

**MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JANUARY 26, 2004
REGULAR SESSION**

Call to Order

The Board of Selectmen convened in regular session on Monday, January 26, 2004 at 7:30 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at the Belmont Town Hall. All members were in attendance.

Questions from Town Residents

There was none.

Action by Appointment

Resolution re: Youth Commission's Belmont "Unplugged" Month

Richard Chasse, Youth Commission Coordinator, introduced the Board of Selectmen to the concept of the "Belmont Unplugged" Program scheduled for the month of March, 2004.

The Board of Selectmen moved: to adopt the Resolution in support of the Youth Commission's "Belmont Unplugged" program for March of 2004.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Discussion of Development of Air Rights at Waverley Square

Ken Buckland of the Cecil Group and Timothy Higgins, Senior Planner, made a presentation of conceptual plans for the proposed development of air rights at Waverley Square by the MBTA.

The Board and the public asked various questions about the concept.

The Board expressed their excitement and strong interest in pursuing planning in conjunction with the MBTA for Transit Oriented Development along the "air-rights" within Waverly Square.

The Board authorized the Office of Community Development to work with the MBTA and the Cecil Group to further explore this

opportunity and to return to the Board with a process to consider development in this location.

Discussion of Veterans Agent Position

The Town Administrator recommended the Board of Selectmen appoint John Maguranis, Veterans' Agent for the Town of Belmont. Mr. Kleckner noted Mr. Maguranis' status as a wartime veteran and his location in the Health Department and this department's specialization with human services. Mr. Kleckner noted Mr. Maguranis' availability on-call 24-hours a day.

Mr. Stavolta, representing the veterans' organizations, expressed concern over qualifications, conflicts with municipal employment and the technical and legal requirements of law. The Board of Selectmen were sensitive of the concerns but were prepared to proceed with Mr. Maguranis' appointment at this time. The Board committed to evaluate the situation to ensure that veterans' services are effectively provided.

The Board moved: to appoint John Maguranis Veterans' Agent, conditional upon confirmation that Mr. Maguranis is a wartime veteran.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Public Information and Communications Planning Group re: Update

The Board of Selectmen reviewed and discussed a set of recommendations from the Public Information and Communications Planning Group relative to improving reciprocal communication between the Town and its residents.

Dr. Solomon supported the concept of customer service training for Town staff. He also noted the importance of a phone directory for Town services. He also noted the need for an ombudsman to direct people to appropriate Town Hall offices and services.

The Planning Group agreed to report back to the board in six months on progress toward implementing the recommendations.

The Board thanked the working group for their efforts.

Belmont Business and Economic Development Planning Group re: Survey Results

The Board of Selectmen reviewed and discussed results from a survey designed by the Belmont Business and Economic Development Planning Group. The survey assessed Belmont residents' perspectives on business districts.

Dr. Solomon recognized the efforts of this working group and noted the value of the study to a wide variety of entities and people.

Discussion of Budget Issues

- *FY 2005 Budget*
- *Fire Station Debt Exclusion*
- *Capital Planning*

The Board of Selectmen discussed various budget issues for fiscal year 2005, including the debt exclusion for the fire stations consolidation.

Mr. Brownsberger reviewed the sense of the Warrant Committee that a longer schedule (approximately 10 to 20 years) for the funding of the fire station debt exclusion appears prudent.

Representatives of the Fire Stations Building Committee recommended the funding of the stations on a 20 year schedule.

Mrs. Mahoney and Dr. Solomon concurred with the recommendation that a longer schedule be added.

Mr. Brownsberger noted his intention to communicate the Board's support for a longer schedule, possibly even a 20-year funding schedule in order to target an average tax bill payment of approximately \$100.

Action by Consent

Discharge of the Fire Station Consolidation Committee

The Board reviewed the Town Administrator's recommendation to dissolve the temporary Fire Station Consolidation Committee.

The Board moved: to discharge the Fire Station Consolidation Committee.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

Action by Writing

Letter from Town Counsel re: Resignation

The Board reviewed and discussed a resignation letter from Town Counsel Robert Morrissey.

The Board thanked him and congratulated Mr. Morrissey on his many years of distinguished service to the Town.

The Board discussed what next steps the Town should take with respect to the replacement of Town Counsel services.

Mr. Kleckner noted the Town's By-Law requirement that the Town Counsel be a Town resident.

Mrs. Mahoney stressed the importance of retaining the services of David Hawkins for building committee and construction law issues.

Mr. Kleckner indicated he would prepare a recommendation for a process to seek Town Counsel services for the Board's consideration at their meeting on February 9, 2004.

Mrs. Mahoney noted that a change in Town Counsel may result in higher legal costs for the Town, given the very reasonable rates charged by Morrissey, Hawkins & Lynch.

Correspondence from Selectman Solomon re: Regionalization of Services

Selectman Solomon sought the Board's approval to explore the possibilities and advantages of engaging in a broad discussion of regionalizing Town services.

Mrs. Mahoney expressed concern of diverting attention of staff and other resources when there are many competing demands.

Mr. Brownsberger indicated his support for Dr. Solomon to speak with staff if he wishes. However, he saw this issue as one for the Town to more aggressively pursue over the next year.

Other

The Board discussed the necessity to hold a special session on February 2nd. The Board agreed to not meet on February 2nd.

The Town Administrator provided the Board with four versions of the Order of Takings for the land on Trapelo Road for the location of a fire station headquarters. He indicated that the Town's Special Counsel has recommended these be approved with the likelihood that one of these versions is likely to be accepted by the Registry of Deeds.

The Board moved: to approve all four versions of the Order of Taking.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

The Town Administrator raised the issue of two requests to fill vacancies, including a public safety dispatcher and a firefighter.

The Board deferred discussion of this matter until more fiscal year 2005 information is available.

Action by Appointment (continued)

Discussion of Litigation (Executive Session)

The Board moved: to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing strategy related to litigation.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0), by roll call vote.

The regular session adjourned at approximately 10:35 p.m.

Melvin A. Kleckner, Town Administrator
Clerk, Board of Selectmen