

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
Monday, January 31, 2011
7:35 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 7:47 pm by Chair Jones in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Selectmen Firenze and Paolillo were present. Town Administrator Tom Younger was present.

ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

One Day Liquor License, First Church Fundraising Event on February 12, 2011

Ms. Nancy McCabe appeared before the Board to request a one-day liquor license for the First Church Fundraising event for Saturday, February 12, 2011.

Mr. Younger noted that there were no problems with the application.

The Board moved: To grant the request for a one-day liquor license as noted above.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Snow Removal Discussion

Mr. Peter Castanino, DPW Director, and Mr. Michael Santoro, DPW Assistant Director, appeared before the Board to discuss a snow removal plan. The snow removal expenses have now exceeded the snow removal appropriation. Regarding the large amount of snow predicted for the next two days, he noted areas that would be plowed first, e.g. the schools, dangerous intersections, and then businesses. He also noted that removing the snow from these areas is the appropriate thing to do at this point. The cost, he said, for removing snow from all of the areas noted above (schools, dangerous intersections, and businesses) would be about \$84,900.

Mr. Younger raised the topic of parking restrictions. Arlington, he said, has put in place a parking restriction for one side of the street. Residents could be notified via the website, phone notification, and posting signs. The Board was supportive of this idea. The Board then discussed safety issues relating to snow and snow removal.

Selectman Firenze raised the topic of the use of the incinerator site for snow storage. He said this idea needs to be revisited. Mr. Castanino noted that the amount of snow stored there and by whom would need to be decided.

The Board moved: To approve the snow removal plan as outlined by Mr. Castanino.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The issue of storing the snow at the incinerator site will be revisited next week.

Mr. Younger noted that the snow plow vehicles reported as “unregistered” by the resident who spoke last week were indeed registered. Selectman Firenze and Paolillo noted that the DPW has done an excellent job removing snow and noted that this was just a complaint of an individual resident. Mr. Younger said he hopes that soon residents’ concerns could be addressed by the website.

QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

A resident arose to express concern over budget cuts, given that Belmont spends less per average on its students than the state average. Chair Jones said the Board will work hard to see that the schools stay excellent. There are a lot of options to look at around this issue. Selectman Paolillo explained about the requested “level service” budget, and he said that the Board needs to understand where the 9.6% increase is coming from. Selectman Firenze said that many of the budget numbers are unknown at this time and decisions can’t be made until the numbers are known. This Board, he said, cares deeply about the quality of Belmont’s schools.

Ms. Ellen Schreiber, a parent, said she is concerned about the current trend with the school budget as the school has already endured lots of cuts over the years. An override will be needed to help make up the \$3M gap. This is a structural problem that is happening each year. She requested that an override be put on the ballot. Chair Jones asked for clarification: are you requesting \$3M for schools, on the April ballot? Chair Jones engaged in a conversation which illuminated ways to close the gap other than an operating override. Selectman Paolillo noted that all departments have experienced cutbacks. He noted that roads and sidewalks are also in dire need of funding. Ms. Schrieber said that people move here for the schools and that may cease to happen.

Mr. Greg Stone, a parent from Chenery Terrace, said he is disturbed that language instruction may disappear. Actually, he said, all of the line items scheduled to be cut are disturbing. There are many things in the town that need to be invested in – especially the schools.

Ms. Alex Feingold, Livermore Road, said she moved here for the schools one year ago. Each cut mentioned seems very painful and it’s cutting bone, not fat. Selectman Paolillo and Mr. Younger explained the local aid scenario. Selectman Firenze said again that many budget numbers are unknown at this time. The school department, he said, has done an excellent job with its budget in terms of the money Belmont gets from the state.

Ms. Peggy Eysenbach, Washington Street, said she is concerned about the process. She said she would like not to shut any doors while so many budget numbers are unknown.

An override allows residents to decide if they want to increase taxes and we need to keep that option open. Selectman Firenze suggested parents pay extra money on their taxes. Chair Jones said that the “One Belmont” override approach (which articulated more than school interests) makes more sense than a “schools only” override approach. General Government has needs too, he said. He explained that sanitary cleaning is needed, as is the Resource Officer at the high school; money is needed for capital; and definitely more DPW workers are needed. Selectman Paolillo noted that there are residents in this community who cannot support a tax increase. Chair Jones said he understands the anxiety parents feel. He said he is not sure a \$3M override exclusively for schools is the answer. He said an override needs to be unified.

Ms. Adriana Pool said that the schools are a big investment for Belmont. She asked why the deficit is so high (14%) in Belmont compared to other towns.

Mr. James Decoulos, Bow Road, suggested that Belmont “be prepared” with an override in case other funding does not come through.

