:11 PM.

(During executive session, one substantive motion passed by unanimous vote. The Board adjourned at 10:00 PM.)

Thomas G. Younger
Town Administrator