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(Working Session) MINUTES  
TOWN OF BELMONT  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM  
Wednesday, December 28, 2016  
8:15 AM

APPROVED  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
DATE: 1-23-17

**CALL TO ORDER**

A (working session) meeting of the Board was called to order in open session at 8:25 a.m. by Chair Mark Paolillo in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Selectmen Sami Baghdady and Jim Williams were present. Town Administrator David Kale and Assistant Town Administrator Phyllis Marshall were also present.

Chair Paolillo turned to the first item on the agenda.

**ACTION BY CONSENT**

**Budget Updates**

Mr. Kale noted that there are a few budget topics that need to be discussed as the FY18 budget is being developed. He began with Belmont Center parking lot fees.

***Monthly Parking Passes Fee Reduction***

There is a request to reduce the business monthly parking fee from \$90 to \$60, on a temporary basis (until June 30, 2017). This request is a reflection of the economic hardships the businesses have faced during the past several months of Center construction.

Selectman Baghdady added that the town's business centers are feeling an economic pinch. Both the business employees and the business owners are impacted by these monthly parking fees. Some business owners pay this monthly parking fee for their employees.

The Board discussed issues relating to the request to reduce monthly parking fees. Mr. Kale stated that the parking situation (on street and in the municipal lots) will continue to be monitored. The Board expressed its support of the businesses and acknowledged that the Belmont Center reconstruction period did hurt many businesses. The Board briefly discussed lowering the fee to \$55 per month, but opted for \$60.

*The Board moved:* To direct the Town Administrator to temporarily reduce the monthly parking fees in all three municipal lots from \$90 to \$60.

The motion passed unanimously (3-0).

***Recreation Department Organization***

Mr. Jay Marcotte, DPW Director, Ms. June Howell, Rec Dept. Coordinator, Ms. Jessica Porter,

HR Director, and Mr. Brian Higgins, HR Generalist, were in attendance (in the audience) to discuss the Recreation Department reorganization, if necessary.

Mr. Kale summarized the current Recreation Department organization. Several employees are retiring, which suggests it is a good time to analyze the staffing and to make decisions for the future. These include the individuals who manage the Underwood Pool and the SPORT Program. Two current union positions could be made non-union positions to absorb these responsibilities. However, if Ms. Howell is moved to oversee the Recreation Department, she would need day-to-day help for the administrative tasks. This would require the hiring of support staff. This reorganization could be done without needing to substantially increase the Rec Department's overall budget allocation. The restructuring will help improve and make more efficient the overall staffing of the Rec Department, stated Mr. Kale.

Mr. Kale then raised the issue of the need for an Interim/ Temporary Recreation Director , as suggested in the recent strategic plan report. This position would shepherd the implementation of the action items outlined in the report with the help of current Recreation staff. He has developed a draft job description for an interim contract managerial position.

Chair Paolillo summarized the recommendation put forth by Mr. Kale as:

- Moving two positions to be non-union (effectively placing them at the managerial level) to coordinate SPORT and Pool activities and support implementing the recommendations continued in the Recreation strategic plan.
- placing two other positions (Sport and Pool Director) at an administrative level
- hiring an administrative assistant to help with the day-to-day clerical functions, and
- Hiring an interim contract Recreation managerial position to manage the recommendation of the Recreation Strategic plan.

Mr. Kale agreed with this summary, and added that these changes will help support the "action items" as delineated in the strategic plan. Funds are available for the interim contract managerial position.

The Board briefly discussed these proposed staffing changes to the Recreation Department. Supporting documents were provided to facilitate the conversation.

### ***HVAC Technician***

Mr. Kale then broached the topic of hiring an HVHC technician as a way to reduce costs on HVAC contracted services. The town pays a substantial amount of money, yearly, for HVAC repair services. It makes sense to try to have this as an in-house service. The HVAC technician's salary could be taken out of the current service contract budget. The contracted services budget would not be eliminated, he explained, but this line item could be reduced by the hiring of an HVAC technician.

The Board discussed this notion and explored the potential cost savings.

As an aside, Mr. Kale noted at this point that an RFP will be issued soon for the Belmont High

School Building Committee OPM position. The language in the RFP was largely stipulated by the MSBA.

### ***Taxi Cab Moratorium***

Selectman Baghdady noted that the moratorium on taxi licenses expired about a year ago. He stated that perhaps the moratorium is no longer needed as no one has requested a license during that time.

The Board discussed briefly and agreed.

### ***Other Budget Topics***

Selectman Williams then distributed a handout, which contained 10 budget-related questions.

Mr. Kale reviewed the intended uses of the override funding in the upcoming budget(s). FY18 is balanced, he explained, but FY19 and further out will be a challenge to balance without an infusion of revenue or a reduction in services. The Board then discussed the impact of the burgeoning school enrollment on the overall budget. The town and school department are working together to address this challenge.

Selectman Williams raised the issue of needing a capital plan for the town. The Library, DPW, and Police station are in need of upgrades, as well as the Belmont High School. Chair Paolillo noted that the Board will need to prioritize the remaining capital projects. There is a sub-group who is meeting to determine a priority list. The subgroup and the Board will need to determine expenses and will need to identify funding sources. Clearly, there should be coordination concerning these projects.

Selectman Williams stated that he has several questions about the Light Department, as well as about decommissioning the existing light station. He raised the issue of the Enterprise Funds needing to pay their ARC obligations (OPEB) annually. The rates that are currently paid are likely including these costs, he said.

Selectman Williams then raised the issue of the town's OPEB liability. He recommended that the town consider hiring Segal Consulting to address this obligation. It was noted that the OPEB study group will appear before the Board at the January 23 meeting. The Board agreed to explore this topic further.

Selectman Williams then discussed the concept of Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB). He noted that expenses should be kept under 3% (i.e., net budget growth limited to a maximum of 3% annually), given the Prop. 2 ½ constraint. Otherwise, frequent overrides will be required to keep up with rising expenses. Mr. Kale noted that revenue-based income is an ongoing challenge for Belmont, as Belmont has a very small commercial tax base. The initial budget for FY18 is up 3.7%. However, efforts in collaboration with the school Superintendent are underway to identify reductions in cost increases.

Chair Paolillo suggested that the impact of the 3% cap should be explored (as an exercise). Mr. Kale noted that keeping the budget at 3% will likely require a reduction in services, given that it is difficult to come up with additional revenue.

### **Other Topics**

#### *Light Board Meeting*

The meeting scheduled for tomorrow (12/29/16) will be cancelled. The Board will meet in Executive Session at some future time to discuss the General Manager contract.

#### *Community Preservation Act Committee*

Selectman Williams brought to the Board's attention two applications that may require their attention: the Friends of PQ Park and the issue of raising private money for the PQ park, and the Sons of Italy's request for funding in order to preserve archives.

#### *Liquor License Hearing*

The Board will explore issues relating to liquor licenses at its meeting on January 9. The Board is exploring changing the transferability clause, as well. Chair Paolillo stated that, concerning The Loading Dock's request, he will read aloud the memo that the Town Counsel issued prior to the Board's granting of that request.

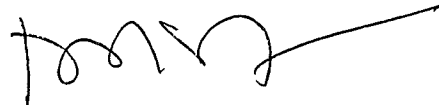
The Board discussed issues relating to conditions placed on alcohol licenses, the transferability issue, and how to handle the upcoming request from The Loading Dock.

### **NEXT MEETINGS**

Monday, January 9, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. Selectmen's Meeting Room Town Hall

Monday, January 23, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. Selectmen's Meeting Room Town Hall

The Board moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:04 a.m.



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Mr. David Kale, Town Administrator