Ms. Anne Mahon, Alma Ave., noted that the One Belmont override campaign, although unsuccessful, was close, and that this year is different as the cuts are extremely painful. An override may pass, she said, because Belmont is on her knees.

Mr. Rob Stafford stated: we can pass the override and then choose not to raise the taxes. Why should we avoid the override? Chair Jones agreed that this could happen, but he is concerned about a \$3M override passing.

Ms. Lisa Fiore, Van Ness Road, said she works in education. Music and art feel very fundamental in education and impact math and literacy.

Ms. Jaime Hood Shea, Washington Street, said she is very concerned about the schools and she is also a teacher. She said she agrees with other parents who have opined that there is no downside to putting an override on the ballot. She asked what the gap was on the town side. The answer was \$300K. Chair Jones explained the budget process.

Mr. Jim Levitt, Juniper Road, asked: How could the Selectman not let us choose (to vote up or down an override)? Many people in town are charitable toward the schools. People work for years to get projects done in this town. He said he understands that all funding options are unknown, but perhaps in June it will be known and then people can choose.

Ms. Mil Pierce, Temple Street, also moved here for the schools. She stated that an Override can’t be a solution for everything. Belmont clearly needs other sources of revenue.

Paul Green, a Junior at BHS, noted that there are 200 students on Facebook already talking about this issue and he and his fellow students would work for an override.

Dispatcher Appointing Authority Discussion

Mr. Younger said that the union that represents the dispatchers notified him regarding the Police Chief having appointing authority for police dispatchers. Mr. Younger noted that this area needs to be more clearly defined. There is a new statute which suggests that the Chief should not be hiring the dispatchers. Selectman Firenze said that the Chief needs to be hiring the dispatchers, as they are under his authority and control. Mr. Younger said that presently he and HR Director Diane Crimmins sign off after the Chief has made the appointment. He also noted that this is an area that may change with regionalization. The Board discussed this issue with regard to regionalization. The Board recommended to keep the appointment process the way it has been.

Committee Appointments

Chair Jones said that the new Economic Development Committee (EDC) has received over ten names. Selectman Paolillo read a list of names.

The Board moved: To appoint the following members to the EDC: Mr. Bob Mahoney, Mr. Nick Iannuzzi, Ms. Lalg Musserian, Mr. Eric Rhodin, Mr. Steve Savarese, Mr. Andy Rojas, Mr. Edmund Starzec, Ms. Tomi Olson, Mr. Anthony Leccese and Mr. Matt Sullivan.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Selectman Paolillo said that the Minuteman task force would like him to serve on the Minuteman District Agreement Task Force.

The Board moved: To appoint Selectman Paolillo to the Minuteman District Agreement Task Force.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: To appoint Ms. Kate Grantham to the Cultural Council.
The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Younger reported on the following items:

- Mr. Castanino noted earlier that we have exceeded snow account by \$38K. Snow accounts are allowed by the state to increase the tax levy and amortize over a two-year period.
- Belmont Center Business Association sent a letter regarding snow removal in Belmont Center.
- The state is offering money via a Tobacco grant for prevention and education. Belmont can coordinate with other communities in applying for the funding (another form of regionalization).
- Following up on smart meter implementation with Mr. Roberts.

- Will need TM approval for additional signage; working with Mr. Clancy on this issue.
- An oil emergency protocol is being formulated.
- Alcohol licenses: we may be able to free up a “beer and wine” license if an “all alcohol” is taken.
- Representative Brownsberger will be at the February 7 Board meeting.
- The town-wide survey results will be discussed at a later date.

OTHER

Selectman Paolillo Other:

- A resident was interested in renting space in Belmont Center for his barbeque. A Planning Board bylaw prevented it. He would like to revisit this issue with the Planning Board to understand the bylaw.

Selectman Firenze Other:

- The Retirement Board requests a pension increase each year. This issue needs to be revisited, as it is always a 3% increase regardless of the cost of living. The Board will request to meet with the Retirement Board.
- There is a White Street parcel (which is owned by the town) and this will be voted on at April TM; it could be disposed of in the spring.

ACTION BY CONSENT

Approval of BOS Meeting Minutes 1/10/11

The Board moved: To approve the BOS meeting minutes of January 10, 2011.
(Selectman Paolillo abstained as he was not present.)
The motion passed unanimously (2-0).

Common Victualler’s License

Angelato, Trapelo Road, is requesting to renew its Common Victualler’s license.

The Board moved: To grant the license request noted above.
(Selectman Firenze rescued himself from this vote.)
The motion passed unanimously (2-0).

Mr. Younger said he will be in touch with the Board regarding weather conditions. The Board discussed future meetings.

The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:41 pm.

Thomas G. Younger, Town Administrator