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**MINUTES  
TOWN OF BELMONT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM  
Monday, January 26, 2015  
8:00 AM**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 8:12 a.m. by Chair Rojas in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Selectmen Baghdady and Paolillo were present. Town Administrator David Kale and Assistant Town Administrator Marshall were also present.

Chair Rojas turned to the first item on the agenda.

**QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS**

[There were none.]

**ACTION BY APPOINTMENT**

**Introduction of the new DPW Director**

Mr. Jay Marcotte, DPW Director, was introduced by Mr. Kale who reviewed the experience that Mr. Marcotte brings to the Town of Belmont. Mr. Marcotte thanked the Board, Mr. Kale, and Ms. Marshall, and expressed his pleasure in being in Belmont.

The Board welcomed Mr. Marcotte.

**Introduction of the new Veteran Service Officer**

Mr. Robert Upton, Veteran Service Officer, appeared before the Board. Mr. Kale provided a brief introduction to Mr. Upton, who then thanked the Board and Mr. Kale. He expressed his appreciation for being in this role and provided background information he brings to the position including an understanding of Veteran benefits, and planning the Memorial Day Parade, etc.

The Board welcomed Mr. Upton.

**Financial Task Force (FTF) Final Report Presentation**

Members of the FTF – Superintendent Phelan, Finance Director Mr. DiCologero, SC Chair Slap, Treasurer Mr. Carman, Ms. Graham, Ms. Helgen, CBC Chair Ms. Mahoney, and Mr. Angelo Firenze – appeared before the Board to provide a FTF Final Report update.

FTF Chair Paolillo reviewed the mission of the task force and noted that the FTF will stay together to continue reviewing and compiling relevant information. He then thanked Mr. Kale

for his efforts in creating the Final Report with other members of the FTF. FTF Chair Paollilo noted that the FTF unanimously approved the recommendations to the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Kale introduced the FTF members, outlined the five working groups (Education, Revenue Opportunities, Capital Projects, Town Government, and Financial Projections), reviewed the FTF mission, and then summarized the key findings.

#### ***A. Education***

Superintendent Phelan reviewed the Education Group's information-gathering process and noted that increased enrollment and the social emotional learning needs of the student body are the major pressure points that require attention and funding. Increased enrollment will impact the Schools need for additional space, as well.

***Recommendation One:*** Increased enrollment will require additional staffing projected for 20 positions over the next three years. He detailed the need for additional positions due to expanding class sizes, the number of non-engaged learning periods at the middle school student schedules and high school student schedules, increasing English Language Learner (ELL) population for whom services and instruction are state mandated, needs for additional guidance counselors at the middle school, and technology support.

***Recommendation Two:*** The second recommendation concerns aligning budget expenditures with key areas of the FY15 shortfall. He explained the current budget year shortfall, noting that mandated services generate bills that must be paid by statute. These services are primarily in the areas of Special Education Tuitions, Transportation and Contracted Services.

***Recommendation Three:*** The final recommendation pertains to requirements for adequate classroom space due to increased district enrollment. The Belmont School system is expected to require temporary modular classroom space, with the imminent need for permanent classroom space across all grade levels. He noted that available space is a real and concerning issue in the short term and long term.

The Board expressed its appreciation for the work that went into this report. Selectman Baghdady asked how long the 20 positions will support the increasing enrollment, and whether the enrollment analysis includes possible new developments in the Town of Belmont. Superintendent Phelan said that this additional staffing should handle enrollment for the next three years and that, yes, enrollment estimates from the new development areas was included.

Selectman Paolillo spoke about the proposed override question that would be needed to fund costs of the Town of Belmont for several years into the future. However, major capital needs will need to be addressed independently of the recommendations of the FTF such as potential new high school, DPW facility, Police Station, Library, etc.

## ***B. Revenue Opportunities***

Mr. Carman listed the members of this working group and summarized the key Revenue Opportunity findings.

