

Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

October 15, 2007, 5:00 p.m.

Corner Meeting House

Chairman Ron Cormier called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., also present were Selectman Reginald Caldwell, Selectman Jon Pike., Town Administrator K. Jeanne Beaudin, Administrative Assistant Cary Lagace, Acting Public Works Director Jim Fortin, Fire Chief Jim Davis, Deputy Fire Chief Sean McCarty, Police Chief Vinnie Baiocchetti, Town Planner Candy Daigle, David Morse, and Ray Carbone with the Daily Sun. Other residents joined the meeting letter for the Public Hearing on the Fireworks Ordinance

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

CDBG Public Hearing

Chairman Cormier opened the CDBG Public Hearing at 5:00 p.m.

There were informational packages regarding the CDBG Application available for those attending the meeting.

Chairman Cormier provided the following information; Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities for economic development, public facility and housing rehabilitation projects and feasibility studies that primarily benefit low and moderate income persons. Belmont is eligible for up to \$500,000 a year each for public facility/housing projects, economic development projects, as well as in emergency funds. Feasibility Study funds are available for up to \$12,000 per year.

Purpose of Community Development Block Grant funding request:

A proposed feasibility study application to the Community Development Finance Authority for up to \$12,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds to finance a preliminary engineering study of the road, drainage, and water system improvements at Pleasant Valley. The majority of residences in Pleasant Valley are occupied by low and moderate income households.

This project conforms with Belmont's Housing and Community Development Plan's Goal of: Encourage Water and Wastewater systems that meet DES Regulations

Funding request: up to \$12,000

Chairman Cormier at this time asked for any public comment. David Morse inquired if this study had already been funded; Town Administrator Beaudin explained that the feasibility study had not been previously funded. Chairman Cormier explained that this study will give the Town a better idea of what the project will cost.

With no further comment Chairman Cormier closed the Public Hearing at 5:07 p.m.

Chairman Cormier opened a second Public Hearing for the purpose of discussing the proposed Housing and Community Development Plan at 5:08 p.m. Town Administrator Beaudin explained that this item has been updated for 2007.

Chairman Cormier asked for any public comment at this time.

With no public comment Chairman Cormier closed this Public Hearing at 5:10 p.m.

Chairman Cormier opened the third Public Hearing to discuss the Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan at 5:11 p.m.

Chairman Cormier provided the following information; although this project does not involve any displacement or relocation of persons (or businesses), if the Town were to undertake a CDBG project which involved displacement or relocation they would follow this plan. The plan outlines the measures they would take to find comparable, suitable housing for persons (or businesses) displaced or relocated.

Chairman Cormier asked for any public comment.

With no public comment offered, Chairman Cormier closed the Public Hearing at 5:13 p.m.

Selectmen Pike moved to adopt the Housing and Community Development Plan. Selectman Caldwell seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Selectmen Caldwell moved to adopt the Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Selectmen Pike moved to approve the submittal of the application and authorize the Chairman to sign and submit the application, and upon approval of the CDBG application, authorize the Chairman to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract. Selectman Caldwell seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes

Selectman Caldwell moved to accept the minutes of the October 1, 2007 meeting as written. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Other Draft Town Ordinances

Chairman Cormier acknowledged receipt of the Town Property, Noise and Snow Ordinances in draft format for the Board to review and vote upon adoption at a future meeting, with exception of the Noise Ordinance which must be authorized by the voters at Town Meeting. Town Administrator Beaudin explained that they have been reviewed by Town Counsel and Chief Baiocchetti.

Budget Items
Health Agencies

The Board reviewed a letter received from Youth Service Bureau showing the statistics of the Belmont residents that use their program. As discussed at a previous meeting there was concern that the funding requested included items such as Truancy and out of school suspension programs. Town Administrator Beaudin had contacted Mike Cozort and confirmed that they too are budgeting funding for Truancy and Out of School suspension and was surprised that they were requesting such from the Town. Chief Baiocchetti indicated that his department has used the program twice this year. Chairman Cormier was concerned that they may be requesting double funding and also that with little use by the Town the average cost per use is approximately \$11,000 per person. He also noted that he has advised them that they should seek funding from extended sources at the county or federal level. The Board agreed that they are not in favor of supporting this request.

