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**Minutes**

**Town of Belmont**

**Board of Selectmen**

**Selectmen's Meeting Room**

**Monday, August 26, 2019**

**7:00pm**

APPROVED  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
DATE: 9/23/2019

**CALL TO ORDER:**

A regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:01pm by Chair Tom Caputo. Vice Chair Adam Dash and Selectman Roy Epstein were present. Town Administrator Patrice Garvin was present.

**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- *Meet Belmont* event is tomorrow, August 27<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8pm at the Belmont Day School gymnasium.
- The Transportation Advisory Committee is holding a public meeting to gather feedback on the plan for installing traffic signals at the Lexington/Sycamore intersection – September 5<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.
- The Tom Nutile Big Band featuring vocalist Jim Bramante will be performing at the Beech Street Center September 12 at 7pm. Tickets are \$10 – the event is sponsored by the Friends of the Council on Aging, with proceeds going towards the Senior Center and Seniors' services.
- There will be a *Barn Babies Ice Cream Social* at the Beech Street Center, Friday August 30<sup>th</sup> – event starts at 1:15pm with ice cream sundaes served at 2pm, courtesy of Rancatore's. Touch and hold baby bunnies, ducks, goats, and more; cost is free, donations appreciated.
- Porchfest is September 7<sup>th</sup> with a rain date of September 8<sup>th</sup>. There will be performances going on all day throughout the day – check the Porchfest website for details on a show near you.

Note a slight adjustment to the agenda: the Minuteman item will be taken up at 7:40pm following approval of the CCC 5k road race.

**COMMENTS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS:**

[There were none.]

**ACTION BY CONSENT:**

**Discussion and possible vote to engage in the process to change health insurance benefits under M.G.L. c.32B sections 21 through 23**

Caputo first provided context on the matter: The Town of Belmont provides health insurance to Town and School employees, running a self-administered plan that was put in place in April of 2012. At that time, the Town opted not to join the State-wide GIC plan but created a plan that mimicked the features of the GIC with respect to co-pays, out of pocket maximums, etc. The features of the GIC had evolved since 2012 to account for the rising costs of health insurance, whereas the Town plan has remained unchanged.

APPROVED

MEMORANDUM FOR THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

The present discussion was concerning whether or not to enter negotiations around plan design changes – not to discuss specific details of plan design, as a proposal did not yet exist. Caputo requested public comment be limited to presidents (or a single representative) of the various unions. He invited Jessica Porter (Director, HR) and the Town's health insurance consultant Sue Shillue (President, Cook & Company Insurance) to join the discussion.

Shillue laid out the process if the Board were to move forward entering negotiations of plan design: the Town would send out a plan design proposal, following which a meeting with the Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC) was required within ten days; at the IAC meeting, review benefit design including projected savings for the first 12 months – up to 25% was required as giveback to employees in a mitigation fund; back and forth between the Town, union presidents and the Public Employees Committee (PEC; consisting one representative for each collective bargaining unit, as well as a retiree) leading to a revised proposal sent out to the PEC; this initiates a 30 day negotiation clock to come to a resolution; if no resolution is reached the proposal goes before a three person State panel (rare occurrence).

In sum, the expected timeline consisted of around two weeks to hold the IAC meeting and submit a proposal to the PEC, followed by the 30 day negotiation period; agreed upon changes to the plan could be implemented following a 60 day notification period.

[Open for public comment.]

- *Kristin Daley (Member of the previous PEC, Belmont Police, representative to IAC):* Concern that the jump to the current GIC plan would be too large, e.g. copay goes from \$700 to \$1500; also, concern over the tiers for different providers in the GIC plan. A key issue that needs addressing is with the health insurance trust fund, need more options for investing. In this sense, mirroring the GIC is just a band aid solution – hitting the employees without looking at big picture of the trust fund.
- *Michael Horan (on behalf of Cory Taylor):* Concerns about the plan design changes. Have previously raised questions about obtaining different prices from other insurance carriers, yet to hear back. The recent 8% premium increase was approved with the understanding that copays/deductible would stay the same.
- *Ross Vona (Firefighters Representative):* Reiterate concerns over the potential plan design changes. Make sure we look after retirees. There was agreement 4-5 years ago for the trust fund to invest with the retirement board – should discuss this again.

