Selectmen spend more funds for matching streetlights

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BELMONT — The Belmont Board of Selectmen has voted to spend an additional $32,000 to make sure that streetlights that are going to be installed in the downtown match the lights installed at the Belmont Mill two years ago.

At the Board of Selectmen meeting, Monday night, Chairman Jon Pike said, “I was a little appalled that when the job went out, the exact requirements of the bid was not upheld.”

Selectmen Ronald Cormier responded that he wanted to give those involved the benefit of the doubt.

At issue is whether the initial bid for replacing the lights included specifications that the light poles and fixtures must match those used at the mill. Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin said that the Revitalization Committee thought the same poles would be used, but found that much cheaper ones were going to be used, resulting in the selectmen voting to spend the extra money to upgrade them.

The poles used at the mill and that the selectmen voted to acquire for the downtown, she said, are of a high quality and good aesthetic.

Beaudin said ensuring the poles and fixtures will remain uniform will cost an additional $32,860. Since the lights haven’t been installed yet, she said there were no extra poles and that the town was simply upgrading the order.
There was “no concern, it just needed to be addressed, so we decided that they should look the same,” said Beaudin.

In other news the board received a letter from the state Department of Transportation regarding the possible replacement of the Tioga Bridge on Church Street. According to the DOT, the replacement would cost $880,000, of which the state would pay $704,000. However, those state funds would not be available until July 2019, at the earliest, Beaudin said.

The Tioga Bridge entered the public’s consciousness after a state inspection found serious issues with the bridge, which have since been addressed, this past summer. Because of this, Beaudin said, the town applied to the State Bridge Aid Program for the bridge’s replacement.

Beaudin said that the town will not consider replacing the bridge until the town is sure that the state funds are available, and that the recent repairs, which she said cost roughly $150,000, were designed to leave the bridge in good lasting condition.

“A lot of projects get put into that system for funding, the timing depends on where you are in the queue. It could be pushed back further depending on how many requests they receive, or it could be postponed to subsequent funding year,” Beaudin said, adding, “Eventually it will need to be replaced, but we have done the work necessary to maintain it for some time we hope. There is no immediate need.”

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