Selectman Pike moved to \$0 fund the Youth Service Bureau request. Selectman Caldwell Seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Caldwell moved to approve the Health Agencies Budget requests in the amount of \$58,584, as amended. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Park & Recreation/Beach

Town Administrator Beaudin explained that the sewer rent for the Town Beach budget had inadvertently been overlooked and that budget needs to be increased by \$200.00 to cover that expense.

Selectman Caldwell moved to amend the Town Beach budget to \$80,572.00. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Building Inspection

Town Administrator Beaudin presented the Building Inspection budget, noting an increase in office supplies to cover the addition of much needed filing cabinets and a small increase in telephone and postage to cover the increase in enforcement expenses related to additional correspondence. Selectman Pike asked if there was a way to recoup those additional expenses, Town Administrator Beaudin noted that after the fact permit fees are doubled. Chairman Cormier noted that the offsetting revenues are approximately \$40,000.

Selectman Caldwell moved line item 4240-201 to 4240-999 in the amount of \$8,450.00. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Insurance Not Allocated Elsewhere

Town Administrator Beaudin explained that she has received a proposal from the Local Government Center for Workers Compensation insurance that is significantly less than Primex. She indicated that the saving could be more if we held our Health Insurance with them however it is still more cost effective to continue with Primex for that option. Selectman Pike asked if a rewards program was in place or could be implemented for employee safety records that are kept low. Town Administrator Beaudin expressed that there currently is no such program. Chairman Cormier suggested having the Safety Committee look into this type of program.

Selectman Caldwell moved line items 4196-616 to 4196-626 in the amount of \$146,000. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Fire Department Ambulance Request

Chief Davis wrote a memo to the Board explaining the need for the new ambulance. Chairman Cormier recalled that the ambulance was in the CIP program last year but had been pushed out a year. There was a brief discussion regarding the balance in the Comstar fund (\$509,000) and that a used ladder truck and ambulance are being requested this year for a total of \$350,000 to come from the Comstar fund. Chief Davis noted that the next scheduled vehicle purchase is for an engine in 2009. Chairman Cormier expressed that based on the memo that he would like to see the ambulance move forward to the budget committee for further discussion.

Selectman Caldwell moved line item 4902-009 in the amount of \$150,000. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

2008 Road Project Review & Bond Information

Town Administrator Beaudin advised the Board that she had received quotes from Northway Bank for bonding \$3 million for road work per the Board's request. The interest rates are 3.7% for 5 years, 3.75% for 7 years and 3.8% for 10 years. The Board discussed that the \$3 million would not solve all of the road work problems and it would be hard to ask voters for additional funding when the town is paying on a bond.

Jim Fortin presented to the Board a proposed program that broke the work into three areas, rebuild, rehab and overlay. He noted that the recent engineering opinion of Cotton Hill Road was at \$342,000 and Vineyard Way for \$47,000, which is significantly less than the original estimate of \$592,000 which did not include Vineyard Way. His opinion is that Union and Horne Road should be the focus as they are in more need of work than other roads and Bean Hill can be done later. He will be receiving engineering opinion on those other roads soon and would like to discuss them with the Board once they are received. Following this discussion Chairman Cormier indicated that he would like to avoid bonding the work if possible.

Public Works New Hire

The Board reviewed a memo from Jim Fortin recommending the hiring of Tony Watson for the Public Works truck driver/laborer position. Town administrator Beaudin explained that the Highway Foreman position is vacant from the retirement of Jim Marden and is not being filled in the same capacity, instead of an additional Supervisor it was decided to change the position to truck driver/laborer. Selectman Pike asked that this be discussed further in non-public session.

Brown Property Acquisition

Chairman Cormier explained to the audience that a parcel of land in the downtown area has become available for purchase and the Board is having this informal discussion to gather feed back regarding this property. The Northway bank building and property has become available and the Board is considering the purchase of the parcel for the purpose of future municipal buildings, park green space, Library expansion and perhaps a river walk. He indicated that he had spoken with a few residents and received positive feed back and is looking for further feedback from those present at the meeting. He noted that the Town has about 90% of the funding available through the Municipal Facilities Capital Reserve fund.

Ken Knowlton asked if the building could be used for Police Department or other Town facility, he does not like to see buildings razed for no good reason. Chairman Cormier explained that the building is not large enough to house either Police or Town Hall facilities and the building has excessive maintenance cost which is one of the reasons it is being sold, the best option would be to tear it down. The Board looks at this as an opportunity to do a revitalization of the downtown area, which would be able to be done in stages. Ken expressed that if the Board is up front and does the prep work as to where this is going there should be community support, he felt previous Town Hall proposals moved much too quickly. Chairman Cormier noted that some of the previous studies showed that the community wanted to keep facilities in the downtown area and this is a great opportunity to do that. Chairman Cormier added that the area could be made a focal point, with views to the Mill opened up and it could prompt businesses and residents to improve the look of the entire downtown. Ray Carbone asked the amount of funding available and the cost of the property, Town Administrator Beaudin explained that there is \$250,000 in the Capital Reserve account and the asking price for the property is \$300,000 and is currently listed with Prudential. The Lot is .69 acres and the current building is 2900 square feet.

The Board needed to move onto the Fireworks Ordinance Public Hearing and indicated that they would resume discussion of this acquisition following the Public Hearing.

Public Hearing – Fireworks Ordinance

Chairman Cormier opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. for public input on the proposed Fireworks Ordinance. He explained that at the previous Public Hearing the Board heard concerns about noise and the hours they are being set off are becoming later and later. They had discussed the permit process for class B & C fireworks.

Donna Guimont of Tucker Shore Road spoke indicating that all summer long she deals with fireworks on a nightly basis at all hours and she has concerns of the litter that they produce as well as her animals are frightened. Chairman Cormier additionally explained that there are 2 types of fireworks class B are aerial, typically larger commercial fireworks that require a permit from the state and class C which are common fireworks that can be purchased at a fireworks store and are typically ground displays. Ken Knowlton of Lamprey Road told of when a neighbor set off fireworks that scared his horse so badly they thought it was going to die, he ended up coming to an agreement with neighbor. He believes that legal fireworks are becoming more and more powerful.

Fire Chief Davis indicated that there are lobbyists that are there every year pushing for more, to the extent that the Fire Marshal's Office is hiring an individual to deal strictly with fireworks. He noted that the laws are written specific to the grams that can go into the product, which the lobbyists seem to be having success in increasing.

A Church Street resident stated that following Old Home Day a neighbor set off fireworks that ignited the woods behind her house as embers from the fireworks were carried in the wind into the woods. She also noted that her animals are frightened by the noise. She felt that the hours being suggested in the ordinance were too late and the timeframe needed to be shortened.

Chairman Cormier explained that the Board is currently reviewing a noise ordinance which will better address a lot of the concerns he is hearing tonight because the noise ordinance will regulate all noise. Richard Winchell of Morgan Road expressed that he is dealing with the fireworks all the time, it seem to never end and he can't enjoy any peace and quiet. His animals

are frightened too. He believes they should be limited to certain days and certain timeframes. David Morse stated fireworks are a constant problem and if the permits are going to cut down the number fireworks being shot off he would be in favor of the ordinance. He questioned the part of the ordinance that referred to the storage of fireworks. There was discussion relative to whether fireworks could be stored or not and it was decided that further clarification was needed.

Police Chief Baiocchetti pointed out that the fireworks ordinance does not deal with noise but only fireworks and whether or not a permit should be required. The two problems being discussed are fireworks and noise. Currently the noise ordinance is out dated and is in the process of being reestablished in order to bring it to the voters at Town Meeting. Once a noise ordinance is in place it will cover a broader problem than just the fireworks. Chairman Cormier agreed that the noise ordinance is needed and will address the majority of noise concerns and the source of the noise will be irrelevant.

Ray Carbone pointed out that this isn't just a problem in Belmont but is affecting most Lakes Region towns. It was noted that Massachusetts has very strict regulations on fireworks which is driving a lot of people to the area to light them off. The Board agreed that they will work with the Fire Department to refine the ordinance so that it can better address the problem and will be looked at in conjunction with the noise ordinance. With no further discussion Chairman Cormier closed the Public Hearing at 6:50 p.m.

Brown Property Acquisition Discussion Resumed

Discussion resumed with Chairman Cormier explaining that preliminary thoughts were to close Mill Street for the creation of even more available space with the entrance to the area being further down on Center Street. Selectman Pike felt this is great opportunity to give back to the community. Donna Cilley stated that she felt the asking price was a good deal, as she remembers several years back when the same lot was offered to the Town it was of similar price then. She expressed that space needs for facilities should be a focus and is in favor of this acquisition.

Chairman Cormier noted that there is a process that will need to be followed to move ahead with the purchase, such as public hearings and regulations with in RSA 41:14. Town Administrator Beaudin advised the Board that she had been in contact with Tony Brown who had provided the Purchase & Sales agreement for the Board to sign which would be pending the full process that would be complete some time in December. Chairman Cormier noted that there are currently two tenants whose leases would be honored through August 2008. He added that the Board is ready to move ahead with the process and noted that there would be no building proposal for 2008. Selectman Pike moved to sign the Purchase & Sales agreement for 154 Main Street. Selectman Caldwell seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Miscellaneous

Donna Cilley advised the Board that it is her intention to bring before Town Meeting a proposal to change the Comstar account to a public safety fund. She realizes that the fund was originally geared toward the ambulance service and later expanded to incorporate the fire side as well and feels that the times are such that it should incorporate all aspects of the safety departments including the Police Department. It is her understanding that a cruiser responds to most ambulance and fire calls and some times to the hospital following the ambulance and should be included in the use of the funds received through that account. Town Administrator Beaudin confirmed that it is a Special Revenue fund that could be changed at Town Meeting

with the vote of the community. Chairman Cormier expressed that he didn't see a problem with that and the community would make the decision regarding its use. Chief Davis spoke that the cruisers only go to the hospital occasionally; they do go to a percentage of medical calls. Deputy McCarty added that the Police come as a courtesy, which is greatly appreciated, but it is not always because they have been requested.

There was discussion that if the change happened, the Fire Department would be forced into creating a Capital Reserve account for equipment as the funding they would normally use may be exhausted by other purchases. Chairman Cormier felt that the cruiser purchases could be built into the purchase plan for the Comstar account and would like to see a schedule for that account showing that option.

Non-Public Session

Chairman Cormier moved to enter non-public session at 7:28 p.m. in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (c). Roll call was taken and those present and voting were Ronald Cormier, Reginald Caldwell and Jon Pike. Also present were Town Administrator Beaudin and Acting Public Works Director Jim Fortin.

Selectman Caldwell moved to promote James Fortin to Public Works Director at a Grade 23 Step 8 on the current non-union scale (\$62,882.53) with a six month probationary period. Placement on the recently adopted pay scale at Grade 9 Step 10 (\$64,013.14) following completion of his probationary period. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Cormier moved to hire Tony Watson for the position of Truck Driver/Laborer at a Grade 9 Step 1 (\$27,650.77/\$13.29 per hour) with a six month probationary period. His start date will be October 22, 2007. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Selectman Caldwell abstained.

Chairman Cormier adjourned the non-public session at 8:28 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Ronald Cormier, Chairman

Reginald Caldwell

Jon Pike