

**MINUTES  
TOWN OF BELMONT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM  
Monday, September 21, 2009  
7:00 PM**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Leclerc in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Selectmen Firenze and Jones were present. Town Administrator Tom Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti were also present.

**QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS**

There were none.

**ACTION BY WRITING**

**Chenery Middle School – Refunding 1996 Debt**

Mr. Carman and Ms. Keefe appeared before the Board regarding the Chenery bond. Refinancing the Chenery debt for the remaining six years of the bond at a lower interest rate will save the town some money (several thousand dollars), explained Mr. Carman.

*The Board moved:* To approve the refinancing of the Chenery Middle School bond.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board members signed the appropriate bond papers.

The Board discussed with Mr. Carman the legislative process underway pertaining to the rewording of the Wellington ballot initiative.

**ACTION BY APPOINTMENT**

**Climate Action Plan (CAP) Report – Discussion**

Members of Sustainable Belmont, including Chair Jan Kruse and Vice Chair John McAlpin, appeared before the Board to discuss the Climate Action Plan (CAP). Sustainable Belmont, explained Ms. Kruse, was mandated by the Vision 21 Committee to support Belmont in being an environmentally responsible community and to reduce effects of climate change. The formulation of the CAP began 3.5 years ago. The benefits of implementing this plan include: saving money, reducing dependence on non-domestic

fuel sources, improving health, reducing oil spills, and refocusing domestic jobs on renewable energy. This is part of a larger effort throughout Massachusetts. Unfortunately, the US is the leader in carbon emissions. Mr. McAlpin explained that Belmont's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are about 277 tons, which comes from residents' homes and cars. The CAP has been publicly vetted last spring and summer throughout the town.

The goal of the CAP, explained Ms. Kruse, is a 4% emissions reduction each year, which will result in an 80% reduction by 2050. This is necessary to avoid the worst effects from CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The CAP is recommending the practice of both energy conservation and improving energy efficiency. The report recommends the following: emphasizing conservation, improving efficiency, and promoting the use of alternative energy. Some changes may cost money up front, but will save money over a period of time. The BMLD is offering an energy saving program. Behavior changes will help as well (e.g. biking, car pooling, etc.)

In summary, Ms. Kruse stated that the CAP offers 75 voluntary recommendations and desires community support for the plan. The 80% reduction by 2050 is doable if it is broken down into small bites. The time to begin is now; this will ultimately save money for Belmont.

The Board acknowledged the group on such a comprehensive and thorough report. Chair Leclerc said he would like to submit "support for this plan" as a Warrant article for the fall Town Meeting. Selectman Firenze said that feels rushed.

A member of the audience commented on the report: Mr. Monty Allen, a Town Meeting member from Precinct 8, noted that issues relating to climate change will increase poverty and cause millions of people to leave their homes. He said he hopes that Belmont will recognize the importance of climate change and that the leadership of Belmont will support and endorse this plan.

*The Board moved:* To accept the report as submitted by Sustainable Belmont at this evening's Board meeting.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

There followed some discussion of the resolution expressing support for the CAP and how to move it forward.

Chair Leclerc said that while Sustainable Belmont came up with a realistic approach, he would like to amend the resolution (in Part B.) the word "powers" and replace it with "function."

*The Board moved:* To change the word "powers" to "function".

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Selectman Jones said that he likes that this plan is cost-effective and focuses on conservation, efficiency, and education. Selectman Firenze noted that this is the right thing to do, but is concerned that the fall Town Meeting is only 6 weeks away.

The Board discussed that the Energy Committee mentioned in the resolution should *review* the CAP document rather than have to take its provisions as binding.

*The Board moved:* To change the word “use” in item (d.) to “review”.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Chair Leclerc proposed to add at the end of item 1 “through appropriate recognition of energy conservation” to the document.

*The Board moved:* To add at the end of item (1.) the phrase “through appropriate recognition of energy conservation.”  
The motion passed (2-0). Selectman Jones abstained and said he was fine with the way it was written.

Selectman Firenze proposed that changes be implemented within the scope of the Energy Committee to monitor so as to not add responsibilities to town department heads.

*The Board moved:* To add a new item (6.) “that these recommendations are to be accomplished by the Energy Committee.”  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board agreed not to require the Energy Committee to report directly to Town Meeting

*The Board moved:* To replace in item (5.) the wording “the Belmont Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting” with the wording “town through the Board of Selectmen”.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0)

The Board opted to postpone voting on the main resolution until these changes were incorporated into the document. They will vote on it at the next Board meeting (10/5/09).

