

**Minutes of the  
Town of Belmont  
REGULAR SESSION  
of the  
SELECT BOARD  
April 10, 2023  
7:00pm**



**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: May 8, 2023  
TIME: 2:39 PM

To view the recording of the meeting, please click [HERE](#).

**Call to Order:** Mr. Paolillo called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Select Board Members	Present	Staff Members	
Mark Paolillo, Chair	Yes	Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator	Yes
Roy Epstein Vice Chair	Yes	Jennifer Hewitt, Treasurer/Collector	Yes
Elizabeth Dionne, Member	Yes	Jason Marcotte, DPW Director	Yes
<b>Other Officials Present</b>		James MacIsaac, Chief of Police	Yes
Tom Gibson, Belmont Retirement Board	Yes	Michael Widmer, Town Moderator	Remote
Kathy Riley, Actuary	Remote	<b>Others Present</b>	
Scott Driscoll, Investment Advisor	Remote	David Fox, VP, Raftelis	Yes
Floyd Carman, Former Town Treasurer	Yes	Gi-Yoon Huang, Petitioner for Article 6	Yes

### Board Organization

Mr. Paolillo explained that the Board had decided at their April 7, 2023 meeting to change the Board officers on July 1<sup>st</sup> each year instead of immediately after the Town Election. This avoids a leadership and committee assignment changes in the middle of budget discussions. Because of this, he will continue as Chair until June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at which time Mr. Epstein will become Chair and Ms. Dionne will become Vice-Chair.

The Board also decided to send Liaisons only to the Warrant Committee, Comprehensive Capital Budget Committee, Permanent Audit Committee, and the Community Preservation Committee. Other committees will be invited to meet with the Select Board for updates.

Mr. Paolillo identified Town organizations that he would like to have appear before the Board.

### Community Announcements - None

### Comments by Town Residents

Ira Morgenstern: Asked who does the checks and balances for capital projects and when these occur during a project. Mr. Paolillo explained the process used for building projects, identifying the times during the process when checks and balances occur. There was a discussion of Mr. Morgenstern's question.

### Town Administrator's Report

- a. Employee spotlight: Heidi Barberio, Recreation Programs. Ms. Garvin outlined Ms. Barberio's role in the department, and her outstanding work.
- b. Update on FY2024 Budget: Work is still being done to finalize the budget for Town Meeting. No new information has been received from the State regarding additional aid. The School Committee has not yet voted on their budget. There was a discussion of Supplemental State Aid and the Budget.
- c. Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Belmont Vacancy: The MAPC has asked that an appointment be made as there has been a vacancy for a long time. There was a discussion of Ms. Dionne possibly filling the role and of identifying a backup.

- d. Representative Katherine Clark Priority Project- Community Path Phase 1: The Community Path has been selected as a priority project by Ms. Clark's office, and Ms. Garvin explained what this means, which was discussed.

**Call for a Special Town Meeting within Annual Town Meeting being held Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 7:00PM.**

Ms. Garvin explained the articles for the Special Town Meeting.

Article 2 – Appropriation Belmont Rink & Sporting Facility, Authorization to Borrow – Ms. Garvin reviewed the project costs, funding mechanisms, and timing. There was a discussion of the construction and borrowing plans.

Article 3 – Home Rule Petition – 61B Excluding Golf Clubs – Ms. Garvin said more discussions are needed before this article goes to Town Meeting. Ms. Dionne explained the purpose of the article and the challenge of non-profits paying either no or very low taxes. There was a discussion of this issue.

Mr. Epstein pointed out that this article would set a precedent for the State, and the difficulty that might cause for approval from the Legislature. He recommended speaking with Representatives Rogers and Brownsberger for guidance. How and when to proceed was discussed, with the Board deciding to defer on this article at this time. Mr. Widmer agreed with the Board's decision.

*A Motion was made to call for a Special Town Meeting within Annual Town Meeting being held Wednesday, May 3, 2023 at 7:30PM. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

**Open Special Town Meeting Warrant for May 3, 2023 for the purpose of discussion and vote on one article**

*A Motion was made to Open Special Town Meeting Warrant for May 3, 2023 for the purpose of discussion and vote on one article to authorize borrowing for the Belmont Rink and Sports Facility, located at 354 Concord Avenue in Belmont. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

*A Motion was made to close the Special Town Meeting Warrant. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

**Discussion and Possible Vote on Water and Sewer Rates.**

Mr. Fox introduced himself and Raftelis. Mr. Fox then provided an overview of the Water Fund portion of the Rate Study (which is available on the Town website, click [HERE](#) to view the study) including historical information and future projections, operations costs, financial considerations, update plan, and capital improvements plan. There were questions and discussion about the information presented.

Mr. Fox then explained that the fund is creating a deficit and it will continue to do so unless there is a rate adjustment. A discussion of the use of Retained Earnings to offset the deficit was held.

The recommended rate increase is 4% per year over the next 5 years, although this plan will need to be reviewed later in the 5-year plan and the increase voted on yearly. There was a discussion of the impact of the trend of lower usage and whether this increase would prompt residents to use even less. Mr. Fox said this increase will not be a factor and rates do no influence usage. The proposed increase will allow the fund to stay at or slightly above the costs after FY2024 and allow the Retained Earnings to remain positive starting in FY2024.

Mr. Fox provided an overview of the Sewer Fund portion of the study, including operations costs, capital improvements, etc. He pointed out that the financial situation is similar to the Water Fund with deficits projected starting FY2023 and Retained Earnings going negative in FY2025.

The recommended rate increase is 8% in FY24, 8% in FY25, and then 3% thereafter to keep up with inflation. This would produce sufficient revenue after FY23 to cover costs and rebuild Retained Earnings.

