

## Selectmen's Meeting Minutes

December 4, 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, Public Works Director Jim Fortin, Fire Chief Jim Davis, Deputy Fire Chief Sean McCarty, Police Chief Vinnie Baiocchetti, General Assistance Director Donna Cilley, George & Susan Condodemetraky(5:20), Brenda Paquette, David Morse, Tony & Loretta Brown, Richard Pickwick, Lori Ingram with the Laconia Citizen, Eric with the Winnisquam Echo and Ray Carbone with the Daily Sun.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Minutes

Selectman Caldwell moved to accept the minutes of the November 19, 2007 meeting as written. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### Public Hearing – Amend Town Property Ordinance

Town Administrator Beaudin explained that following the second Public Hearing on the Town Property Ordinance she received correspondence from the State of New Hampshire indicating that a clause in the original ordinance could not be put into place due to the grant funding that was received to create the Park. The clause expressed that users had to be Belmont residents or accompanied by Belmont residents which contradicted the guidelines of the grant that indicated public use. The ordinance has been amended to remove that wording. Chairman Cormier requested audience comment, with there being none he closed the public hearing at 5:02 p.m.

Selectman Caldwell moved to accept the Town Property Ordinance as amended. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### Solid Waste Budget

Town Administrator Beaudin reviewed the Solid Waste budget request with the Board noting that the curbside contract is with Bestway Disposal for 3 years and represents a 5% increase and is verifying with them if the Town will be subject to a fuel surcharge. She noted that the expense at the Co-Op has been reduced perhaps partially attributable to recycling

efforts with approximately 80 tons being processed by Bestway at their recycling facility. She was able to reduce the cost of landfill monitoring by putting out to bid and accepting the bid from Horizon Engineering's.

Selectman Caldwell moved to accept line items 4323-470 to 4325-450 as presented. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Fire Department Budget Changes**

Chief Davis has submitted a memo requesting the increase of line item 4220-710 Equipment Fuel by \$1,500 following the Budget Committee questioning whether there would be enough to cover rising costs.

Selectman Caldwell moved to increase line item 4220-710 by \$1,500. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

His memo also requested an increase in line item 4220-210 Telephone by \$500 for the same reason.

Selectman Caldwell moved to increase line item 4220-210 by \$500. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Chief Davis also submitted a request to the Board to consider increasing detail pay rate from \$25.00 per hour to \$30.00 per hour. It was noted that this is a manpower rate only and does not include equipment.

Selectman Caldwell moved to increase to Fire Department detail pay rate to \$30.00 per hour. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Hearing Donation Acceptance**

Chairman Cormier opened a Public Hearing at 5:11 p.m. to accept a donation from Elan Publishing. Donna Cilley explained that over the year Elan holds fundraisers and then distributes the monies raised throughout the communities that their employees live in. Donna noted that they expressed a desire for the funds to go toward senior citizen services. Chairman Cormier closed the public hearing at 5:13 p.m.

Selectman Caldwell moved to except the \$150.00 donation to go into the General Assistance fund. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **2008 Roads Budget**

Town Administrator Beaudin explained that she, Public Works Director Jim Fortin and Rick Ball met with Underwood Engineering to review Cotton Hill and other projects. The following proposals are being recommended following that meeting. There would be two bid packages prepared for immediate release, the first bid would be for all paving, overlay and surfacing related work, the second would be for the drainage, ditch work and earthwork. The costs related to these projects are being projected using State bid figures, however it is anticipated that the actual bids will be lower than these figures. The roads that would be included would be included for these bids are Cotton Hill, Vineyard Way, a portion of Union Road, Horne Road drainage and overlay on several other roadways. The bids would come in prior to Town Meeting and the budget could be adjusted from the floor at Town Meeting to

reflect the actual bid figures. There is approximately \$537,000 in Capital Reserve and \$160,000 anticipated in Highway Block Grant funds. There would be an increase of approximately \$687,000 which would be approximately 87 cents on the tax rate.

Old State Road will be put on hold until such time that the Town hears from the State. There have been significant efforts by property owners and the Town in that area to correct the problems which seem to be having positive effect. Approximately \$90,000 for drainage is needed to complete the sidewalk project on Concord Street if that moves forward.

Public Works Director Jim Fortin commented that he feels that the bid process will produce some real competitive bids. Contracts will like that the bid packages include several different projects that they can just move from one to the next.

Selectman Pike moved \$867,350 in Capital Reserve Highway repair and \$240,000 in Capital Reserve Drainage. Selectman Caldwell seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Cormier commented that he feels that this is a good start for the much needed road work.

### **Tax Rate**

Town Administrator Beaudin reviewed with the Board the final figures that were used to calculate the new tax rate following the Town wide revaluation. She noted that the 2006 Town wide value was \$499,500,599 compared to 2007 value of \$789,212,772. The new tax rate came in at \$17.64 a decrease \$8.05 a 31% decrease. She added that she has reviewed many properties and does see that some individuals receiving the Elder Exemption may now have taxes due where they may not have before. She suggested that the Elder Exemption qualifications may need to be adjusted. Susan Condodemetraky asked if there was a Disability exemption offered, Town Administrator Beaudin explained that Belmont does not offer a Disability exemption however does offer a credit for a home that has disability accessibility improvements made to it. There was concern for individuals that may have trouble paying their tax bills and Chairman Cormier assured that audience that the Board does try to work with individuals that may be having difficulty meeting their tax payments.

### **Public Hearing – Brown Property Acquisition**

Chairman Cormier opened the public hearing at 5:37 for public discussion regarding the acquisition of the property located at 154 Main Street owned by Tony and Loretta Brown. This is the second Public Hearing for this proposal. Donna Cilley asked the Board to clarify if solicitation was made to other banks for that location. Chairman Cormier expressed that the Town had not solicited banks for that location. Town Administrator Beaudin indicated that the Town had been solicited regarding their banking needs by banks during that time. Tony Brown explained that he and his wife Loretta had decided not to pursue lessees for that location once they had been approached by the Town regarding purchasing the property. Northway Bank had decided not to renew their lease following a survey that they conducted that indicated their customers wanted a drive thru. Chairman Cormier noted that although the property would be removed for commercial use the Board felt that the enhancement that could be done to the area would likely encourage and stimulate business in the downtown area. David Morse noted that Wallace Rhodes had told him that through his research of that area he had found that way back the area was known as “The Commons” which seems fitting for the proposal for the area. Richard Pickwick was present and pointed out that there are two other businesses that have tenancy that would be affected by a sale. Tony Brown explained that he had an obligation

the Amber Flanders and did offer her first to purchase the building which did not work out for her. Chairman Cormier explained that the Board would honor those leases to their expiration if the Town takes ownership of the property and will assist with relocation. Mr. Brown noted that the hair salon owner intends to move her business to her home.

George Condodemetraky expressed that he respects others opinion, however it is his feeling that this matter of purchasing this property should go before the voters at Town Meeting. Chairman Cormier explained that last year a warrant article was passed at Town Meeting that authorizes the Board to make this type of real estate transaction as long as they follow the process of getting the information out to the public. He added that if the Board had received a negative response they may not move forward with the process but until now have received very positive feedback. George expressed that he felt it was the Board's responsibility to notify the voters that there is a petition process for appealing this proposal. Chairman Cormier acknowledged that perhaps they should have however if there is a petition, the proposal won't make it to Town Meeting for a vote. At this time George presented a petition to the Board with 80 signatures of individuals that would like to see it go to a vote. David Morse commented that he respects George for his checks and balance process but feels that this is for the long term good of the municipality and these types of transactions have to be addressed when they become available the municipality does not have the same advantage as private sales as they need to respond to offers immediately and \$300,000 is a very fair offer. Chairman Cormier expressed that the Brown's are not going to hold on to the property they are going to move forward to sell to someone else.

With no further discussion Chairman Cormier closed the Public Hearing at 5:58 p.m.

The Board took a 5 minute recess.

### **Building Inspector/Code Enforcement/Health Officer Appointment**

Town Administrator Beaudin explained to the Board that there were approximately 12 applicants for the Building Inspector position with herself and Candy Daigle interviewing 5 candidates. Following those interviews they unanimously recommend Steve Dalton for the position of Building Inspector/Health Officer/Code Enforcement Officer. The interview pleasantly surprised them with the vast knowledge that Mr. Dalton has and they feel he will be a valuable asset to the Town. He would be hired at a Grade 19 Step 3 or \$46,401. Selectman Caldwell expressed that he was unaware of the diversity of Steve's background until he reviewed his resume. Chairman Cormier noted that the position will require someone to be fair and consistent. Steve added that in most situations cooler heads prevail.

Selectman Caldwell moved to hire Steve Dalton as Building Inspector/Code Enforcement Officer/Health Officer at a Grade 19 Step 3 \$46, 401with an increase to Grade 17 Step1 \$48,583 following 6 months probation. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The Board welcomed Mr. Dalton and wished him good luck.

### **Mapping Liaison Appointments**

The Department of Safety has requested that the Town appoint a mapping liaison. It is recommended that Rick Ball with his extensive mapping knowledge be appointed as the primary liaison and Candy Daigle as the secondary liaison.

Selectman Caldwell moved to appoint Rick Ball primary mapping liaison for the Department of Safety. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Caldwell moved to appoint Candy Daigle secondary mapping liaison for the Department of Safety. Selectman Pike seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

### **Police/Fire Department Call Statistics**

Chairman Cormier began by stating that the intent of these statistics was to look at the Fire Department responses and compare them to the number of Police Department responses to the same scene. It was explained that the two departments log their responses in different systems that track things differently and can't be matched in a fashion that clearly shows the responses to the same scene. It was discussed that the Police Department traditionally responds to any calls that they are available to do so and the report of statistics really isn't capable of showing the true responses. Chairman Cormier added that the initial intent of the request of these figures has validity for the suggestion of converting the Comstar fund to an emergency services fund. It was stated that the two departments continue to work closely together as has been the practice for many years. Each department works to assist the other in time of need.

### **Comstar Fund – Capital Reserve Fund Creation**

Chairman Cormier noted that the previous discussion has prompted a proposal for a warrant article at Town Meeting to change the Capital Reserve account to one that would service all emergency services. Town Administrator Beaudin noted that there would need to be a vote to discontinue the Comstar fund with the funds being transferred to the General Fund Account and another that would establish a Capital Reserve account for "Public Safety" with a transfer from the General fund in the amount of the year end balance from the Comstar fund. Chairman Cormier stated that the intent is to expand the usage of the revenues to other areas and allow each for the Capital Reserve to be used to offset the tax rate. Town Administrator Beaudin noted that there are currently two budget requests that if approved at Town Meeting would be paid for out of the account, the ladder truck and ambulance purchase. Donna Cilley suggested a press release in order to get this confusing transaction stated correctly to the citizens reading the newspapers.

### **Fire Department - Fire Inspector Request**

The Board reviewed a request from Fire Chief Davis for a full time Fire Inspector. Chairman Cormier asked what pay the individual would start at; Chief Davis explained that a range was provided to the Board because it would depend on the individual's qualifications where they would start in that range. Selectman Pike asked what the difference is between this and what the Building Inspector/Code Enforcement may be doing; Chief Davis explained that this individual would only be doing fire inspections looking at the fire code side of it. He explained that right now it is being done by current staff who if is out doing inspections would need to drop it and respond to a call if one came in and when they would get back to finish the inspection is unknown as their first responsibility is to respond to calls. Deputy McCarty indicated that the work is presently being done at a bare minimum. Selectman Pike asked if hired how this individual would get to sites for inspections, Chief David indicated that the department has the utility truck that would be used. Chief Davis noted that they are pretty much on top of new business inspections working with the Land Use office however; the other inspections are falling further behind.

Chairman Cormier added that since he has been on the Board he has heard similar situations happening in other department sand the Board has worked hard to implement practices and people to address the situations and handle theses matters in a more consistent fashion and this situation should be handled the same way so these important matters are not

falling through the cracks. He feels the Board should forward the request to the Budget Committee for their input on the request. The Board will vote on the request at their next meeting when they will address salaries.

### **Budget Committee Resignation**

Town Administrator Beaudin advised the Board that a letter of resignation from the Budget Committee has been received from Rich Fournier. This leaves 3 vacancies on the committee.

### **Gambling Forum Discussion**

Town Administrator Beaudin explained that she had previously written letters to state representatives to determine interest in participating in a future forum. Kathy Sgambati and Alida Milham both responded positively to the letter and expressed interest in participating in a future forum. The forum is being scheduled to take place as part of the Board's regular meeting on January 14, 2008. She will follow up with confirmation of that date to all representatives again. Chairman Cormier further explained that the idea is to hold the non binding referendum to get a feel for how Belmont residents feel about expanded gambling with representative present to provide their input and ideas.

### **Miscellaneous**

David Morse addressed the Board regarding the recent revaluation figures and noted that he has noticed that a large portion of the increase is in the land values. He also noted that there appeared to be big differences between the East and West sides of town as well. He has a great concern in the timing of the bills with large increases being due in just thirty days a lot individuals on fixed incomes may have trouble paying these bills on time. He suggested that the Board waive interest fees where appropriate for individuals that can't make their payment right away.

Town Administrator Beaudin cautioned David that the figures he is using from the website have recently been updated to the new final values so some of the figures he is looking at may have been adjusted. She added that by mid January she should have the manual from the assessing firm in order to better answer questions regarding specific neighborhoods or areas. She also noted that the Board can not waive interest fees by State law. Chairman Cormier added that he encourages individuals with concerns regarding their payments to contact the Board.

Chairman Cormier stated that following the meeting with DRED earlier this year in which they identified connectivity as an area of concern for Belmont business along Route 106, he has recently hear of a grant that can assist communities with the development of wireless communication and asked Town Administrator Beaudin to look into that. Ray Carbone expressed that through that DRED meeting he also understood that they felt a representative to work with DRED would be helpful as well and suggested that perhaps a retired individual in the community with a business background may be willing to assist for a small yearly stipend, which would benefit both the individual and the community.

Donna Cilley suggested to the Board that with today's technology and the media now using computers to take notes at meetings that perhaps an area should be set up toward the back of the room so as limit the noise to a certain area.

### **Non-Public Session**

Chairman Cormier opened the non-public session at 7:07 p.m. in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (a) and (c). Roll call was taken and those present and voting were Ron Cormier, Reginald Caldwell and Jon Pike. Also present were Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin and Police Chief Vinnie Baiocchetti.

Chairman Cormier closed the non-public session at 7:25 p.m. No decisions were made during the non-public session.

The Board of Selectmen acknowledged that the authority to hire part time dispatchers without additional authorization is vested with the Police Chief, and they do not feel it is necessary to approve these individuals for hire.

Selectman Reginald Caldwell moved that in accordance with the provisions of RSA 105:2-a to allow the Police Chief to write formal general orders, rules and regulations, and standard operating procedures on behalf of the Town of Belmont Police Department. Selectman Pike seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Selectman Reginald Caldwell moved to transfer funds encumbered in 2006 to cover the cost of replacement of the floor in the kitchen of the area leased by the NH Community Technical College; the transfer is from 4950-001 (4903-602). Selectman Jon Pike seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

### **Next Meeting**

The next regular Board of Selectmen's meeting will be Tuesday, December 11, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. at the Corner Meeting House.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

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Ronald Cormier, Chairman

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Reginald Caldwell

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Jon Pike