### **Core Services Discussion – Clayton Christensen**

Dr. Clayton Christensen, a town resident and Harvard Business School professor, appeared before the Board to share his insights on the issue of core Town services. He noted that he had created a survey in the mid-1990s on this topic and offered to assist in re-doing it. The survey asked a random sample of residents what services/items they value and whether they would be willing to pay more or less for different levels of service. Residents, he explained, made their choices understanding the benefits, the reductions, and where money would be saved or spent. The survey asked about the pool, the library, roads, a new Senior Center, etc. Roads and schools rated high, Christensen

explained, while a new Senior Center rated low and the library was marginal. Given this data, he said, events since then have seen governance by advocacy not democracy. In attempting to replicate that study, the Board of Selectmen would gain a sense of what matters to the broad population. Dr. Christensen added that there is a perception that this town has not been led.

Chair Leclerc responded that leaders are elected to consider their values on decisions that are made; they are not automatons of polling data. The Board of Selectmen rely on a mix of good data, values, and leadership. Leclerc said he supports gathering public opinion data, but that all decisions can't be based solely on the data. Selectman Jones said he'd like to move this idea forward and get a sense of public interest. Selectman Firenze said that data is important and that he too has not been happy with how money was spent. There is a lack of trust on how to spend money and this data will provide the ammunition needed to make hard decisions.

No further action was taken.

## **Committee Appointments**

### ***Vision 21***

The Board discussed the new appointments to the Vision 21 Committee. Dr. Paul Solomon in the audience noted that Mr. Bruce MacDonald and Mr. Kevin Heine have expressed interest in the Vision 21 Committee. Selectman Firenze said he would like to get members appointed who have been in town for a while. Dr. Solomon noted that Bruce MacDonald had been a Belmont resident for over 30 years.

*The Board moved:* To appoint Mr. Kevin Heine and Mr. Bruce MacDonald to the Vision 21 Committee.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### ***Board of Registrars***

*The Board moved:* To reappoint Mr. Bill Hofmann and Mr. Robert McGaw to the Board of Registrars.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### ***Minuteman Study Committee***

Chair Leclerc reviewed how the Minuteman Study Committee came into being. Selectman Firenze asked if either Ann Paulsen or Representative Brownsberger could be a part of the committee to discuss regionalization of vocational schools.

*The Board moved:* To appoint Chair Leclerc as the BOS representative and full voting member of the committee.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

*The Board moved:* To appoint Mr. Carl Brauer to the Minuteman Study Committee.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### ***Disability Access Committee***

Selectman Firenze stated that concerns have arisen regarding handicapped access. For example, there are no handicapped facilities or parking at the new field at the high school. This committee, he said, is understaffed. He encouraged them to make their needs known and to find people to sit on the committee.

Ms. Laurie Graham spoke from the audience about the requirements of the committee. By law, some members must be individuals with disabilities or family members of a disabled person. This necessarily limits the applicant pool.

The Board discussed disability access issues and the need for the town to address this issue.

### ***Traffic Advisory Committee***

*The Board moved:* To appoint Ms. Dana Miller to the Traffic Advisory Committee.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### **Town Administrator's Report**

Mr. Younger reported on the following items:

- The Beech Street Center will have its dedication ceremony on Saturday, September 26th at 2:30 p.m. The Center will be furnished in mid-October.
- The Media Center Open House will be on Saturday, October 3rd.
- Mr. Younger will meet with Attorney Monahan regarding the VFW liquor license.
- The High School driveway needs speed bumps.

### **ACTION BY CONSENT**

#### **Approval of Special Election on January 19, 2010**

*The Board moved:* To approve the Special Election for January 19, 2010.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Mr. Younger noted that since this is a state mandate, it may be funded (in part) by the state.

## **OTHER**

- *School-Related Traffic Concerns.* No one is taking a full view of the traffic flow problems at all the elementary schools. Remote drop offs, one way streets, school busing need to be further analyzed. Selectman Firenze said he would like to see an appointed committee formed to address these issues across the schools. The solutions for one school could positively impact other schools. Firenze suggested that the School Department put a traffic committee together.
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- Ms. Laurie Graham, from the audience, said that the School Committee and the WBC (both of which she is a member) feels it doesn't have responsibility to create a traffic advisory task force to deal with issues. Firenze replied that the School Department can make recommendations on many of these things. Ms. Graham noted that the School Committee will be discussing this at a future meeting.
- *Belmont Youth Basketball Association (BYBA).* Selectman Firenze asked about the issues relating to their insurance coverage. Mr. Conti replied that there are two ways: the BYBA can get coverage as an independent volunteer group that has their own charter and insurance, or BYBA can be covered as part of the Recreation Department (covered under the town insurance policy).

Chair Leclerc would like to reduce the number of items under "OTHER" and see them placed as items on the actual agenda.

### **Executive Session**

The Board moved to enter into executive session to discuss litigation at 9:49 p.m. The Board will not return to open session.

*(During executive session, no substantive motions were made. The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 pm.)*

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Thomas G. Younger, Town Administrator