Key findings include:

- Belmont's current fees are comparable with other towns.
- Cellular Antennas – Belmont is currently getting tax revenue.
- Parking fee changes – will result in \$50,000 of additional revenue to cover current expenses.
- Revenue opportunities for the Recreation assets such as swimming pools and skating rink should be explored for implementation.
- A Recreational Manager should be considered to manage town and school recreational programs, facilities, and fields.
- Town-owned land located on Woodfall Road, Pleasant Street, Mill Street and Orchard Street should be evaluated for best use and optional sources of revenue.
- Current parking options for additional parking spaces in addition to the Parking Management plan for Belmont Center, should be explored.
- A field management task force (for all field stakeholders) should be created.

The Board discussed the need for additional commercial development across town as well as the need to continue addressing PILOT possibilities.

## ***C. Capital Projects***

Ms. Mahoney summarized the Capital Projects Group key findings. The focus, she said, fell into two categories: analyzing the annual capital budget (pay-as-you-go), and the long-term outstanding building projects.

She reviewed the funding of the annual capital budget, noting that it needs to be increased to \$3M to fund a larger percentage of priority requests. The requests include necessary equipment items, which impact safety.

Ms. Mahoney reviewed capital projects that have been addressed in the past decade, including two Fire Stations, the Beech Street Center, Wellington School, and Harris Field. Projects that are currently underway include the Underwood pool, the Light Department sub-station, Belmont Center Reconstruction.

Capital projects which require answers on location and funding sources that still need to be addressed are the following with estimates:

- 1 – BHS - \$70M (after estimated MSBA grant) - location is identified
- 2 – Reuse of the former Incinerator Site - \$2M – athletic fields or other uses such as a municipal building or a solar farm
- 3 – DPW - \$28M – location is identified

- 4 – Library - \$18M – timing of state grant funding is unclear
- 5 – Police Station - \$20M, location is undecided

She added that there are many other items on the horizon such as the cost of modular classroom space for the schools, elementary school upgrades for older buildings, future Minuteman capital expenses, the skating rink, and various equipment upgrades.

Recommendations include additional funding for roads (\$300,000), sidewalks (\$200,000), debt service (\$120,000 in FY16 and FY17), to leverage \$1,000,000 in capital request.

The Board briefly discussed the capital needs, noting that each identified project represents a dire need for the community.

#### ***D. Town Government***

Mr. Kale summarized the Town Government working group's key findings. Staffing levels and services were looked at across the departments (DPW, Police, and Fire). Arlington and Winchester were assessed for insights into towns that are similar to Belmont. The group analyzed essential and non-essential services as well as possible increased efficiencies across town (technology, collaboration, and/or regionalization).

Staffing is clearly down, which forces town departments to be creative in continuing to deliver services. He reviewed current collaboration efforts across town departments. Regionalization requires involvement at the state level in order to smooth out statutory obligations, funding differences, union and bargaining issues, operational and liability matters.

Selectman Paolillo reviewed recommendations including:

- Establish an incentive bonus pool for departments to reward them for innovative and cost-saving ideas.
- Continue to explore regionalization/collaboration with other communities.
- Continue to collaborate and share innovative ideas with other comparable communities.
- Work more closely with state legislatures to lobby for state-level changes in health care, OPEB, and overall pension costs.

The Board expressed support for these recommendations.

#### ***E. Financial Projections***

Mr. Kale stated that this group worked with a large number of key personnel across town in creating the model and the projections. Belmont's budget is mostly comprised of property tax revenue 80% with 9% coming from state aid. Based on the current year state budget shortfall, it is prudent to assume State aid will, at best, be level-funded. Mr. Kale then reviewed how free cash is funded and replenished.