[Close public comment.]

Dash noted that plan design was part of the negotiation process, and felt that it was necessary to open this process. Epstein concurred, pointing to investment options for the trust fund as an additional reason to engage the process.

*Motion: That the Town of Belmont engage in the process to change the health insurance benefits under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 32B, Sections 21-21. (Vote passed 3-0)*

**Vote to approve Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE) Apple Run (f/k/a The Dan Scharfman Memorial Run) on Sunday, October 6, 2019**

Paul Roberts (Board Member, FBE / Race Co-director) joined the meeting. The change in name was at the request of the Scharfman family. Due to construction at the High School site, Roberts outlined changes to the previous routes used for the race, for both the 2k and 5k. Caputo confirmed that all necessary approvals from Police, Fire, and Public Safety had been granted.

*Motion: To approve the request for the Foundation for Belmont Education's Apple Run on Sunday October 6, 2019, with the routes as designated. (Vote passed 3-0)*

**Vote to approve request for One Day Liquor License, Wine and Malt only, from CLC Café for the Cushing Square Merchants Association's Fall Festival event to be held on Saturday, September, 21, 2019**

Rob Pelletier (CLC Café) explained the license was for a beer garden to be set up in front of the café (on the sidewalk, which is private property) during the Cushing Square Fall Festival; a similar event was held last year. Pelletier was requesting a longer time window (11am-6pm) to allow volunteers from the event to participate.

Mary Westcott Thomajan (Owner, Westcott Mercantile / President, Cushing Square Merchants Association) spoke to the success of the event and how it was managed to be family friendly. Dash agreed the event had been a success last year and extremely popular.

There was a question of whether the Board was allowed to approve a license for longer than five hours; Garvin confirmed that it was possible.

*Motion: To approve the One Day Liquor License for CLC Café as specified above, from 11am to 6pm on September 21, 2019. (Vote passed 3-0)*

**Vote to approve request for Cushing Square Merchant's Association to hold their annual Fall Festival on September 21, 2019**

Thomajan explained that one significant change from last year was that DPW had raised a suggestion in a planning meeting to close off parking spaces on Trapelo Rd., allowing for an expanded footprint and participation of stores on Trapelo. Sgt. Mailhot had confirmed it would be feasible to physically barrier off the parking spaces safely without disrupting traffic flow. The impacted businesses on Trapelo had been informed of the proposed change, and those participating in the Fall Festival were enthusiastically supportive.

*Motion: To approve the request from the Cushing Square Merchant's Association to hold the Annual Fall Festival on September 21, 2019, using parking spaces from 85 to 121 Trapelo Road, as shown on the plan provided. (Vote passed 3-0)*

**Vote to approve request for CCC 5k Road Race to be held on October 20, 2019**

The race organizers had provided a new map to account for construction at the High School – Bill Lovallo had agreed to work with the organizers to come up with a suitable route. Garvin was unsure whether construction on Hittinger would be complete in time for the race.

*Motion: To approve the request for the CCC 5k Road Race to be held on October 20, 2019, with the proviso that the Town Administrator work with the application to finalize the route. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### **Minuteman presentation**

Jim Gammill (Representative, Minuteman School Committee) and John Phelan (Superintendent, Belmont Public Schools) were present. Gammill was ultimately requesting that the Board consider putting an article on the Warrant for Special Town Meeting, asking Town Meeting whether it wanted to rescind the 2016 notice of withdrawal as a member town from the Minuteman (MM) School.

Gammill proceeded to give a presentation explaining the motivation for this request, arguing that substantial changes had occurred since 2016 that should prompt the Town to reconsider its 2016 decision. Such changes included: new building was completed one year early and on budget (improved financial situation); incoming class is over-subscribed, could lead to Belmont students potentially not having access in the future if trend continues; gap in the per-student cost for members vs non-members was closing – non-members now charged a capital fee; the Minuteman Working Group, established at the direction of Superintendent Phelan, had recommended Minuteman as the only option from an educational standpoint that would meet the needs for vocational/technical education outlined by the School Department.

