

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
TOWN HALL AUDITORIUM
Monday, September 15, 2008
7:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 7:31 PM by Selectman Leclerc. Selectman Jones was present. (Chairman Firenze arrived at 7:32.) Town Administrator Tom Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti were also present.

QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

[There were no questions.]

ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

Verizon Petition No. D08-29, Pleasant Street

Dick Burgio, from Verizon, appeared before the Board to request permission for the placement of a conduit to Pleasant Street, which has already occurred.

The Board moved: To accept the petition No. D08-29, Pleasant Street.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

ACTION BY CONSENT

Approval of Board of Selectmen Minutes – April 7, 2008 – April 9, 2008 – April 21, 2008 – June 16, 2008 – July 7, 2008 – August 4, 2008

Chairman Firenze requested that the approval of the Minutes be postponed until the next meeting.

ACTION BY WRITING

Wellington Brook Tributary Area Agreement with Fay, Spofford, and Thorndike

The Board moved: To accept the Wellington Brook Tributary area contract agreement.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Storm Drain Culvert Headwall Replacement Contract with Greener Excavating

The Board moved: To accept the Storm Drain Culvert contract with Greener Excavating.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

OTHER

Chair Firenze discussed that the Baker home/Underwood estate property is on the market for sale. There are endless possibilities for the town to use that property, he said, but that it was probable that the town could not move quickly enough to act on purchasing the property.

ACTION BY APPOINTMENT (*continued*)

Cross Street and Channing Road

Town Engineer Glenn Clancy appeared before the Board to discuss the intersection of Cross Street and Channing Road. Chair Firenze provided some background information on this issue. After the roads override failed last April, this intersection could no longer be included in the Pavement Management Plan. A decision was made to use the limited available funds for major road surfaces only. The Cross and Channing Road neighbors made an appeal last summer, he continued, but the Board upheld its decision (although not unanimously) to not address this intersection.

Chair Firenze then posed two questions to Mr. Clancy: 1) If only one intersection in town was to be reworked, would you choose to do this particular intersection? 2) Is there anything that can be done at this intersection to provide similar benefits short of a redesign? Mr. Clancy responded that, no, he would not single out this intersection at this time over others. Clancy added that intersections are not usually redesigned outside of pavement management road construction. As for what else could be done at the Cross/Channing intersection, Mr. Clancy offered that some changes in pavement markings could be successful there.

Selectman Leclerc stated that he was confused and was under the impression that even if the override failed that this intersection had been voted on separately and would be redesigned. Leclerc added that this intersection is of a high priority as it impacts Belmont Center. Chair Firenze responded that the money is simply not available to go forward with this intersection. Selectman Jones added that although the intersection was approved by the Board in March, that vote cannot be binding since the money is not there going forward in light of the override's failure.

Mr. Clancy stated that the Belmont Center roads are slated for work in 2011 and that that may be an appropriate time to tackle the Cross/Channing intersection.

Resident Steve Marlin of 38 Channing Road said that this intersection poses a safety issue and has been identified as such since 2001. He said that the March 31st Board of Selectmen vote was unanimous, with no spoken contingency upon the override failing.

Karen Funkenstein of 27 Channing Road asked why the Board would have made a decision based on money it didn't have. Chair Firenze apologized to that point. Chair Firenze requested that Mr. Clancy look at the intersection and try to address its safety concerns without exceeding available funding.

Recycling Committee – Update

Members from the Recycling Committee appeared before the Board to give an update on the committee's progress, and the industry trends, as well as the impact on contracts and user fees. Committee Chair Doug Koplow said recycling in Belmont is up from 33% to 40% and the town's schools are now recycling paper. Cardboard and juice boxes have been added to the program. Increased recycling could save the town upwards of \$150,000 a year. Contract re-bids are upcoming. Single stream (one container) recycling is likely in the near future. Options to increase recycling include: formal enforcement of a waste ban (whereby un-recycled items that qualify for recycling would not be picked up), municipal buildings could be charged fees for not recycling, "pay as you throw" programs could charge trash fees to residents, and improved outreach and education could be achieved through hiring a part-time recycling coordinator.