Mr. Fox reviewed the FY2024 Rate Design Overview and recommendations, explaining what impacts the costs that different customers pay, which were discussed.

Mr. Fox then showed the impact of the changes for various customer types and discussed next steps.

There was a discussion on how to proceed, including holding a public forum for this topic.

Angus Abercrombie asked if a significant increase in the number of units in Belmont would affect the rate increases (such as Belmont meeting the State mandate for housing near public transit). Mr. Fox said it would absolutely affect the rate because it increases the revenue base.

**Discussion and Possible Vote to award the Fuel System Replacement Project contract to Green Site Services Group, Inc. from 25 Forge Parkway, Franklin, MA 02038 for an amount not to exceed \$996,000.00.**

Mr. Marcotte reviewed the history and costs of the project. The project should start next spring, depending on the delivery of the fiberglass tank. There was a discussion of the project and contract.

Bill Trabilcy asked what the contingency amount is and what will happen to it since the cost to remove contaminated material is now included in the contract. Mr. Marcotte said the contingency would remain, although a change order would be needed to access it.

There was a discussion of what will happen to the already appropriated funds for this project.

*A Motion was made to award the Fuel System Replacement Project contract to Green Site Services Group, Inc. from 25 Forge Parkway, Franklin, MA 02038 for an amount not to exceed \$996,000.00. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

**Discussion and Possible Vote on one-time increase in COLA in FY23 for Retirees.**

Mr. Gibson explained that in 2022 the Governor signed an Act which provides a one-time increase in the COLA percentage for retirees from 3% to 5%. He outlined the impact of this change on retirees, and the process that has been used to bring this updated proposal to the Select Board. Mr. Carman explained that the goal is for the Town retiree's COLA to match the School retiree's COLA. There was a discussion of the proposal's impact.

Mr. Epstein expressed his displeasure that the funding schedule was shortened to FY2030 and that the Select Board had not been informed of this change. He asked that the schedule be extended to FY2033 which would meet the interest of the retirees and be more aligned to the Town resources.

Mr. Gibson defended the process that was used to change the schedule and explained the reason for the change. There was a discussion of the process that was used and how it was communicated.

Mr. Paolillo asked Ms. Riley how Belmont's funding schedule compares to other towns. She responded that it is in the middle of the pack. She explained the impacts on the funding schedule explaining that it affords the Town flexibility in the future.

Mr. Driscoll explained that the retirement system returned -8.9% from its investments last year, and that performance has improved since then to about 2.5%.

Mr. Paolillo asked that the funding schedule be extended given the deficit expectation for next year, and a discussion of this suggestion, its impacts, and timing followed.

The proposal will be returned to the Retirement Board for reconsideration of the funding schedule before it is proposed at Town Meeting.

Ms. Riley explained that a decrease in the appropriation would not be approved and explained how this would impact the funding schedule, which was discussed.

A recess was called at this time (9:14pm) and the meeting resumed at 9:23pm.

**Discussion and Review of the Citizen Petition re: Parking Regulations.**

Ms. Garvin said that this petition really changes nothing since there are already regulations in place, although more enforcement could be done. She believes the petition is designed to raise awareness of the danger of people parking on sidewalks and reviewed some efforts that are being done to resolve the issue.

Ms. Huang explained why she is bringing this Citizen's Petition and showed photographs of cars blocking sidewalks in various areas of Town. She then reviewed the specifics of the petition.

Chief MacIsaac outlined the laws governing the levels of fines allowed. He said the department writes about 28 tickets a day for these types of violations, including overnight parking tickets. He explained that many people do not have space in their driveway so they have to choose between leaving the car on the street, which guarantees a ticket, or blocking the sidewalk which might avoid a ticket. He said they ask residents near schools to move cars from driveways before school begins. He discussed the options for increasing the fines and pointed out that there has been no increase since 2005. The Town has adopted MGL c. 90 s. 20A, which allows a fine of up to \$25 for most parking violations.

There was a discussion of increasing the fines, how to solve the problem of cars blocking sidewalks, and the challenges of overnight parking.

Ms. Garvin said she and Ms. Huang had discussed having Ms. Huang make the presentation at Town Meeting about the issue, then have the provisions of the petition incorporated into the Parking Regulations, and finally have a motion to dismiss the warrant article. The Board could then vote to increase the fine as this is not a vote required at Town Meeting.

Mr. Abercrombie said that there is significant value in communicating this to the entire town and explained his reasoning for this position.

Ms. Huang mentioned that the petition includes provisions for shrubbery and other sidewalk obstructions, which was discussed.

How to proceed with the petition/warrant, change in parking fines, and regulations was discussed.

It was decided that Ms. Huang would present at Town Meeting, and the Board would combine the spirit of the citizen's petition into the Parking Regulations and also vote to increase the fines.

*A Motion was made increase the \$15 Parking Violation Fines to \$25. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

How to communicate these changes and the parking issues was discussed.

#### **Discussion And Possible Vote on FY24 Health Insurance Rates.**

Ms. Garvin explained that these changes are already included in the budget and explained the increase of 3%. Ms. Hewitt explained why the increase is 3%.

*A Motion was made to approve a 3% rate change to the FY24 Health Insurance charges. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

#### **Discussion and Possible Vote to award Butler Elementary KALWALL System contract to Suburban Glass and Mirror Co. Inc, for an amount not to exceed \$386,606.00.**

This item was deferred to the meeting on April 11, 2023.

#### **Next Meetings**

- April 11, 2023, 8:30am – Remote Special Meeting
- April 24, 2023, 7:00pm – Regular Meeting
- May 1, 2023, 5:30pm – Pre-ATM Meeting

#### **Adjournment**

*A motion was made to adjourn the meeting of the Belmont Select Board Committee, and the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:06pm.*

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny  
Recording Secretary