

Approved by
the Select Board on:

6/21/2021

SELECT BOARD MEETING

MONDAY, JUNE 7, 2021

REMOTE MEETING

5:30 PM

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: July 6, 2021
TIME: 10:16 AM

CALL TO ORDER

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

ACTION BY CONSENT

Vote to approve request for use of Town Green by Belmont Pride Parade organizers on June 12, 2021 to erect and use two tables and to place an ice cream freezer on the Green

Motion was made to approve the above request from the Belmont Pride Parade organizers. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

- Gladys Unger asked additional permission from the Select Board for a sign to be erected on the Town Green for the Belmont Pride Parade.

Motion was made to approve a sign on the Town Green for Belmont Pride Parade. Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Discussion and possible vote on positions for articles and amendments for Annual Town Meeting, Segment B

AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE 16 – ENTERPRISE FUNDS FOR WATER SEWER AND STORMWATER SERVICES

MOTION A: That \$1,398,954.00 be appropriated from Water Retained Earnings, and \$6,324,031.00 be appropriated from Water Revenues to fund the expenses of the Water Department.

MOTION B: That \$974,711.00 be transferred from Sewer Retained Earnings, and \$8,559,545.00 be transferred from Sewer and Stormwater Revenues to fund the Sewer and Stormwater Enterprise Fund.

Amendments are being proposed to the above Article 16 motions. The two amendments, put forth by proponents Lisa Oteri, Judith Ananian Sarno, and Robert Sarno, propose to pause the underground tanks project. Lisa Oteri, spokesperson for the proponents of the amendment, said they feel that the Town hasn't vetted all the costs and Belmont should be working towards becoming less dependent on fossil fuel. She claims that other towns are well on their way to convert their fleets to hybrids or electric and that Belmont should be focusing on a green infrastructure. The proponents also believe that the tanks don't have to be above ground and that smaller tanks should be installed. They say that a \$1M estimate seems high because it is double what was approved in Town Meeting last year. The proponents want to work with Town officials to find other solutions.

Epstein said he feels that Lisa's statements reflect misconceptions. He said that our underground tanks could legally remain in service, but they represent an uninsurable solution and a high risk. If they leak, the Town will have to pay for remediation work and the DPW yard would be forced out of service.

Paolillo agrees that the tanks need to be replaced, but he believes the size of the tanks in the proposal are too big. He said if peak use for fuel has been estimated at ~3000 gallons, then we don't need to install 6000 gallon tanks. He feels that Belmont is investing in an infrastructure that may not be needed in five years. He is not comfortable with drawing down \$300K from the enterprise funds from the water and sewer enterprise funds because that money should be used for rate stabilization. He would like to see if the scope of work could be reduced without delaying the project.

Epstein said that the DPW is prepared to support 4000 gallon tanks. But according to the engineering consultants, Weston and Sampson, the reduction in size of the tanks would reduce the cost of the project by \$10-\$20K.

Dash said that smaller tanks would mean more frequent delivery which also affects climate change. The lifetime of the tanks would be 20 years and he feels that it will be a long time before we electrify all our vehicles. Passage of the article would allow us to go out to bid.

Ann Marie Mahoney, Chair of the Capital Budget Committee, said they would revisit the size of tanks and that would part of the design of the project going forward. She cautioned about making them too small for top usage periods and/or emergency weather situations. She said delaying the project from going forward at this time, means that the start of project will be deferred until next Spring and there is a 20-28 week lead time once the bid is accepted.

Garvin said in regards to the allocation between water and sewer,, the Town did not analyze the project based on consumption only. Water and sewer have been using the assets for two decades and have not been contributing before this.

Epstein asked Mark his opinion regarding above- vs. under-ground tanks. Paolillo said he doesn't have an opinion on that, his objection is related to the size of the tanks and the drawdown from the enterprise fund.

Ann Marie said the Capital Budget Committee has been looking at this for three years. The Committee has written proposals for above and underground tanks and for different size tanks. The best we can do is to go with the proposals from a firm with expertise. Mahoney said that underground tanks are estimated to be \$400K more than above ground.

Dash reminded the public that this issue has been discussed at previous meetings and public comments will not be allowed tonight. This discussion is for proponents of amendments and the Select Board.

Motion was made for unfavorable action by the Select Board on the Motion A amendment. Motion for unfavorable action was approved by a vote of 2-1. Paolillo opposed.

