

MINUTES  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2007  
REGULAR SESSION  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM, TOWN HALL  
6:30 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 6:30 PM in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Town Hall. All members were present. Town Administrator Tom Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti were also present.

II. QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

There were no questions.

III. ACTION BY APPOINTMENT

Senior Center Building Committee

The Board moved: To enter executive session to discuss potential litigation and to subsequently return to open session.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0). The Board entered executive session at 6:33 PM.

(During executive session, no substantive motions were made.)

The Board returned to open session at 7:18 PM.

II. QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS

Don Mercier asked if the Selectmen could write a letter urging that families who adopt children from the foster system get precedence for affordable housing units at the former Metropolitan State Hospital site?

The Board moved: To send a letter indicating that if this is possible the Board believes it should be done.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

Self-insurance discussion -Susan Shillue, Vice President, Cook & Company

Susan Shillue appeared with Phil Curtis, chair of the Health Insurance Advisory Committee. She explained that there are two types of stop-loss reinsurance - specific (based on the excess of an individual claim) and aggregate (based on the excess of total claims). She recommended that specific reinsurance is more likely to be a cost-effective option for the town because the aggregate limits are set fairly high compared to claims experience.

In moving to self-insurance, the Town would set up a Health Insurance Trust and the law requires that it be fully funded for 12 months of claims. Any money that remains after paying claims can be used to mitigate rates.

Ms. Shillue felt that the Town could be successful under a self-insured plan provided that it adequately funds the trust and obtains the necessary reinsurance. She said Cook & Company's study suggested that Belmont's premium experience has not been tied as closely as it might have

been to the Town's claims, although the most recent premium increase was fairly accurate. Ms. Shillue feels that a 3-5% savings through a self-insured plan would not be unreasonable to expect.

Under her analysis, Belmont would save \$890,000 if it were self-insured for 2007.

It was clarified that it would be possible to move to a self-funding option as soon as July 1. Mr. Curtis felt that a strong majority of the Warrant Committee is leaning in favor of this. Ms. Shillue works with many other municipalities that are self-funding in this way.

The Board expressed an interest in sharing the analysis with Harvard Pilgrim and asking them why their premiums are calibrated with such a high percentage to cover the risk. It was agreed to try to have a response to present at the January 31 joint structural meeting.

#### Police Chief Interviews and Discussion

Mr. Younger summarized negotiations with the leading candidate for the Police Chief position chosen by the Selectmen. Mr. Younger said after negotiation, it was not possible to come to agreement on the salary, as the candidate insisted on a figure that was above the advertised salary range for the position.

It was noted that the Board had been pleased with the finalists for the position. The Board agreed there is no reason to re-open a full search. Of the other three finalists, one candidate lives far from Belmont and was unwilling to move closer if offered the job. So there are two candidates left. After some discussion, the Board agreed that having interviewed all the candidates extensively, there was no point in having them come in again for additional interviews. The Board's choice is between Lt. Manning of Waltham and Captain McLaughlin of Arlington.

Mr. Younger recommended Captain McLaughlin based on his experience and ability to work with the department. It was noted that Captain McLaughlin has lived in Belmont for 20 years. The Board felt comfortable with Mr. Younger's recommendation.

The Board moved: To instruct the Town Administrator to complete negotiations with Captain McLaughlin for the position with the expectation of appointing him if the negotiations are successful.

Lt. Chris Donahue said that the negotiating process with Mr. Younger was disappointing because the offer was less than the previous chief received and than the amount budgeted for the position. He said he has more experience with budgets and administration than any previous police chief. He said that the advertised salary range did not include the educational incentive. He was looking forward to working with the department and felt he had identified opportunities for savings. He feels the Board is downgrading the position of police chief, but promised to support Captain McLaughlin or whoever the Board selects.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

#### V. ACTION BY WRITING

##### A. Approve Ambulance and Fire Engine Purchase Contracts

Fire Chief David Frizzell said there was one bidder on a new ambulance for the department. The bid of \$158,000 is within the budget for the vehicle and he asked for the contract to be approved and executed.

Mr. Younger noted that Chief Frizzell has worked together with a chief in another community to try to bid similar vehicles together to save money and expects to do more along those lines in the future.