The Board expressed concerns over enforcement of these options and asked that the Recycling Committee check to see how other towns are dealing with these different options.

Committee Appointments

Selectman Leclerc began by stating that he felt embarrassed that the Board did not let its "9 years of service maximum" policy be known via a letter to every single committee member, prior to the decisions reached at the Board's last meeting. The Board of Selectmen then discussed some of the decisions that were reached at last week's meeting. In some cases, Chair Firenze said, committees need new people and other committees are fine with people who have served for years. The simple solution is to enforce the nine year rule. Selectman Leclerc responded that philosophically, he was fine with the 9 year rule, but he was not satisfied with how it was implemented last week. Town Administrator Conti added that term limits in general were discussed last year, and that the 3 term limit was discussed extensively. Chair Firenze offered that this Board established a 9 year limit guideline; it is not policy.

Recreation Commission. The Board decided to hear from the candidates. They will be invited to appear before the Board at an upcoming meeting.

Council on Aging. The Board decided to invite members in to discuss their views on reappointments.

Zoning Board of Appeals. The Board decided that each Board of Selectmen member will come back to the table with a ZBA nominee to fill the 2 permanent and 2 associate openings.

Planning Board. The Board decided to invite Karl Haglund in to appear before the Board. The Board of Selectmen will make its appointment decisions based on that conversation.

Historic District Commission. The Board decided to invite the members in and make its appointment decisions at that time.

Human Rights Commission. The Board will need to decide if this committee should remain in existence.

McLean Land Management Committee.

The Board moved: To appoint Mr. Carere.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Youth Commission. The Board may present to Town Meeting the option of rolling the Youth Commission into the Recreation Commission.

Town Counsel. Chair Firenze suggested that, in the future, it would be helpful to go out and see what candidates are available before automatically reappointing. Mr. Younger recommended reappointing Mr. Giorgio for this year (i.e., until June 30, 2009) but he will advertise next Spring for new candidates.

The Board moved: To reappoint Mr. Giorgio to Town Counsel.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Belmont Housing Trust.

The Board moved: To rescind the one year appointment of Roger Colton and to reduce the committee from 11 to 9 members.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Younger spoke on the following:

- Mass Municipal Association (MMA) is holding its legislative meeting on October 10, 2008.
- Fall Leaf Disposal – From Oct. 27 to Dec. 13, residents can dispose of leaves at the town yard station.
- Self-Insurance of the Town's health care has been successful to date.
- Moore St. – Work continues this week, Pleasant Street has markings.
- Cushing Village – The parking lot proposal received one bid.
- Vacant Building Policy fees – Chair Firenze requested that the Assessors discuss this at a future Board meeting.

- Energy Update – The \$177,000 deficit is being addressed by reducing the budget via: no EMS software, no new cruiser, no imaging software, a recommendation to close the Benton library branch, not lighting the track during evenings when no sports are scheduled, and fewer evening meetings at Town Hall.

Chair Firenze chose this time to address the issue of the proposal to reduce the town's street lighting. An original suggestion to turn off "some" town lights since became a proposal to turn off "two thirds" of our lights, which then became "leaving main streets on and turning off the rest of the town's lights," began Chair Firenze. He continued: A decision has not yet been made (in fact no change has been implemented). While some potential savings may exist, we won't jeopardize safety to achieve those savings. If implemented, we will do a more thorough job of understanding the consequences and will do it on trial basis first to see if it works. This will need to make economic sense (be cost effective) with the safety impact considered. Assistant Town Administrator Conti noted that the budget for FY09 was cut on the assumption that street lighting would be cut to some extent. If the town decides to not shut off lights, he said, something else will need to be cut since the budget has already been reduced.

Executive Session

The Board moved: To enter into executive session at 10:21 PM to discuss value of real property and contract negotiations. The Board will not be returning to Open Session.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

(During executive session no substantive motions were made. The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:13 pm.)

Thomas G. Younger, Town Administrator