Finally, Gammill outlined the two different paths for rejoining MM as a member, depending on the outcome of the vote he was requesting at present. If Town Meeting were to vote to rescind the notice of withdrawal it would have to be accepted unanimously by the Minuteman School Committee (MMSC); further, it was Gammill's sense the MMSC would require the Town to pay back ~\$472k in debt service for the new building. If the Town were to proceed with the withdrawal and want to rejoin at a later date, this would require a three quarters majority on the MMSC to amend the regional agreement, in addition to approval from all the MM member towns' Town Meetings.

The Board discussed the timing of the decision as well as the potential repayment of \$472k in debt service:

- Timing: Take up the matter at Special Town Meeting in the fall or wait until Annual Town Meeting? Epstein was concerned about having the necessary time to conduct appropriate analysis and educate the public/Town Meeting Members on such a complex issue. Gammill and Phelan argued for a Special Town Meeting vote as the outcome would affect enrolment decisions for students as well as the budget process for the MMSC and the Town.
- Debt service payment: There was question as to whether the amount and/or timing of the payment could be negotiated – the sense was that a one-time payment of \$472 would be difficult to swallow. Gammill suggested to work with Garvin on a proposal that he could take back to the MMSC.

[Open public comment.]

- *Jane Feinberg Caplan*: Had a daughter who attend Belmont High and struggled, would have benefited from a more hands on approach like at MM. The reputation of MM among the students is that it is an inferior option – the Board should consider the long-term impact and messaging to kids of withdrawing. Also should consider the wider context of trend towards career/technical education, changing economy.
- *Jack Weis*: Reinforce that the 2016 vote was a close and difficult one. The matter turns on the question of enrolment and whether students were likely to be frozen out – based on the historical data this was unlikely, shouldn't base decision on a single data point.
- *Bob McLaughlin*: The school was built to be over capacity, and there is a low risk Belmont students would be frozen out. It is more expensive for Belmont to participate as a member town. Not enough time prior to Special Town Meeting to engage on the issue – should have deference for the public vote taken in 2016.
- *Michael Crowley*: Hoped the School Committee would take a vote on the matter – he felt it was worth bringing before Town Meeting. With respect to the \$472k, should compare this amount against the amount need to mitigate the problem if students are frozen out; also, would need a stabilization fund to handle yearly spikes in enrolment as a non-member town.
- *Tomi Olson*: Had a son who was a graduate of MM. Hard to convince kids to see MM as a viable option, continuing with the withdrawal will exacerbate this. There have been good efforts made recently to work with middle school students to see the value of a technical education. Kids with different learning styles should have opportunity to excel.
- *Susan Burgess-Cox*: Part of the School Committee's priorities/goals for the year is to discuss the MM question, will be on an upcoming agenda; part of the discussion will be whether to take an official vote.
- *Jim Sullivan*: Was part of the MM Working Group established by Superintendent Phelan to study alternative options. In his view, there is no viable Plan B. Argued for putting the question on the Special Town Meeting warrant to give a definitive timeline for addressing the issue. Lots to educate the public about.

[Close public comment.]

Caputo proposed a continuation of the discussion at the next Board meeting September 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Presentation of Traffic Study completed for the ice skating rink**

Glenn Clancy (Director, Community Development) and Jeffery Wheeler (Senior Town Planner) joined the meeting. The study was conducted by BSC Group as part of the development of an RFP for a potential public-private partnership for a new ice rink. Community members had expressed a desire to evaluate the traffic impact of a new rink – the study projected an incremental 23 car trips due to a new rink (with 1.5 sheets) at peak rush hour.

Further, the study identified three potential locations for an entrance on Concord Ave. Wheeler was developing evaluation criteria based on the choice of entrance as well as overall approach to traffic management. Clancy explained that they were notifying the public of the study and would be posting it online, as the work developing the RFP continued.

[Open public comment.]

- *Amy Tannenbaum (Goden Street)*: The timing is wrong for a new rink – should build the school first and work to resolve traffic/safety issues that arise before taking on another project. A

potential developer with a public-private partnership will have an incentive to get more people onto the site.