Mr. Kale turned to the issue of the current school budget deficit. The budget freezes that have been implemented have not had an impact on this net deficit. Some additional Special Education costs have been incurred. He informed the Board that the SPED circuit breaker funds, LABBB credits, and revolving funds have all been exhausted in being applied to the budget. He briefly reviewed the increasing enrollment numbers, noting that SPED costs for out-of-district tuitions and ELL staffing requirements increase when enrollment increases.

He then reviewed the Town's projected *cumulative* shortfalls: \$7.7M through FY19, with a \$4.5 shortfall through FY17. He detailed that funding would be applied to roadway improvements, municipal bonds to address capital needs and \$650,000 to fund additional teaching positions and other educational needs.

Non Tax Revenue sources such as building permit fees, parking lot fee increases, commuter parking fees, new growth/development were reviewed.

Recommendations include:

- a. Utilize the FY15-19 model for budget projections as a framework for future budget planning
- b. Implement the Revenue Working Group's recommendations whenever possible
- c. Request that the Board of Selectmen consider placing a \$4.5M operating override on the April 2015 ballot

He noted that the FTF added that any excess levy capacity and/or budget savings would be put into an override stabilization fund to be used for fiscal year 2017 and 2018 to address anticipated budget shortfalls described in the Report.

### ***Considering an Operating Override***

Selectman Paolillo laid out the operating override rationale. He stated that the override request is a fiscally prudent measure for the Town, noting that \$4.5 would get the town through the next three years. \$7.7M felt like too much to ask of the residents.

Chair Rojas expressed support for the FTF recommendations. He said the report lays out the override rationale. The Board of Selectmen will continue deliberating the recommendations.

An operating override recommendation of \$4.5M was discussed in some detail. Selectman Baghdady stressed the point of leveraging the \$4.5M over the next several years.

Mr. Firenze offered a different perspective, noting that the \$4.5M number is large. He said that perhaps the amount could be less, given other revenue sources – the potential sale of town-owned land, building permits for large projects, etc.

The Board thanked the FTF for its report.

The Board took a two-minute recess.

### **Review and Vote on the Annual Town Meeting (TM) Warrant**

Ms. Marshall provided the dates and details regarding the TM Warrant. The Warrant will open on February 2, 2015 and close on March 2, 2015.

*The Board moved:* To open and close the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting on the dates noted above.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### **Acceptance of a letter of resignation from the Board of Selectmen's Representative on the Belmont Media Center Board of Directors**

Mr. Kale informed the Board that Ms. Carol Yelverton has resigned. He noted that applications are being received to replace her.

*The Board moved:* To accept the letter of resignation from Ms. Yelverton from the Belmont Media Center Board of Directors.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### **Acceptance of a letter of resignation from a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)**

Mr. Kale informed the Board that Mr. James R. Fagan resigned from the ZBA. An applicant will need to be appointed in the near future.

*The Board moved:* To accept the letter of resignation from Mr. Fagan from the ZBA.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

### **Approval of a request to change the manager of record on the Wine and Beer Restaurant Liquor License at Stone Hearth Pizza**

Mr. Kale provided the details of the management change. Selectman Baghdady noted that the application is incomplete. Voting will be deferred to the next meeting.

### **Proclamation for Ms. Zoe Colt**

Chair Rojas read the Proclamation. The Board congratulated Ms. Colt.

*The Board moved:* To approve the Proclamation.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

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

Mr. Kale will give his report at the next meeting.

## **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

December 30, 2014

*The Board moved:* To approve the meeting minutes of 12/30/14.  
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

## **NEXT MEETINGS**

Monday, February 2, 2015 at 7:00

Monday, February 9, 2015 at 6:00 – Joint with SC

Monday, February 23, 2015 at 7:00

## **Executive Session**

*The Board moved:* To enter into executive session at 10:28 a.m. to discuss strategy sessions with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the public body and the Chair so declares. The Board will not return to open session.

A roll call vote was taken: Chair Rojas said aye, Selectman Baghdady and Paolillo also said aye and the motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:43 a.m.



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Mr. David Kale, Town Administrator