The Board moved: To approve the purchase of an ambulance for \$158,000 from Greenwood Emergency Vehicles.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

Chief Frizzell said the Fire Department also solicited bids for a pumper truck. There were two bids, only one of which met the specifications. The law requires that the Town reject the non-responsive bid before accepting the higher bid.

The Board moved: To reject the non-responsive bid.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: To approve the purchase of a pumper for \$260,000 from Greenwood Emergency Vehicles.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

Chief Frizzell said the department will be getting a federal grant for turnout gear for \$48,000 this year, and has also received a gift from a Belmont family to outfit a fitness room.

#### ACTION BY CONSENT

- A. NEW Application for License Approval - Class II Used Car Dealer - Superior Trading Corp.

Daniel Wagner appeared before the Board and explained that he had been given a license by the Board the previous year and the venture did not work out well. Now he is requesting a new license to buy and sell vehicles at auctions with no vehicle storage on the property. The property will contain an office for recordkeeping.

The Board moved: To approve the license.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

#### Town Administrator's Report

Town Administrator Younger reported on the following items:

" New Concord Avenue directional signs have been installed in the center medians to aid motorists.

" A good meeting was held with the proposed restaurateur for the center fire station property and various department heads about the various licenses that would be needed. It is hoped the restaurant could be in place by the end of the year. The restaurant will meet the 130-seat requirement for a full liquor license.

" Habitat for Humanity has assured the Town that they will be prepared to close on the Brighton Street property by the February 9 deadline.

" There was an HVAC leak in the Homer building today and the ceiling had to be opened to re-solder the pipe. The flooding from the leak may have damaged the granite flooring.

" A traffic study is underway to determine if the School Street and Fairview Avenue intersection should have 4-way stop signs.

" The Town has received the annual request to allow an all-night high school graduation party. The Board authorized Mr. Younger to send a letter authorizing the party to proceed with appropriate police coverage.

" Mr. Younger has been elected one of five town managers to the Governor's Local Government Advisory Committee.

" Tomorrow morning Mr. Younger is meeting with the Lexington town manager and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council to discuss regionalization possibilities.

#### ACTION BY CONSENT

##### B. Reserve Fund Transfer Requests

One request is from Planning Director Jay Szklut to monitor the progress of developments at McLean, for \$22,500. The others are from Public Works Director Peter Castanino for repairs already made to damages from the microburst storm: \$32,000 for clearing downed trees, and another \$32,000 for refurbishing of the track because of water wrinkles under the surface.

The Board moved: To recommend approval of these items to the Warrant Committee.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

##### C. Renewal Applications: Common Victualler's, Livery and Class II Used Car Dealer's License

The applications are from 1 limousine company, 4 used car dealers, and 18 common victuallers.

The Board moved: to approve all items except Angelato's and Belmont Hill Club.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board moved: to approve the licenses for Angelato's and Belmont Hill Club.

Selectman Firenze recused himself.

Motion carried unanimously (2-0).

#### ACTION BY WRITING

##### B. Appointment of Vacant Human Rights Commission Position

The Board moved: To appoint Trish Lomar to the Human Rights Commission to fill the remainder of the term of a vacancy caused by a retirement.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

#### VI. OTHER

The Board has scheduled Saturday budget hearings on February 24, March 3, and March 10.

The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents has requested the Town to send a letter to the state for increased special education spending. Selectman Brownsberger said he has sponsored legislation to increase the special education funding in several ways.

The Board moved: To send a letter to Belmont's legislative delegation advocating increased special education spending by the state as requested.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

Mr. Szklut has requested the Selectmen's signatures on a letter of a grant application for a consultant to develop a Chapter 40R smart growth overlay plan for the Our Lady of Mercy properties.

The Board moved: To sign the letter.

Motion carried unanimously (3-0).

There was discussion of the process for reviewing upcoming building projects in the queue. This will be discussed in detail at the next meeting.

There was discussion of a complaint from a resident about delivery trucks for Macy's obstructing resident driveways and creating noise issues.

The Board adjourned at 9:42 PM.

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Thomas Younger, Town Administrator