

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
Monday, January 10, 2011
7:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 7:00 pm by Chair Jones in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Selectmen Firenze was present; Selectman Paolillo was not present. Town Administrator Tom Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti were present.

Chair Jones requested a moment of silence for victims of the Tuscon, AZ shooting.

QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

[There were none.]

ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

Health, Safety, and Security Committee

Director of Nursing Rosemary Peterson, BHS Principal Mike Harvey, CMS Principal Kristen St. George, and members of the Health, Safety, and Security Committee appeared before the Board to discuss the data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The Survey was administered last spring to students in grades 7 through 12.

Ms. Peterson introduced herself to the Board of Selectmen. She began with a brief overview of the survey, noting that it was developed by the CDC and first used in 2000. The survey aims to identify key health risks associated with middle and high school students. The survey is voluntary and anonymous. 96% of CMS students and 93% of BHS students participated in the survey. Belmont contracted with Northeast Health Resources (NHR) to help administer the test and compile the results. Funding for the survey came from several sources (School Department, PTOs, and DARE).

Chenery Middle School Findings

Ms. St. George reviewed the data from the following areas:

- Personal Safety: 136 kids rarely wear helmets.
 - Violence: 11 students reported having carried a weapon to school, and 152 students reported having been in physical fights in the past 12 months.

- Suicide: 57 students reported hurting or injuring themselves on purpose, 38 reported seriously thinking about suicide, 24 have made a suicide plan, and 14 have attempted suicide.
- Substance Abuse: 108 students reported having used alcohol, 33 students reported using marijuana, and 12 students used cocaine.
- Bullying: 187 students reported having been bullied in the past 12 months.
- Sexual Behaviors: 31 students reported having had sexual intercourse.
- Physical Attributes: 112 students consider themselves overweight, and 177 are trying to lose weight.
- Screens: 55 students reported spending 4 hours a day on average in front of a screen.

Ms. St. George noted that, based on these results, CMS is working to revise its handbook, and has participated in the new anti-bullying policy (which has been submitted to the state and will also be incorporated into the CMS handbook). Chair Jones asked why bullying is so high at the middle school. Ms. St. George replied that developmentally this age group has a lack of social skills and there is a belief that if they focus on another person, it takes the focus off them. Selectman Firenze asked what piece of data is the most astounding. Ms. St. George replied that the wide variety of areas impacted show how much stress the students are under.

Belmont High School Findings

Dr. Harvey began by saying that, while there were no big surprises, there were some troubling areas reflected in the results. 984 students were surveyed at the high school and 1% is equivalent to 10 students.

Dr. Harvey reviewed the data from the following areas of concern:

- Dating Violence: 56 students reported a “dating-based assault.” Chair Jones asked why males are reporting such a high rate of dating violence. Dr. Harvey replied that males are subject to dating violence as well as females.
- Suicide: 900 reported feeling overwhelmed and under stress, 100 have considered suicide, 78 have attempted suicide (with 22 needing medical attention).
- Alcohol: 394 reported that alcohol is allowed by parents, and 445 reported having had one drink in the past 30 days. 97% reported not having drunk on school property. 297 kids reported having binge drunk (more than 5 drinks in a short period of time) in the past 30 days.
- Marijuana: 40% reported having tried it once, and 22% have used it 10 times in their life.
- Prescription Drugs: 15% report using prescription drugs not prescribed to them.
- Drugs: 238 reported being offered, sold, or given drugs on school property.

Dr. Harvey noted that both alcohol and marijuana use are not happening on school grounds, which leads to parental and community involvement. However, there is some level of drug activity happening on campus as noted in the 238 who have reported “being offered, sold or given drugs on school property.” Chair Jones noted that the school resource officer (SRO) remains a high priority. He also noted that the numbers on bullying are consistent with state and national trends, and that this issue tends to get better as the kids get older.

Regarding the use of alcohol, Dr. Harvey said that the schools provide education and make it clear that these are not acceptable behaviors. The school has set very clear expectations but these expectations need to be set at home. The school has engineered events to reduce alcohol use, e.g., the dance contracts, the Promenade event, enforcing and strengthening the MIAA policy.

Discussion

As for next steps, Dr. Harvey asked: Should the SRO position be revisited? And how do we fully engage the entire community as the school staff is not at house parties on a Saturday night. Belmont has been lucky so far in averting a tragedy, he said, but he is concerned that we are “pressing our luck.”

Ms. Jeanne Mooney, TM member from Precinct 6, requested the full survey and the full survey results. She noted that Belmont is very much like the rest of the state, and that prescription drug use is a fast growing area of abuse.

Dr. Alper, from the Board of Health, offered that the Health Department agrees that this is not just a school issue. It is up to the community to deal with kids who are vulnerable. There had been a committee to address these issues, he said, and he would like to move forward again. The schools are an ultimate referral as they see the kids on a daily basis, but the community needs to respond.

Police Chief McLaughlin noted that DARE funded the survey (not the Police Department). He would like the full SRO program back at the high school and he would put an SRO at the middle school as well.

Dr. Entwistle reiterated that keeping students safe and healthy involves the schools, but that this is also a community issue. Any information gleaned at the school level will continue to be shared with the community.

Proclamation Policy with Selectmen’s Revisions - Discussion

Chair Jones noted that the Board is frequently requested to make a Proclamation, but until now had no specific Proclamation policy. The Town Administrator’s office has put together specific guidelines to guide the Selectmen through the Proclamation process. Chair Jones made one adjustment to the Proclamation policy.

The Board moved: To accept the revised Selectman's Proclamation Policy.
The motion passed unanimously (2-0).

Committee Appointments

Chair Jones noted that there are five committees that still need appointments, but no action will be taken tonight.

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Younger reported on the following items:

- Skating Rink – There is a \$16K net profit, and there have been no major issues with the rink so far this year.
- Public Safety Survey – Mr. Younger received data from the Police and Fire departments on services used by Belmont Day School, which include 59 responses (48 of which were police related). At Belmont Hill School, there were 144 responses, which were primarily fire (only 38 were police related). Selectman Firenze asked about charging for these calls. Mr. Younger replied that he is not finding communities that are charging for these services. Next step: Mr. Younger will get a legal opinion regarding charging for these services to these organizations. The Board discussed this issue. Mr. Conti suggested presenting a faux bill for the cost of these services. Mr. Younger said the emphasis remains on getting payment from state owned property.
- Trapelo Road – 78% design completion is in process.
- Planning Board – Charging fees for vacant buildings is to be discussed on January 28.
- Licenses – Kashish may apply for a full alcohol license.

ACTION BY CONSENT

Approval of BOS Minutes Meetings for 11/1/10, 12/6/10, and 12/20/10

The Board moved: To approve the minutes of the above noted meetings subject to revisions offered by Selectman Paolillo.
The motion passed unanimously (2-0).

Common Victualler's License

The following establishments are requesting to renew their Common Victualler's license: Morrison Management Specialists, Inc., and Nick's Place.

The Board moved: To approve the request of the above named establishments.
The motion passed unanimously (2-0).

ACTION BY WRITING

Approval of Designer Selection Procedures

Mr. Conti noted that the approval of Designer Selection Procedures is required by state law and relates to the hiring of architects for building projects. The wording comes from text on the Inspector General's website. Mr. Conti noted that the Board went through this process with the Electric Light Board. The Board discussed how this impacts building committees throughout town.

The Board moved: To approve the designer selection procedures as outlined by Mr. Conti.

The motion passed unanimously (2-0).

OTHER

The Board meets again on Monday, January 24.

There will be a MLK breakfast hosted at the BHS next week.

Selectman Firenze Other

- Requested a Cushing Square update: Chair Jones said that negotiations were continuing but that it not likely the meeting on January 13th will happen.

The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 pm.

Thomas G. Younger, Town Administrator