Motion was made for unfavorable action by the Select Board on the Motion B amendment. Motion for unfavorable action was approved by a vote of 2-1. Paolillo opposed.

Discussion of fuel tank presentation at Annual Town Meeting

Epstein's slides were presented for approval for Town Meeting.

Key Points of fuel tank presentation:

- 1) The current tanks are 35 years old.
- 2) Current tanks are not insurable from reputable insurance companies.
- 3) The DPW yard is the only place deemed appropriate for new tanks.
- 4) New above ground tanks are less expensive and just as safe as underground tanks.
 - Epstein's economic analysis of private gas station vs. Town owned tanks shows that the Town would be spending more money if they adopted a private gas solution. And no other town uses this model. Belmont replaces vehicles slowly and transition to electric vehicles will be slow.

Motion was made to accept the slides and have Epstein present the slides at Town Meeting tonight.

Motion was approved by a vote of 3-0.

Discussion of the Belmont Light contribution towards the DPW tank replacement project

Craig Spinale, General Manager of Belmont Light, commented on the reasons for the contribution of Belmont Light towards the DPW tank replacement project. The Light Department was approached by Town Administration about the issue. He understood that the project was voted a year ago at Town Meeting so there was no need for Belmont Light to assess the size of project.

Craig feels that the \$200K contribution from each department is appropriate. He said that Belmont Light was comfortable outlaying this capital dollar value. He spoke to auditors about the issue and they agreed that Belmont Light should buy into capital assets. Instead of purchasing assets they could have asked the Light Board to vote to transfer funds to Town, like the Pilot Project system, but it was decided that buying into the assets was the best approach. Our yearly process is set up as a quasi-commercial entity. The Select Board sets the rates and every year Belmont Light estimates the costs and we present to the Light Board.

Paolillo thanked Craig for coming tonight to present. He said he wants to support project but he thinks we are overspending on fuel consumption. He believes that this kind of transfer is concerning. He thinks the Chair of the Select Board should have been apprised of the matter before the decision was made.

Epstein said if Belmont Light had to get fuel elsewhere, \$200K would be in the zone of reasonableness for a negotiated contribution. Epstein said that Craig Spinale can make this decision as a General Manager without Light Board approval. Dash agreed. He said Belmont Light does asset purchases without the Select Board approval or knowledge.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. May 17, 2021 – Regular Meeting
- b. May 24, 2021 – Regular Meeting
 - Tabled until June 9th meeting.

Town Committee applications:

June 11th is the deadline for committee applications for the Town. Marshall said there has been a lot of interest in committee slots. Next week, he will evaluate which committees still have openings.

SELECT BOARD COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

- Paolillo announced that the Community Path Committee had met with Mr. French and Mahoney about the engineering plan. There was a pretty significant easement needed in original plan. We heard the French and Mahoney concerns. Senator Brownsberger, Representative Rogers, Patrice Garvin, Glenn Clancy and Paolillo met with Mr. French to talk about why the path changed so much from original plan. Glenn asked the engineering consultant to review the plans and they came back with a plan that does not involve a permanent taking. This information has been shared with the business owners.
- Tom Caputo did a presentation from Financial Task Force on recommendation for utilization of money from the American Rescue Plan Act:
 - 1) \$1M in school will be used to address COVID related expenses that are above and beyond School committee budget.
 - 2) Town should work with school to identify COVID expenses in FY21. We can get retroactive reimbursement back to March 3.
 - 3) The Task Force will put together a working group to discuss the \$7.6M utilization. This will be an opportunity for the public to express their opinions.
- Dash said we want to get a proposal together. Four Mass. towns that were hard hit by COVID, are getting more funds than other towns. This might mean the \$7.6M funding for Belmont may be reduced.
- Paolillo suggested that during the budget presentation on Wednesday evening at Town Meeting, we should show people the work being done by the Financial Task Force.
- Dash said that Town needs to decide on a process. And we need to know how much we are getting in first tranche.

Discussion and possible vote on remote participation in meetings

- Dash asked to put the June 21st Select Board meeting on as a live meeting.
- We will have to come up with a Town policy on remote participation. We need to provide remote participation going forward for public Zoom participation.
- Garvin said we will get money in the first part of the fiscal year for remote participation hardware. Hopefully we can extend remote participation until the Fall.

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

Next meeting is June 9th at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



PATRICE GARVIN, Town Administrator