[Close public comment.]

Caputo summarized that no action was being taken by the Board at present, this item was to inform the public on the existence of the traffic study.

#### **Presentation by the Business Study Committee**

Raul Gonzalez (MAPC) and Emma Thurston (Business Study Committee) joined the meeting. Gonzalez gave a presentation highlighting the findings of the Committee, including background analysis, results from the business survey, and final recommendations to the Board. One key recommendation was the establishment of an Economic Development Committee.

Thurston commented that the Town was very excited to give feedback on how to improve business conditions in Belmont. Jeffery Wheeler (Senior Town Planner) reported there was great energy on the Committee, hope to keep momentum going forward with new Economic Development Committee – should have business representation.

Caputo requested a charge be drafted for the Economic Development Committee based on the findings of the Business Study Committee.

*Motion: To accept the results of the Belmont Business Study Committee report presented tonight. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### **Vote to approve Complete Streets Prioritization Plan**

Clancy and Elsa Chan (VHB) were present. Chan explained there were 23 final projects narrowed down and consolidated from the larger list generated via the online portal. The final projects were chosen by public consultation and evaluation under a matrix with 13 criteria, together with a view towards projects that would likely be attractive to MassDOT. The final list also had cost estimates for each project and was presented ranked in priority by the 13 criteria.

The Town would submit this prioritization plan to MassDOT for approval, which covered a five year time horizon; once approved, projects could be selected from the list on an annual basis to apply for up to \$400k in funding, competing against other towns/projects.

Clancy noted the Town was not obligated to submit projects according to the prioritization, as situations could change and other funding sources may be identified for certain projects. Clancy and Chan were requesting the Board to formally adopt the prioritization plan to allow for submission to MassDOT.

*Motion: To adopt the Complete Street Prioritization Plan provided to the Board of Selectmen this evening and submit to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for approval. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### **Vote to approve request for One Day Liquor License, Wine and Malt only, from Beaujolais Catering for a Mitzvah on September 14, 2019 at the Beech Street Center**

*Motion: To approve the request for the One Day Liquor License as specified above, from 7pm to 10pm. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### **Vote to approve Community Path contract for Nitsch Engineering**

Russ Leino (Chair, Community Path Project Committee) joined the meeting. Garvin explained that two bids had been received and the CPPC had decided to move forward with Nitsch. Counsel had reviewed the contract at length, requesting the Board's approval so the firm can start work.

Caputo asked if the work would be sequenced –Phase 1a (Alexander Ave. underpass) would be easier to execute first? Garvin noted it was necessary to spend the \$150k in grant money from MassTrails prior to June of next year. Leino responded that the projects were linked and design would proceed on both simultaneously – need to be at 25% design for both Phase 1a and 1b to get on the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Once on the TIP, could discuss sequencing of construction. Would be no problem to spend the MassTrails grant money by the deadline.

Epstein highlighted a minor concern in the contract language, essentially that Nitsch would present design plans to construct within the right-of-way 'where possible'. Garvin said Michael Trepanier from MassDOT thought the bid was low – Nitsch was leaving some flexibility in the work/scope.

*Motion: To approve the contract for design of Phases 1a and 1b of the Community Path with Nitsch Engineering in the amount of \$1,157,720. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### **Open Fall Town Meeting Warrant Discussion**

Garvin was seeking guidance on when and how long to open the Warrant. As this was Special Town Meeting, which was meant to address exceptional/timely matters, there was consensus the window should be short, i.e. twenty four hours. Dash suggested a late September target for opening the warrant, wait to see an update on the Minuteman issue.

#### **Committee Appointments**

##### BEMA

*Motion: To reappoint Glen Castro, Wayne Haley, David Frizzell, and Richard Nohl to the Belmont Emergency Management Agency. (Vote passed 3-0)*

##### Belmont Media Center Board of Directors

Ralph Jones seeking reappointment, no other applicants.

