



2016-04-06 / Front Page / Local

## Belmont Selectmen approve Wareing Road project bid



**THE BELMONT BOARD OF SELECTMEN** at Monday's meeting. From left, Jon Pike, Ruth Mooney, and Ronald Cormier. (JIM CLARK/CITIZEN)

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**BELMONT** — The issue of the Wareing Road construction and paving project took up much of Monday's Belmont Board of Selectmen meeting.

Upon a recommendation from Underwood Engineering, the board approved a bid of \$316, 020, from the firm of D.B.U Construction of Epsom, to perform work on Wareing Road.

Selectmen Ruth Mooney and Jon Pike voted to award the contract to D.B.U., with Selectman

Ronald Cormier voting against.

The project will involve construction and paving of all but two-tenths of a mile of Wareing Road, from Route 106 to the crest of the hill by the entrance to Parent Sand and Gravel Company.

There were a total of six bids for the project, and D.B.U.'s bid was the lowest. Other bids were received from Nutter Enterprises of Belmont at \$328,240; John H. Lyman & Sons of Gilford for \$342,930; Busby Construction Co. of Atkinson for \$344,996; Weaver Brothers Construction Co. of Bow for \$358,817; Northeast Earth Mechanics, Inc. of Pittsfield for \$379,195 and D.A. White Excavating of Campton for \$369,808.

Parent Sand and Gravel currently conducts its business from a site on Shaker Road. It purchased adjacent property from Nutter Enterprises, which accesses Wareing Road. Parent Sand and Gravel intends to use Wareing Road as its main entry point, and also will transfer its scaling operation there.

Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin emphasized at Monday's meeting that the bidding process for the project was a completely fair and open one. She noted that the D.B.U. Construction bid was clearly the lowest of the six companies, and that the engineer's recommendation was based on the lowest bid received.

Adam Towne, chief financial officer of D.B.U., confirmed that he is a partner in Parent Sand and Gravel.

Selectman Cormier voted against awarding the bid to D.B.U. He said he was concerned about the public perception that the company would profit when the road work and paving is completed.

Selectmen heard from town resident Kevin Sturgeon, who voiced objections to the Wareing Road project, and a lively and sometimes heated discussion with selectmen followed. Also in the audience were former Selectmen Brian Watterson and Reggie Caldwell.

Selectmen pointed out that improvements to Wareing Road will facilitate truck traffic, including vehicles coming out of the Parent Sand and Gravel site, and lessen the frequency of all trucks using Main Street as a throughfare through town. Both Mooney and Pike said high-speed truck traffic through Main Street poses a safety danger, particularly to children.

There is also a concern about heavy trucks causing lasting pavement damage to Main Street, as opposed to regular car traffic.

Mooney told Sturgeon that arguments about the Wareing Road Project should have been taken up with the town planning board during the preliminary stage of the process, and not at the final stage when bid approval was finally presented to selectmen for action.

On Wareing Road, there is another access road which leads to the Nutter gravel pit. In addition to Parent Sand and Gravel's entryway point, there are two residential properties on the road, and another residential property, which also contains an auto repair shop.

Town Administrator Beaudin said it is unknown when the Wareing Road reconstruction and paving project will begin, but it is hoped that work will get underway soon. For the time being, Parent Sand and Gravel remains at its location on Shaker Road.

Selectmen also approved Underwood Engineering's recommendation for the award of a bid for the Hoadley Road culvert replacement project. J. Parker Construction of Pittsfield was awarded the contract with a low bid of \$293,070.

The Wareing Road expenditure comes out of a warrant article presented in March, in which voters approved the appropriation of \$750,000 to be placed in a highway reconstruction and maintenance capital reserve fund for a number of road projects. The original estimate was that the Wareing Road project would cost about \$385,000.

Town voters last month approved a separate warrant article for the Hoadley Road project and the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$375,000. Both the Wareing Road and Hoadley Road bids came in well below the estimates.

Selectmen on Monday also heard from Donna Cilley, who called for a complete review of town zoning ordinances. She voiced concerns about the town's lack of infrastructure for future commercial and industrial growth.

Cilley urged selectmen to meet with the town planning board to discuss the issue of a total reevaluation and review of the town's industrial and residential zones.

Cilley said that in discussions with voters at the Belmont polling place on March 8, few town residents had any real understanding about the aquifer warrant article issue.

By a vote of 514 against and 187 in favor, Belmont voters rejected an amendment to the town's zoning ordinance that would have prohibited new and expanded industrial uses on property that is part of the town's aquifer and groundwater protection district. Existing businesses would have been allowed to continue operations as normal, and the zoning change would not have affected them.

Discussion then focused on what needs to be done to bring more business and industry to the town, as well as increase the number of new residents. A major difficulty is extending water and sewer lines to promote development, particularly along Route 106.

Cormier said the issue was not just about water and sewer lines, but the lack of Internet access

and availability, including wi-fi, which discourages businesses from locating to the town. The consensus among selectmen was that economic expansion in the town has flattened, and not much is happening.

Selectmen approved the annual contract renewal with Lakes Region Public Access Television. Payment to LRPA was authorized in the amount of \$8,558, based on 15,056 subscribers in the town.

The money comes from part of a franchise fee that MetroCast Cable pays to the town of Belmont. The town receives a total of \$60,000, or 3 percent of its gross revenues.

The board also heard from Heritage Commission Chairman Linda Frawley, who said that the town bandstand is eligible for consideration to be included in the New Hampshire State Register of Historic Places. A final determination of whether to put the bandstand on the state register will be made at the spring meeting of the State Historic Resources Council on April 24.

The Belmont Mill was included on the register last year, and the Province Road Meeting House was listed in 2003. The Belmont Public Library became part of the National Register of Historic Properties in 1985. Markers have been placed by the Heritage Commission at all three locations in recent years.

Frawley informed selectmen about the Heritage Commission's 2016 program schedule. The first event will take place on Saturday, May 21, with a Heritage and Preservation Fair from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the town library. Display of town artifacts and items from those who reside in Belmont will be featured during the event.

Selectmen also heard from Town Historian Emeritus Wallace Rhodes of the Belmont Historical Society regarding his research concerning a locomotive explosion which took place at the town railroad depot behind the Belmont Mill in January 1894. Two train workers were injured in the explosion, and there was damage to nearby property.

Information was also received about a preliminary "reconnaissance" survey report concerning homes in the north section of town, as compiled by Richard Kipphut of Plymouth State University.

**[Return to top](#)**