

Approved by
the Select Board on:

5/17/2021

SELECT BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

MONDAY, MAY 3, 2021

5:30 PM

REMOTE MEETING

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: June 3, 2021

TIME: 9:54 AM

A special meeting of the Select Board was called to order by Chair Adam Dash at 5:30 pm. Vice Chair Roy Epstein and member Mark Paolillo were present, along with Town Administrator Patrice Garvin, Assistant Town Administrator Jon Marshall, and Assistant Health Department Director Diana Eklund.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Today is the beginning of the closure of Leonard St. so outdoor dining in Belmont will commence for the summer!

ACTION BY CONSENT

COVID Update:

- Diana Eklund reported that as of May 30th, the Commonwealth of Mass. has relaxed mask restrictions. Belmont can follow the new rules or decide to adopt stricter rules. Up to now, most communities have followed state guidance. She said the Belmont Board of Health is suggesting that the Town abide by the new mask rules.
- Paolillo agrees with aligning with the state guidelines.
- Epstein asked about the policy for playgrounds. Diana said we are not setting different policies for playgrounds, but new signs may be put up. Jon Marshall said the Town plans on setting specific guidelines for recreation.
- Dash asked if we should still require masks for playgrounds? Diana feels that masks should only be worn if you can't socially distance.

Motion was made to amend our current emergency order to conform to the governor's latest guidance and emphasize the requirement to wear a face mask when you cannot socially distance. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Proclamation in honor of Jeffrey Wheeler

- A Planning Board member will read this proclamation at Town Meeting tonight but Select Board needs to vote it.

Motion made to approve the proclamation in honor of Jeffrey Wheeler. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0

Discussion and vote on Select Board positions for Warrant Articles and Amendments for Special Town Meeting

- Dash said that the Select Board had voted favorably on both Warrant Articles in a prior meeting, but there is an amended amount for Article 2 that Patrice Garvin wanted to make, so he thinks a favorable action vote should be made again on both Articles.

- Garvin amended Article 2 (Transfer to Cemetery Perpetual Care Interest) to reflect revised actual dollar amount.

Motion made for favorable action on Article 1 for Special Town Meeting. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Motion made for favorable action on amendment to Article 2 for Special Town Meeting. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Discussion and vote on Select Board positions for Warrant Articles and Amendments for Annual Town Meeting

Discussion on Article 2 (Light Board Governance)

- George Hall reviewed the roles of the Light Board and Select Board in the event that the property at 450 Concord Ave., which includes a sub-station and office building, were no longer needed for Light Department use. Hall said that his opinion states that if the Light Board decides the property is no longer needed, then Town meeting could vote for a different municipal use. If the property is sold, then the money from the sale would go into the receipts reserved account for other capital item expenditures. However, Belmont Light would have to make the initial decision about ownership. The role of each entity reflects the difference between care custody and ownership. The only entities that are allowed to own land, are independent authorities. Town Departments don't have the ability to own, only to manage. Once a department decides to give up a piece of property, then it becomes a general municipal property and can be used, or sold, as Town Meeting decides.
- Epstein asked about the sequence of approvals. Hall said Town Meeting only has to approve it once. The Select Board could do a procurement and then convey their recommendation of action to Town Meeting. If there is no buyer, then the Select Board could go to Town Meeting to authorize to sell in the best interest of the town. Dash noted that the Light Board will be using the property for at least the next five years before they decommission the substation.
- Paolillo asked about the policy that will be used if the Town decided to proceed with an elected Light Board. Hall said there would (2) 3-year terms (2) 2-year terms and (1) 1-year term on the ballot for elections. Candidates choose which office to run for. Once candidates have been elected to those offices, then the three-year rotation cycle takes effect after the inaugural election. This is a similar rotation to Town Meeting.

Article 10 vote

- The Town Moderator wants Article 10 to be re-voted.
- Paolillo asked if the Select Board could delay the vote on amendments until Wednesday, May 5th because he feels he needs to do more research. Dash said that would be fine; amendments were not issued until late on Friday.

Other discussion:

- Dash feels the Select Board has been responsive on issues of equity and wanted to respond to the Globe article published today. He feels that the Select Board has been working closely with the students who proposed the Indigenous People's Day Article for Town Meeting. Dash stated that he didn't get the e-mail from the Globe until after they published the article. Paolillo stated that he feels the Town is doing the best they can to support diversity and equity.
- Dash raised the issue of bicycles on Royal Road. He said he wanted to let the public know that the Town is working on getting a bike course. Last week, he received a complaint about kids who had erected bike jumps on town-owned land on Royal Rd. Since the Town is liable if anyone is hurt, the structures had to be removed. He said he would like to have a dialogue with all groups in Belmont about the safe use of land, but it will have to wait until after Town Meeting. He feels we need to find a way to pursue a public process on this issue, rather than communicating through social media. He wants to convey to the public that there is no ill intent. The Town is looking out for the safety of the public. Paolillo said there are wetlands there too and the Conservation Committee has purview over that area.
- Dash said the only Article that we have not re-voted, due to Paolillo's membership on the Board, is the CPA article and it is not coming up until Segment B.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Jennipher Burgess said she has become aware that there is a speaker coming to the Wednesday Town Meeting to talk about the cons of Article 10. She wants to know if a proponent of the Article could be invited to attend on Wednesday as well? Dash said that she needs to speak to Mike Widmer, the Town Moderator about adding a speaker to the Town Meeting agenda.

Motion was made to recess until Annual Town Meeting. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 5:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,


PATRICE GARVIN, Town Administrator