*Motion: To reappoint Ralph Jones to the Belmont Media Center Board of Directors. (Vote passed 3-0)*

##### Cable TV Advisory Committee

*Motion: To reappoint Mark Carthy to the Cable TV Advisory Committee. (Vote passed 3-0)*

##### Community Path Project Committee

Epstein was no longer seeking reappointment; Phil Lawrence and Russ Leino were seeking reappointment.

*Motion: To reappoint Phil Lawrence and Russ Leino to the Community Path Project Committee. (Vote passed 3-0)*

One additional slot still needed to be filled. Holly Muson was present at the meeting as a candidate.

- *Holly Muson: Town Meeting Member Precinct 1, an 18 year Belmont resident. She brought experience primarily from a pedestrian perspective and had attended many CPIAC meetings, Pare*

presentations, etc. Muson had a Bachelor's in Civil Engineering with an MBA from Harvard, and professional experience with commercial construction project management, developing affordable housing projects.

*Motion: To appoint Holly Muson to the Community Path Project Committee. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### Financial Task Force II

*Motion: To appoint Mark Paolillo and Hardy Tey to the Financial Task Force II. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### Historic District Commission

A letter from the Chair recommended Carl Solander be promoted from associate to full member and reappointment of all the candidates whose terms were expiring.

*Motion: To reappoint Lisa Harrington (member), Theresa McCarthy (member), Carl Solander (member), Kathleen Fahey (associate member) and Nushin Yazdi (associate member) to the Historic District Commission. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### Housing Trust

*Motion: To reappoint Judith Feins, Rachel Heller, and Judy Singler to the Housing Trust. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### Local Emergency Management Committee

There were no new applicants. Dash pointed out that the Statute establishing the charge for the Committee requires a total of 12 members; he suggested reappointing the current 9 members presently, and seeking applicants to fill the remaining slots according to the categories outlined by the Statute.

*Motion: To reappoint all current nine members to the Local Emergency Committee. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### Meet Belmont Planning Committee

There were four slots to fill. Brian Saper had just served his first term and was seeking reappointment.

*Motion: To reappoint Brian Saper to the Meet Belmont Planning Committee. (Vote passed 3-0)*

*Motion: To appoint Lisa Difavor, Mei Ye, and Amy Varjian to the Meet Belmont Planning Committee. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### MWRA Advisory Board

*Motion: To reappoint Jay Marcotte as full member and Mark Mancuso as alternate member to the MWRA Advisory Board. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### Registrar of Voters

Joe Zarro had not yet served a full term and was seeking reappointment.

*Motion: To reappoint Joseph Zarro to the Registrar of Voters. (Vote passed 3-0)*

#### Vision 21 Implementation Committee

The Chair Kevin Dorn was up for reappointment.



*Motion: To reappoint Kevin Dorn to the Vision 21 Implementation Committee. (Vote passed 3-0)*

Candidates Laura Burns and Ira Morgenstern had interviewed for the Planning Board and were impressive. Dash identified Rudy Pinezetti as another exceptional candidate. Finally Gang Zhao had previously served but moved out of town; had recently moved back to Town and wanted to get involved again.

*Motion: To appoint Laura Burns, Ira Morgenstern, Rudy Pinezetti and Gang Zhao to the Vision 21 Implementation Committee. (Vote passed 3-0)*

Water Advisory Board

William Shea and Frank French sought reappointment.

*Motion: To reappoint William Shea and Frank French to the Water Advisory Board. (Vote passed 3-0)*

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT:

Garvin reviewed the Town Administrator's Report:

- Myrtle Street tree issue had been resolved.
- Brought to attention that accessibility in Belmont Center could be improved. Over the weekend certain handicapped parking spaces had been moved and continue to identify improvements to other areas.
- The Police Department and Dispatch have been successfully relocated for the construction period. Thanks to DPW for assistance.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS:

Dash: The Library Trustees were working with the Veterans Group regarding a suitable memorial.

Caputo: Reached a milestone in design for the Middle and High School building project of 60% costing. The projects were showing a \$19m overage – the Building Committee would need to reengage the value engineering process to bring back within the budget.

ADJOURNMENT:

*Motion: To adjourn at 10:29pm. (Vote passed 3-0)*

Respectfully Submitted,

  
PATRICE GARVIN, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR