

- **MINUTES**
- **TOWN OF BELMONT**
- **BOARD OF SELECTMEN**
- **SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM**
- **Monday, October 6, 2008**
 - **7:30 PM**

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- **CALL TO ORDER**
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- A regular meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 7:31 by Chairman Firenze. Selectman Jones was not present. Town Administrator Tom Younger and Assistant Town Administrator Jeff Conti were present.
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- **QUESTIONS FROM TOWN RESIDENTS**
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- Mr. George Diarbakerly and his father were concerned about the Woodfall Road auction process. He claimed his father was the highest bidder at \$2.7M, but that the Selectmen declined to sell to them and decided to sell the property for \$2.465M, which is less than the \$2.5M they (the Selectmen) said they would not go below. Chair Firenze responded that Woodfall Road was an open auction and that Mr. Diarbakerly was not prepared to meet the \$2.5M bid that was on the table at that time. Town Counsel was present and is witness to the fact that Mr. Diarbakerly said he was not prepared to go to \$2.5M. There was a question about the \$40,000 fee for the auctioneer. The auctioneer said he will pay the town the \$40,000 if the bid of \$2.5M was a go. Mr. Diarbakerly was told this, and again he declined. Mr. Diarbakerly remained unconvinced that the process was fair and was then advised by Chair Firenze that he could protest the auction by writing a letter to the town via the Board of Selectmen.
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- **ACTION BY APPOINTMENT**
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- **Discussion of New Library**
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- Mr. Hal Shubin and members of the Library Board of Trustees appeared before the Board to discuss the status of the new library project. Mr. Shubin updated the Board that the Mass. Board of Library Commissioners may be granting Belmont \$5.3M (provisional award). Shubin explained that, in order to qualify for this state money, Belmont would have to show that its funding source is secure by 12/31/09. They (the Library Board) are looking to private fundraising and, shortly after proving money is available, would receive the first of three installments (which amounts to \$1.5M – i.e., one third of the \$5.3M). The Capital Project Overview Committee (CPOC) looked into land and projects in town and reported on the Library. Their report opposed the idea of tearing down the existing library building, but did advocate for building a new Library across the street, on Concord Ave. The School Committee is concerned about the White Field house, which sits on the prospective site and is used for locker and storage space. The Mass. Board of Library Commissioners would need to be comfortable with the

proposed site, requiring that it meet the Library's programmatic needs. Shubin concluded his remarks by proposing that CPOC might help to oversee the process.

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- Chair Firenze articulated the concern that, while state funding may be coming sooner than anticipated, that money should not dictate to the town what its existing priorities are. For example, the Wellington, the high school upgrade, and a new rink are projects that have long been in the town's queue. The new Library is not among the top three priorities of the existing queue. Firenze advised the Library Board to put their ideas together with CPOC's, and to continue to study the issues of parking, the field house, the fields, etc. Firenze asked how much private money the Library Board expects can be raised. They responded that once a site is named, they are hoping to raise \$5-7M. Firenze noted that with the state grant and private donations, the town will still need to fund about \$10M for this project.

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- Mr. Younger will contact CPOC and come up with a recommendation for next steps, and the Board of Selectmen will revisit the queue with the Permanent Building Committee, as well.

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- **National Grid, Little Pond Road**

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- Mr. Harold Cooper, Permit Representative from National Grid, appeared before the Board to request acceptance for a petition to install approximately 260 feet of a gas main on Little Pond Road. The gas main will service house numbers: 28, 24, 20, 21, 16. Mr. Younger added that Community Development Director Glenn Clancy is comfortable with this petition.

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- *The Board moved:* To accept the petition placed by National Grid for a gas main on Little Pond Road.
- The motion passed unanimously (2-0).

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- **Community Preservation Act (CPA) Committee Report**

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- Members of the CPA committee appeared before the Board to discuss their report. The Board's Chair, Mr. Adam Dash, said that the CPA committee was charged with investigating the Community Preservation Act and has done so for the past 11 months. Mr. Dash acknowledged Mr. Conti's valuable role with the committee. The CPA was put into effect by the state in 2001. It involves a property tax surcharge for up to 3% (or less) with up to 100% in matching state funds. The money is earmarked for open space, recreation, historic preservation, and affordable housing. The CPA committee would vet applications, and Town Meeting would make the final decision on the use of the funds. While the state match has been at 100%, the committee is expecting it to be less than 100% in the future. The state's money is accumulated by the Registry of Deeds fees, and that fund gets divided among cities or towns participating in the CPA program.

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- The CPA committee and the Board of Selectmen discussed the two low income exemptions: the first \$100K in property value, and low income elderly. Chair Firenze

noted that he was told by other towns not to adopt any exemptions because of the administrative cost of them. Mr. Dash replied that up to 5% of the funds can be used to administer the program. Potential uses for CPA funds in Belmont include: acquiring some of the Uplands, the brick barn at Rock Meadow, and the Underwood pool.

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- The CPA is unanimously recommending a 1.5% surcharge with the low income exemptions. It expects a 40-65% state match rate. Chair Firenze said he struggles with the concept of taxing Belmont citizens and having the state dictate how Belmont has to spend the money. He also expressed concern about the timing of when to put this on the ballot. Next Steps: The Board of Selectmen will vote to recommend or not.
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Committee Discussions: Council on Aging (COA)

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- The COA Board appeared before the Board of Selectmen to discuss its membership. Chair Joel Semuels and COA Director Nava Niv Vogel began by reviewing with the Selectmen the membership status of the COA. There are presently three openings. There are six candidates interested in the three openings. Mr. Semuels said that the intended individuals should have interest in the purpose of the COA, interest in developing programs for elders, interest in serving on subcommittees, experience working with elders, as well as education in the area of elders. Eleven COA members are permitted by bylaw. Term lengths were discussed and Chair Firenze stressed the value of institutional knowledge and in keeping people who may be approaching the 9 year guideline because of their knowledge. He said each committee is being evaluated and decisions are being made on a case by case basis. Chair Firenze asked the COA to review and prioritize its programs given the FY10 fiscal climate (e.g. the \$4M budget shortfall).
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- Three new COA members will be appointed at the next Board of Selectmen meeting: October 20, 2008. Mr. Younger will prepare the data regarding length of committee appointments.
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- The two Boards then discussed how to best ascertain the skill set of the six candidates. Mr. Younger will email the Board of Selectmen regarding the candidates' information (e.g. resumes, etc.) Mr. Kazarian expressed an interest in having the Waverly Square area represented. Another COA member expressed that younger people's viewpoints would be appreciated.
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- *The Board moved:* To reappoint Dr. John Bruschi, Henry Kazarian, and Ethel Hamann.

- The motion passed unanimously (2-0).
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Town Administrator's Report

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- Mr. Younger presented one contract for the Board to vote on (Sewer System) and one contract for the Board to sign.
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- *The Board moved:* To approve the contract for \$145,300 for the sewer system evaluation survey.

- The motion passed unanimously (2-0).

- *The Board moved:* To authorize Mr. Clancy to apply for the low interest sewer loan (DEP and MWRA) approved at April's TM.

- The motion passed unanimously (2-0).

- The Board signed the necessary contracts.

- **OTHER**

- **Street Lights**

- Chair Firenze said the town is spending (for street lighting) at a rate in which it will run out of money half way through the fiscal year. There may be a need to go to TM for the money to fill in the gap. The Warrant Committee will not authorize reserve fund money, as this does not constitute an appropriate reserve fund transfer. Firenze noted that any Woodfall Road proceeds can only be used for capital projects or paying down debt on capital projects – not for street light funding.

- **Lighting the Track**

- Chair Firenze noted that he was recently contacted by the Sports Complex committee which said the town promised that the track would be lighted for residents. Walking lights (which had been previously installed on the track) are lower in cost to operate, but have not been in use due to a complaint received by one resident. Tower lights have been used, at 4 times the cost. Mr. Younger will investigate options for using the lower cost walking lights on the track. A civic organization has offered funding for the track lighting.

- **ACTION BY CONSENT**

- **Approval of Board of Selectmen Minutes – April 7, 2008 – April 9, 2008 – April 21, 2008 – June 16, 2008 – July 7, 2008.**

- *The Board moved:* To approve the minutes of the above meeting dates.

- The motion passed unanimously (2-0).

- The minutes of August 4, 2008 will be reviewed at the next meeting (10/20/2008).

- **ACTION BY WRITING**

- There was none.

- The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:25 pm.

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• Thomas G. Younger, Town
Administrator

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