

Approved by the Select Board:
Monday, January 22, 2024

**Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
REGULAR SESSION
of the
SELECT BOARD
November 17, 2023, 2023**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: February 21, 2024
TIME: 9:36 AM

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

I. Call to Order: Mr. Epstein called the meeting to order at 8:30am.

Select Board Members	Present	Staff Members	
Roy Epstein, Chair	Yes	James MacIsaac, Police Chief	Yes
Elizabeth Dionne, Vice-Chair	Yes	Mark Hurley, Assistant Police Chief	Yes
Mark Paolillo, Member	Yes	Dan Dargon, Assessor	Yes
Staff Members		Leslie Davidson, Treasurer	Yes
Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator	Yes	Dana Bickelman, Council on Aging	Yes
Jennifer Hewitt, ATA/Finance Director	Yes	Kelli King, Human Resources Director	Yes
David DeStefano, Fire Chief	Yes	David Petto, IT Director	Yes
Anrew Tobio, Assistant Fire Chief	Yes	Donna Tuccinardi, Accounting	Yes

II. PROCLAMATION IN HONOR OF THE BELMONT LION'S CLUB 75TH ANNIVERSARY. Ms. Dionne read the following proclamation:

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS: Members and friends of the Lions Club of Belmont have gathered on November 18, 2023, in celebration of the 75th Anniversary of Lionism in Belmont; and

WHEREAS: The Belmont Lions Club, sponsored by the Somerville Lions Club, received its charter from Lions Club International in July, 1948. Since its founding by the 30 chapter members, the Belmont Lions Club has thrived and grown to become an integral part of the Belmont Community. Over the past 75 years, the club has supported numerous individuals and organizations in need through its fundraising activities. Clearly, the membership epitomizes the Lions' motto, "We Serve,"; and

WHEREAS: Ever since Helen Keller charged the Lions to be "Knights of the Blind," Lions throughout the world have committed to helping the blind and preventing blindness. The Belmont Lions live up to this commitment by directing a large portion of their funds to eye research, eye testing, diabetes screening, and prevention of blindness, donating \$732,186 to the Massachusetts Lions Eye Research Fund; and

WHEREAS: Other causes receiving financial support by the Belmont Lions include: Belmont High School scholarships, Belmont youth sports and D.A.R.E programs, the Cotting School, Belmont Council on Aging and community flagpoles and benches to honor Lions who served Belmont and Lionism; and globally extending to the international relief efforts through the Lions Club International Fund; and

WHEREAS: The Lions Clubhouse at One Common Street, built as a railroad station in 1907, a historic treasure of the entire community that was purchased by the Belmont Lions in 1955 from the Boston & Maine Railroad, has been carefully maintained by the club and has been recognized by the Massachusetts Historic Commission for its historic value by the award of a restoration grant; and

WHEREAS: The club's annual Christmas and Wreath Sale has become a tradition so basic to the Holiday Season in Belmont that former residents return from far and wide to take part.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Select Board, does hereby express its most sincere thanks for your spirit of community service which you display for our Town, and we further offer our congratulations to you on your 75th Anniversary Celebration.

The Select Board: Roy Epstein, Chair; Elizabeth Dionne, Vice Chair & Mark Paolillo, Member

A Motion was made to approve the Proclamation in honor of the 75th Anniversary of Lionism in Belmont. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by 3-0 vote.

Fire Department/Belmont Emergency Management Agency (BEMA)- Chief David DeStefano & Assistant Chief Andrew Tobio

Chief DeStefano explained that his budget is a level-service budget that will provide the same level of protection as the last several years. The modest increases are mostly due to collective bargaining, inflation, etc. He then reviewed some of the new services that have been added, including those that collaborate with other departments.

There was a discussion of the services that the department has provided, and expectations of what will be needed, as well as the proposed budget.

Mr. Epstein asked if there are open positions in the department, and the Chief indicated that they are fully staffed as of right now. There is a pending retirement and resignation so this will change soon. There was a discussion of staffing, compensation, and training programs.

Belmont Police Department – Chief James MacIsaac & Assistant Chief Mark Hurley

Chief MacIsaac said that the Police budget is about the same as last year with small increases due to inflation, dues, and contractual obligations. He then reviewed the achievements of the department. He also spoke about some future programs that are being planned.

Chief MacIsaac then reviewed the 8 vacancies in the department. There was a discussion of the impacts of this shortage on personnel, as well as implementing leaving Civil Service.

Ms. Dionne asked if the Chief had any opinions on camera monitoring of traffic, especially to ensure cyclists' safety. She spoke about a possible Home Rule Petition to become a pilot location for these. Chief MacIsaac reviewed the history of this issue and there was a discussion of concerns with this type of program.

Mr. Epstein asked if the Police Station is complete, which Chief MacIsaac confirmed that it is but he reported certain problems with the landscaping.

Assessors – Dan Dargon

Ms. Garvin explained that the largest change with the budget is in Reevaluation Services, and Mr. Dargon explained the reason for the increase in the cost.

Ms. Dionne pointed out that the Collins Center Report was critical of the software the town uses for reevaluations, and asked what the expense of changing software would be. Mr. Dargon said he is getting quotes for this for a future Capital request, and the timing of doing this was discussed. Making this change was discussed.

Treasurer – Leslie Davidson

Ms. Garvin explained that this department is being slightly reorganized, and the Admin Assistant position is being eliminated. They are working with the unions on new job descriptions for the Excise Tax Technician, Real Estate Tax Technician, and Accounts Payable Technician positions so they are more cross trained.

Ms. Davidson provided an overview of what her department does and some highlights of the department's activities during the year. She then reviewed her goals for FY25. There was a discussion of future plans for the department, including services that it might offer in the future.

There was a discussion of residents who are on payment plans, the poor access to the outside lock box for payments, and other issues, including the impact of seniors of an override and tax increases.

Council on Aging – Dana Bickelman

Ms. Bickelman reviewed some of the achievements and goals of the Council. There was a discussion of why the social worker position is not needed.

Human Resources – Kelli King

Ms. Garvin reviewed the shifts that have been done in Human Resources and some changes that Ms. King has initiated.

Ms. King praised the hard work of Kerri Clarke, who was the only person in the department for a long time and reviewed the responsibilities Ms. Clarke had undertaken. She recommended that Ms. Clarke be raised to the same grade as the HR Generalist and her title changed to HR Operations Specialist. This would better reflect her contributions to the department. There was a discussion of the plans for the development of HR personnel.

Ms. Dionne asked if the lower employee headcount would give the town the ability to pay more competitively. This was discussed as well as HR's interaction with the School Department and the costs the town incurs because of this.

The Board and Ms. King also spoke about opportunities for staff development, taking advantage of efficiencies, and supporting the needs of the town employees.

Information Technology – Dave Petto

Mr. Petto reviewed the work of his department and the value it adds to the town. He also compared the resources his department has those in private business, and the security challenges the town faces and that his department handles.

There was a discussion of internet security methods and challenges. There was also a discussion of centralizing the IT services across the town which will be more efficient and enhance security.

Accounting – Donna Tuccinardi

Ms. Tuccinardi outlined the work of the department, its accomplishments, as well as future plans.

Ms. Hewitt pointed out that the Chart of Accounts the town uses is complex and difficult to use and said the Finance Department would like to restructure this in the next few years. This will be a Capital request. She also spoke about some of the other critical and complicated processes that Ms. Tuccinardi is involved in.

Town Administration – Patrice Garvin

Ms. Garvin explained that the rink budget will be going into her budget, and outlined the impacts, major costs, and planning to make this happen. The year-round plan and issues for the rink were discussed.

The Board praised the dedication and quality of the department heads and expressed their appreciation for their hard work.

Next Meetings & Upcoming Topics

1. Thursday, November 30, 2023 – 7:00 PM – Joint Meeting – Budget Summit II
2. Monday, December 4, 2023 – 7:00 PM – Regular Meeting
3. Monday, December 11, 2023 – 7:00 PM – Regular Meeting
4. Monday, December 18, 2023 – 8:30 AM – Regular Meeting *
5. Wednesday, December 20, 2023 – 7:00 PM – Joint Meeting- Budget Summit III

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 10:52am.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary