



143 Main Street
PO Box 310
Belmont NH 03220
603-267-8300

2017 Voter's Guide

www.belmontnh.org

Town Meeting

Belmont High School Gymnasium

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Town Reports will be available approximately one week before the Voting Session of Town Meeting in March. The Town Report will be placed on the Town's Website and paper copies will be available at Town Hall and at the polls. The Town Report contains reports from the various departments, boards and officials of the Town.

The voting session of Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 14, 2017 from 7 am to 7 pm in the Belmont High School Gym. All registered voters are eligible to participate in the process.

- ◆ Voters will be deciding on the annual budget for the Town.
- ◆ Voters will also make decisions as to amendments to the zoning ordinance for the Town.
- ◆ The annual Town warrant and other informational documents have been posted to the Town's website along with the Voter's Guide to assist voters in their decision making process.
- ◆ This guide is intended to provide information to voters in regards to the process and matters under consideration before the Town Meeting. The Town website is the primary source of updated information in regards to the budget and Town Meeting. See the main page at www.belmontnh.org.

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HOW DO I PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS

First you must be registered to vote. **How Do I Register To Vote?**

1. You may apply to your Town Clerk's office. You will be required to fill out a standard voter registration form.
2. You may also register with your community's Supervisors of the Checklist. By law, the supervisors are required to meet on the Saturday 10 days prior to each election (Saturday, March 4, 2017 at 11 a.m., Belmont Town Hall). Check the local newspaper or call your clerk's office for the date and time of such meeting.
3. Qualified individuals may register to vote at the polling place on Election Day at all elections.

No matter when or where you register to vote, you will be required to fill out a standard voter registration form, and you will be asked to show proof of identity, age, citizenship, and domicile. These qualifications may be established by signing affidavit(s). Proof of identification is needed.

Further questions may be answered at SOS.NH.GOV or by contacting your local Town Clerk, Cynthia DeRoy at 267-8300 ext. 122.

Second, you may attend the Deliberative Session of Town Meeting. All of the warrant articles will be open for discussion (except zoning ordinance changes). The Moderator will recognize voters who may speak on the articles. Voters may ask questions, make statements and/or make motions to amend the warrant articles.

The NH Legislature has placed limitations on amending warrant articles. Voters may amend some warrant articles however they cannot change the underlying purpose of the warrant article. For example voters change the dollar amount of a warrant article to purchase a building however they cannot change its purpose to purchase a vehicle. Voters cannot change the default budget amounts in operating budgets. Some articles require specific language which cannot be modified.

Warrant articles cannot be removed from consideration at the Deliberative Session. Warrant articles which are amended will reflect the changes made at the Deliberative Session and will be on the ballot for the Voting Session of Town Meeting in March. Warrant articles can be amended by a simple majority vote at the Deliberative Session. Belmont's Deliberative Session was held on Saturday, February 4th.

Third, at the Voting Session of Town Meeting on March 14, 2017 voters can come to the polls anytime between 7 am and 7 pm to vote on the articles as amended from the Deliberative Session. Voters cannot make any changes to the articles at this session. Voters only have the option to vote YES to be in favor of an article or NO to be opposed to an article. Proof of identification is needed on voting day.

The votes are tallied by computer and reported the same day as the polls are open. Most articles require a simple majority for passage. Some articles have special requirements such as bond articles and changing the purpose of a capital reserve fund. These articles require a supermajority for passage. They require a 3/5 majority or 60% to pass.

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Ballot Question #1.

Selectman three-year term (vote for one):

Ronald Cormier

Claude "Sonny" Patten

Richard C. Pickwick

Brian Watterson

Budget Committee three-year term (vote for four):

Craig Clairmont

Susan Harris

Norma L. Patten

Fred Wells

Trustee of Trust Funds, three-year term (vote for one):

Karen A. Jameson

Library Trustee, three-year term (vote for one):

Mary-Louise Charnley

Library Trustee, one-year term (vote for one):

Gail Thomas

Cemetery Trustee, three-year term (vote for one):

Norma L. Patten

Planning Board, three-year term, (vote for two):

Kevin Sturgeon

Peter Harris

Recardo Segalini

Zoning Board of Adjustment, three-year term, (vote for two):

Peter Harris

Norma L. Patten

*Candidate order on the ballot is in accordance with the Secretary of States last random selection list in effect June 2016 through June 2018.

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BALLOT QUESTIONS —PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENTS

Ballot Question #2. Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment #1 as proposed by the Planning Board for the town Zoning Ordinance as summarized below?

Amend the definition of frontage to allow alternate driveway access to a lot where conditions warrant. The current Ordinance requires a lot be accessed over that lot's legal frontage. The amendment would allow application for a conditional use permit to access from another location under certain circumstances (e.g. environmental impacts, traffic safety).

Ballot Question #3. Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment #2 as proposed by the Planning Board for the town Zoning Ordinance as summarized below?

Amend the title and content of the Accessory Apartment ordinance to comply with the new RSA 673:71-73 and amend minimum unit size, definition, and clarify method of attachment to primary unit.

Ballot Question #4. Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment #3 as proposed by the Planning Board for the town Zoning Ordinance as summarized below?

Replace in its entirety the existing Sign Ordinance to comply with the US Supreme Court decision, Reed v. Town of Gilbert Arizona. Changes relate, but are not limited to content-neutrality, purpose, definitions, general provisions and exempt, prohibited, directional and complex signs.

Ballot Question #5. Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment #4 as proposed by the Planning Board for the town Zoning Map as summarized below?

At the request of the property owner, rezone all of tax lot 236/015/000/000 and part of tax lot 123/027/000/000 on Dearborn Street from Industrial to Rural leaving the entire frontage of tax lot 123/027/000/000 for a depth of approximately 230' in the Industrial Zone.

<http://belmontnh.org/docs/Maps/ZoningMap.pdf>

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BALLOT QUESTIONS—CONT.

The following 3 questions pertain to the future of the Belmont Mill; we ask that you read each question before marking your ballot. These articles are nonbinding and are meant to serve as a survey to gather input from you, the voters. Thank you.

Ballot Question #6. Shall the Town vote to support the future renovation of the Belmont Mill for use as Town Offices and other community purposes? No funding is being requested for this purpose under this article.

In 2015, the Board of Selectmen presented to the voters a Warrant Article for a bond issue to renovate the Mill for use as Town Offices; the cost of the project was proposed to be \$3,357,250 and the Town anticipated a bond in the amount of \$2,957,250. The article failed to pass by a significant margin. The Mill's infrastructure i.e. brick and mortar continue to deteriorate and stabilization/repair work is needed if the building is going to remain viable. The cost for this work alone is estimated at \$515k-\$525K.

The Town remains obligated under the 1997 CDBG grant until 2019, the Belknap Family Health Center has identified to the Town that they do not have enough space in the existing building; use of multiple floors is not conducive to their operations and that they are seeking possible alternatives. They do wish to remain in Belmont and continue serving the community but have outgrown the Mill. The Senior Center continues as a tenant on the 2nd floor along with the Town's Park & Recreation Department; the 4th floor is vacant and the 1st floor is being used by local community groups such as Boy Scouts, the SMART Recovery Program and Narcotics Anonymous.

Ballot Question #7. Shall the Town vote to support the future demolition of the Belmont Mill? No funding is being requested for this purpose under this article.

This fall the Board held discussions regarding the Mill and it was suggested that alternative non-binding questions be placed on the Town Meeting Warrant; the demolition of the Mill was discussed and we did obtain cost estimates that ranged from \$80k -\$125K to demo the building.

Ballot Question #8. Shall the Town vote to support the future sale of the Belmont Mill? No funding is being requested for this purpose under this article.

The existing building once the grant obligations are satisfied could be sold, however the sale could only include the building; a portion of the parcel on which the Mill is located is encumbered by the Land Water Conservation Fund into perpetuity. The Town has not identified a potential sale price for this option, but would expect if it were to move forward that the potential use of the building would be looked at closely and limitations placed on the sale.

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BALLOT QUESTIONS - CONT.

Ballot Question #9. Shall the Town vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 72:28-b, All Veterans' Tax Credit? If adopted, the credit will be available to any resident, or the spouse or surviving spouse of any resident, who (1) served not less than 90 days on active service in the armed forces of the United States and (2) was honorably discharged or an officer honorably separated from service and is not eligible for or receiving a credit under RSA 72:28 or RSA 72:35. If adopted, the credit granted will be \$500.00, the same amount as the standard or optional veterans' tax credit voted by the Town under RSA 72:28.

The Town estimates that there are approximately 195 additional veterans who may qualify under the expanded "All Veterans' Tax Credit" in Belmont which equates to approximately \$97,500 in additional credits or .017 cents on the Town's current tax rate; \$1.70 additional tax on a home valued at \$100,000.

Ballot Question #10. Shall the Town vote to amend the vote taken on Article 7 at the 1999 Annual Meeting to restrict all revenues from ambulance billings to be deposited in the Special Revenue fund known as the Fire/Ambulance Equipment and Apparatus Fund to instead restrict all but the first \$166,400 of revenues from ambulance billings received during the 2017 budgetary year to be deposited in the Special Revenue fund known as the Fire/Ambulance Equipment and Apparatus Fund. The first \$166,400 of revenues from ambulance billings will be deposited in the Town's General Fund to defray the cost items identified below. This restriction shall only be effective for the 2017 budgetary year (Majority Ballot Vote).

Training Expenses	\$3,000
Medical & Supply Expenses	\$26,000
Ambulance Billing Fees	\$17,000
Overtime	\$40,000
Telephone	\$2,000
Conferences & Dues	\$1,000
Office Expense	\$12,000
Vehicle Repair & Parts	\$8,000
Fuel	\$7,400
Bathroom Renovations – Fire Station	\$50,000

This article has been included on the Town's Meeting Warrant since 2011; funds collected for ambulance services are used to offset the operating expenditures of the department. This year's amount is higher than prior years because work is needed to renovate the bathrooms at the Fire Station. The average monthly deposit into the fund from ambulance billing for the past 3 months has been \$25,624.

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BALLOT QUESTIONS - CONT.

Ballot Question #11. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Nineteen Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Two Dollars (\$119,482) for the cost of a replacement Communications System for the Fire Department **and further to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of Sixty Nine Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Two dollars (\$69,482) from the Fire/Ambulance Equipment and Apparatus Special Revenue Fund previously established in accordance with RSA 31:95, c; the balance of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to be withdrawn from the Capital Reserve Account established in 2005 for the purpose of Digital Radio Equipment.** (Majority ballot vote required.) (The Budget Committee recommends **\$119,482** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

In 2016 the Town appropriated \$50,000 to be placed in the Digital Ratio Equipment Capital Reserve fund in anticipation of purchasing new communication equipment for the Fire Department in 4 years. Chief Erickson has since updated the cost of the replacement equipment and it is anticipated that the new equipment will be purchased in 2017 through this article; funding for the new equipment will come from the following sources: \$50,000 Capital Reserve and \$69,482 from the Fire/Ambulance Equipment and Apparatus Special Revenue Fund. The balance in the account as of January 10, 2017 was \$691,500.

Ballot Question #12. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Sixty Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Six Dollars (\$60,776) for the second year's payment on the long term lease/purchase agreement entered into in 2016 for the purchase of a new pumper truck for the Fire Department, and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of said amount from the Fire/Ambulance Equipment and Apparatus Special Revenue Fund previously established in accordance with RSA 31:95, c (Created 1994/Amended 1999). **The Town is obligated by the terms of the lease/purchase agreement, as well as the super majority ratifying that agreement in Article 4 at the 2016 Town Meeting, to make these yearly payments.** (The Budget Committee recommends **\$60,776** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

In 2016 voters approved Article #4 of the Annual Meeting Warrant which authorized the Selectmen to enter into a long term lease for the purchase of a new pumper truck. The 2016 article passed and the Town is obligated to the terms of the lease/purchase agreement. This article is necessary only because the payment for the lease is to come from the Fire/Ambulance Equipment and Apparatus Special Revenue Fund.

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BALLOT QUESTIONS - CONT.

Ballot Question #13. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) for the purpose of purchasing a Cab/Chassis Forestry Vehicle for the Fire Department, and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of said amount from the Fire/Ambulance Equipment and Apparatus Special Revenue Fund previously established in accordance with RSA 31:95, c (Created 1994/Amended 1999).

(The Budget Committee recommends **\$40,000** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

Ballot Question #14. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) for the purpose of purchasing an All Terrain Vehicle for the Fire Department, and to fund this appropriation by authorizing the withdrawal of said amount from the Fire/Ambulance Equipment and Apparatus Special Revenue Fund previously established in accordance with RSA 31:95, c (Created 1994/Amended 1999).

(The Budget Committee recommends **\$15,000** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

Ballot Question #15. Shall the Town vote to expend the income from the John M. Sargent Trust Fund for the purposes recommended by the Sargent Fund Committee?

Belknap County 4-H Fair Association	\$ 500.00
Belmont Baseball Organization	\$ 1,000.00
Belmont Conservation Commission	\$ 250.00
Belmont Early Learning Center	\$ 500.00
Belmont Girl Scouts Troop 10972	\$ 500.00
Belmont Girl Scouts Troop 12117	\$ 400.00
Belmont Girl Scouts Troop 20431	\$ 250.00
Belmont Girl Scouts Troop 20532/21532	\$ 300.00
Belmont Girl Scouts Community Account	\$ 300.00
Lake Region Girls Softball	\$ 500.00
Belmont Boy Scouts Troop 65	\$ 750.00
Belmont Cub Scouts Pack 65	\$ 850.00
Belmont Heritage Commission	\$ 250.00
Belmont High School PTO	\$ 500.00
Belmont Historical Society	\$ 500.00
Belmont Middle School Nature's Classroom	\$ 3,325.00
Belmont Old Home Day Committee	\$ 500.00
Belmont Parks & Recreation Scholarship	\$ 1,500.00
Belmont Police Explorers	\$ 1,275.00
Belmont Public Library	\$ 1,520.00
First Baptist Church Food Pantry	\$ 734.15
Friends of Belmont Football	\$ 500.00
St. Joseph's Food Pantry	\$ 2,400.00
South Road Cemetery Association	\$ 1,500.00
Total Funds to be distributed	\$ 20,604.15

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BALLOT QUESTIONS—CONT.

Ballot Question #16. Shall the Town vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 149-I:4-a authorizing the Town to contract with a private nongovernmental entity for the design, construction, and funding of a new sewer or sewerage system, or addition or modification thereto?

This article would authorize the Selectmen on behalf of the Town to work with nongovernmental entities to design, construct and fund new sewer or sewerage systems; it would also allow the Town should it be deemed in the Town's best interest to negotiate with the owners of any private sewer line to acquire the line.

Ballot Question #17. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the deliberative session, for the purposes set forth herein, totaling Seven Million Five Hundred Eighty Six Thousand Nine Hundred Fifty One Dollars (\$7,586,951)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Seven Million Five Hundred Sixty Three Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Six Dollars (\$7,563,786) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. Note: This warrant article (operating budget) does not include appropriations in ANY other warrant article. (The Budget Committee recommends **\$7,586,951** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

A copy of the Town's Operating Budget can be found on the Town's website at www.belmontnh.org or you can pick up a copy at Town Hall.

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BALLOT QUESTIONS—CONT.

Ballot Question #18. Shall the Town vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Town of Belmont and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, Council 93, Local 3657 (**Public Safety Employees Union Police Unit A**) for the term April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020, which calls for the following increases and decreases in salaries and benefits:

Year	Increase (Wages)	Increase/ (Decrease) Benefits
2017	\$37,540	\$10,720
Year	Estimated Increase (Wages)	Estimated Increase Benefits
2018	\$30,347	\$8,836
2019	\$29,966	\$8,919

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Eighty Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Dollars (\$48,260) which represents the additional costs attributable to the increase and decrease in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels in accordance with the most recent collective bargaining agreement. (The Budget Committee recommends **\$48,260** and the Board of Selectmen support this recommendation.) **The total amount to be raised and appropriated for the year one costs under this contract is \$48,260 which includes wages and benefits.**

Ballot Question #19. Shall the Town of Belmont, if article #18 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address article #18 cost items only?

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BALLOT QUESTIONS—CONT.

Ballot Question #20. Shall the Town vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Town of Belmont and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, Council 93, Local 3657 (**Public Safety Employees Union Fire Unit B**) for the term April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020, which calls for the following increases and decreases in salaries and benefits:

Year	Increase (Wages)	Increase/ (Decrease) Benefits
2017	\$13,620	\$4,420

Year	Estimated Increase (Wages)	Estimated Increase Benefits
2018	\$16,591	\$5,606
2019	\$14,695	\$4,960

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of Eighteen Thousand Forty Dollars (\$18,040) which represents the additional costs attributable to the increase and decrease in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels in accordance with the most recent collective bargaining agreement. (The Budget Committee recommends **\$18,040** and the Board of Selectmen support this recommendation.) **The total amount to be raised and appropriated for the year one costs under this contract is \$18,040 which includes wages and benefits.**

Ballot Question #21. Shall the Town of Belmont, if article #20 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address article #20 cost items only?

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BALLOT QUESTIONS—CONT.

Ballot Question #22. Shall the Town vote to approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Town of Belmont and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, Council 93, Local 534 (**Public Works Employees Union**) for the term April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2020, which calls for the following increases in salaries and benefits:

Year	Increase (Wages)	Increase/ (Decrease) Benefits
2017	\$15,433	\$2,982
Year	Estimated Increase (Wages)	Estimated Increase Benefits
2018	\$8,010	\$1,577
2019	\$10,254	\$2,012

and further to raise and appropriate the sum of Eighteen Thousand Four Hundred Fifteen Dollars (\$18,415) for the current fiscal year, which represents the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels in accordance with the most recent collective bargaining agreement. (The Budget Committee recommends **\$18,415** and the Board of Selectmen support this recommendation.)

The total amount to be raised and appropriated for the year one costs under this contract is \$18,415 which includes wages and benefits.

Ballot Question #23. Shall the Town of Belmont, if article #22 is defeated, authorize the governing body to call one special meeting, at its option, to address article #22 cost items only?

Ballot Question #24. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand dollars (\$30,000) to be placed in the BRATT Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2006) (Amended 2014). (The Budget Committee recommends **\$30,000** and the Board of Selectmen support this recommendation.)

As of December 31, 2016 the balance in this Capital Reserve Account was \$59,304.48. The initial phase of the Lake Winnisquam Scenic Trail was completed in 2016 and has been well received by residents and visitors to the area. Funding is being set aside to continue the trail.

Ballot Question #25. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) to be placed in the Highway Department Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2002). (The Budget Committee recommends **\$40,000** and the Board of Selectmen support this recommendation.)

As of December 31, 2016 the balance in this Capital Reserve Account was \$43,394.27.

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BALLOT QUESTIONS—CONT.

Ballot Question #26. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) to be placed in the Municipal Facilities Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2006). (The Budget Committee recommends **\$50,000** and the Board of Selectmen support this recommendation.)

As of December 31, 2016 the balance in this Capital Reserve Account was \$428,646.10.

Ballot Question #27. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Thirty Thousand dollars (\$30,000) to be placed in the Accrued Benefits Liability Expendable Trust Fund previously established (2007), and further to fund said appropriation by authorizing the transfer of \$30,000 from the unexpended fund balance as of December 31, 2016. (The Budget Committee recommends **\$30,000** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

As of December 31, 2016 the balance in this Capital Reserve Account was \$95,634.49; this account is used of offset employee retirements i.e. accrued vacation time at the time of retirement, accrued sick time up to 225 hours and the Town offers a one-time retirement benefit based on years of service to the Town; 15 years \$2,000 and 20 years \$3,000 (this benefit is individual not cumulative).

Ballot Question #28. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000) to be placed in the Highway Reconstruction and Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2006). (The Budget Committee recommends **\$750,000** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

As of December 31, 2016 the balance in this Capital Reserve Account was \$282,903.87.

Ballot Question #29. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to be placed in the Town Bridge Repair and Maintenance Capital Reserve fund already established (Created 2003). (The Budget Committee recommends **\$25,000** and the Board of Selectmen support this recommendation.)

As of December 31, 2016 the balance in this Capital Reserve Account was \$48,218.13.

Ballot Question #30. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) to be placed in the Property Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2005). (The Budget Committee recommends **\$25,000** and the Board of Selectmen support this recommendation.)

As of December 31, 2016 the balance in this Capital Reserve Account was \$42,342.21.

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BALLOT QUESTIONS—CONT.

Ballot Question #31. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Ninety One Thousand Ninety Seven Dollars (\$191,097) for the reconstruction of highways, said appropriation to be offset by Highway Block Grant funds provided by the State of New Hampshire? (The Budget Committee recommends **\$191,097** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

Ballot Question #32. Shall the town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) to be placed in the already established General Cemetery Maintenance Fund governed under the provisions of RSA 31:19-A for the purpose of cemetery maintenance, said amounts to be expendable at the discretion of the Cemetery Trustees (1997). (The Budget Committee recommends **\$10,000** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

As of December 31, 2016 the balance in this Capital Reserve Account was \$19,234.28. This year's request was increased by the Cemetery Trustee's as there is significant work to be done at a number of the cemeteries.

Ballot Question #33. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500) to be placed in the Dry Hydrant and Cistern Repairs and Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2010). (The Budget Committee recommends **\$2,500** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

As of December 31, 2016 the balance in this Capital Reserve Account was \$8,946.17.

Ballot Question #34. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Thirty Two Thousand Seven Hundred Ten Dollars (\$232,710) for the operation and maintenance of the Water Distribution and Treatment System for the ensuing year, said sum is to be offset by users' fees. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Two Hundred Twenty Eight Thousand One Hundred Seventy Five Dollars (\$228,175) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law. (The Budget Committee recommends **\$232,710** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

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BALLOT QUESTIONS—CONT.

Ballot Question #35. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Hundred Twenty Eight Thousand Thirty Seven Dollars (\$528,037) for the operation and maintenance of the Sewage Collection and Disposal System for the ensuing year, said sum is to be offset by user's fees. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Five Hundred Twenty Six Thousand Six Hundred Fifty Two Dollars (\$526,652) which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law. (The Budget Committee recommends **\$528,037** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

Ballot Question #36. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Four Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$4,500) to be placed in the Heritage Fund previously established (2005). (The Budget Committee recommends **\$4,500** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

As of December 31, 2016, the balance in the Heritage Fund was \$22,579.79.

Ballot Question #37. Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000) to be placed in the Village Rail Spur Trail Capital Reserve Fund previously established (2016). (The Budget Committee recommends **\$5,000** and the Board of Selectmen supports this recommendation.)

As of December 31, 2016 the balance in this Capital Reserve Fund was \$25,000.86. The Town received a grant from the NH Recreational Trails program in the amount of \$73,440; the grant requires a match from the Town either in kind volunteer hours or funding.



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BUDGET PROCESS

The budget process is less of a beginning and ending process than it is a cycle. In early summer, the Board of Selectmen issue guidance to department heads and the various boards. The guidance has varied from year to year but usually sets the amount of annual salary increase and other criteria. During this same timeframe department heads are asked to update and submit their Capital Improvement Plan requests.

Budgets are usually required to be submitted to the Board no later than the end of August. The submitted budgets are generally in two forms, an excel spreadsheet and a narrative explanation. The excel spreadsheets are integrated into one master budget spreadsheet. The Board reviews the proposed budgets and meets with department heads during late September through October. The Board makes adjustments and submits a recommended budget to the Budget Committee. The Board's budget also includes items which will be the basis for individual or special warrant articles.

The Budget Committee reviews the proposed budgets submitted by the Town during November and December. The Budget Committee votes to recommend a budget to the Voters of the Town and holds a public hearing in early January prior to the Deliberative Session. This is an informational session for voters to learn more about the budget and ask questions.

The Deliberative Session of Town Meeting is the next step in the process and is held between the last Saturday in January and the first Saturday in February. At this meeting voters in attendance have the power to amend some warrant articles including the amounts of the proposed appropriations. The changes made at this session will be included on the ballot to be voted on at the Voting Session of Town Meeting which is held the second Tuesday in March, this year's Voting Session will be March 14, 2017 from 7 am to 7 pm in the Belmont High School Gymnasium. Voters cannot amend the articles at this session; they can only vote yes or no on each ballot question.

The Town has a calendar year budget which begins each year on January 1st, and ends on December 31st. Voters in March are voting on a budget which actually began in January.

Additional town meetings can be held to address budget issues. The Selectmen may call one additional town meeting if the budget is not approved by the voters. The Selectmen can also request additional meetings through the Superior Court to address budget crises which arise between town meetings. These rarely occur; however they are permissible under those circumstances.

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PURPOSE OF THE CIP

A Capital Improvements Program is a decision making tool used to plan and schedule town improvements over a period of six years or more. It is a statement of a town's intended schedule for the construction, expansion or replacement of public facilities and equipment that have an appreciable life expectancy such as schools, libraries, and highway equipment. For Belmont, a capital improvement has been defined as an item costing at least \$25,000 and having a useful life expectancy of at least one year. Operating expenditures are not included in this definition.

It is recommended that a CIP should be updated on an annual basis and this is accomplished yearly by the Planning Board. The first year of the CIP is typically referred to as the capital budget and includes all capital projects to be appropriated by the governing body. While the CIP should be used as a guide for the municipal budget process, it is an advisory document only and not a strict set of guidelines. The responsibility for preparing the annual town budget remains with the Selectmen and the Budget Committee, with the final approval for appropriations made by the voters at Town Meeting.

Using the CIP to make annual expenditures for public improvements is one of the best ways to implement the town's Master Plan. For example, the Community Facilities Chapter of the Belmont Master Plan identifies several recommendations for improvements to public facilities. The ideals and recommendations represented in the Master Plan should be consistent with capital improvement requests made by individual community departments. It has been the case in several Lakes Region communities that a Master Plan update is followed by the development of a CIP. In fact, a stated goal in the Belmont Master Plan is the development of a CIP.

A leading purpose for a CIP is to show the financial impact caused by major expenditures for larger projects. Funding for capital improvements can come from a variety of sources including town appropriations, bonds, and state and federal programs. An understanding of project funding sources aids in determining the impact of capital improvements on the *municipal portion of the local tax rate*. By planning, fluctuations in the municipal portion of the tax rate can be minimized.

Another purpose of the CIP is that it allows for the coordination of planned capital expenditures of the various departments within a town government. Often school capital expenditures are not included in the municipal CIP because the focus of a CIP is the impact capital projects have on the town tax rate. However, annual updates on anticipated capital projects from the school district may aid the CIP Committee in understanding and coordinating these expenditures with their own work on the municipal capital improvements program.

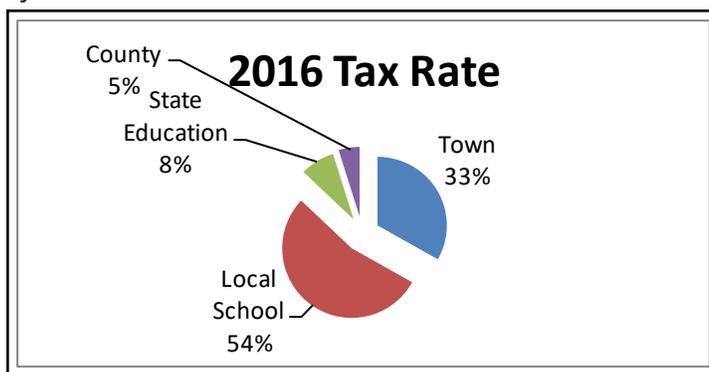
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HOW IS THE PROPERTY TAX RATE SET?

The property tax rate is set every year usually in October but sometimes as late as November by DRA. The tax rate has four components:

2016 Town	\$9.55
2016 Local School	\$15.54
2016 State Education	\$2.33
2016 County	\$1.41
TOTAL	\$28.83



This rate is assessed for every **\$1,000** of property valuation. In other words if you own property such as a house valued at **\$200,000** the rate is calculated **\$200 x \$28.83 = a tax bill for \$5,766**.

When the voters approve the budgets those appropriations are factored into determining the annual tax levy. In the case of the 2016 budget the voters approved the following:

Town Appropriations	\$9,758,542
School Appropriations	\$15,020,287

The total of all appropriations for the Town, School and County represent the amount of revenue needed to pay for the appropriations for the respective budgets. In 2016 that amount was **\$26,987,827**. This is the total amount of anticipated spending for the year for the town, School and County. This amount is offset by other anticipated revenues from various sources other than property taxes as well as credits. After those adjustments were made the amount to be raised in property taxes in 2016 was as follows:

Town amount	\$5,684,166
School amount	\$9,259,459

The county and State Education amounts to be raised through property taxes are added to these amounts. In the case of 2016 the following amounts were assessed:

County Assessment	\$840,321
School Education Assessment	<u>\$1,368,677</u>
Total property tax levy for 2016 was:	\$16,917,323

This amount is assessed over the tax base of the town which was valued at **\$595,718,746**. In the case of the **Town** portion of the tax levy the tax rate is determined by the following formula:

$$\text{\$5,684,166 tax levy} / (\text{\$595,718 (assessed value} / \text{\$1,000)}) = \text{\$9.55 Town Tax Rate}$$

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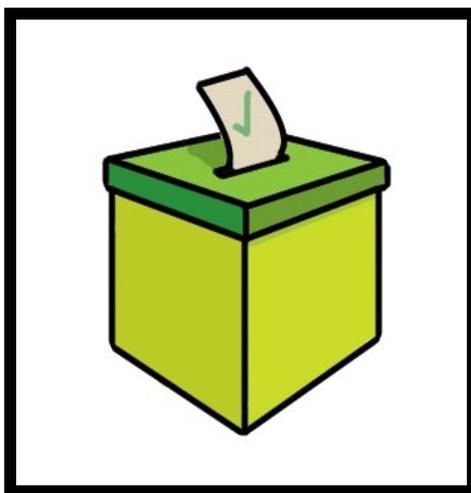
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CAPITAL RESERVE FUNDS AND UNRESERVED FUND BALANCE

Why are we proposing to place money into capital reserve funds? Capital reserve funds are in essence savings accounts for a particular purpose. Capital reserve funds are generally used for big ticket items. Without capital reserve funds, vehicles, equipment, new facilities or renovation of existing facilities would need to be funded through leases or the sale of municipal bonds. Borrowing money for these purposes can add additional costs in the form of interest payments over the period of the lease or bond until those instruments are paid off.

Both capital reserve funds and borrowing money spread the cost of what is being purchased over multiple years. This minimizes spikes in the tax rate. Capital reserve funds make those payments in advance of the purchase while borrowing spreads out the cost in the future. Appropriations to capital reserve funds are invested and earn interest. The Trustees of the Trust Funds invest and manage these funds.

What is the unreserved fund balance? The unreserved fund balance also known as the unassigned fund balance, is composed of two sources. The first is the surplus funds or unused funds in the Town budget for each year. Unexpended funds from the budget are transferred to the unreserved fund balance. The second source is additional revenues above that which was anticipated for any particular year. These funds are also transferred to the unreserved fund balance. The NH Department of Revenue Administration along with guidance from the Government Finance Officers Association recommends the unreserved fund balance should be between 5% as a minimum and a maximum of 17% of general fund operating revenues. The fund balance retained in 2016 was \$1,473,276 or 7.35%. It is important to remember that the unreserved fund balance is not actually cash.



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2017 Proposed Tax Rate

◆ Proposed Budget	\$ 9,830,770
◆ Projected Revenue	\$ (3,794,797)
◆ Reserved for Abatements	\$ 35,000
◆ War Service Credits	\$ 335,500
◆ Unexpended Fund Balance Applied	\$ (480,000)
◆ Estimated Assessed Value Used to Calculate	\$600,000,000/\$1000=\$600,000
◆ Estimated 2017 Tax Rate Town Portion	\$9.88
◆ 2016 Tax Rate Town Portion	\$9.55

◆ HOW DO I VOLUNTEER FOR THE TOWN?

The Town relies upon volunteers to serve on the various boards, committees and commissions as members and alternate members. Some of these positions are elected however some are appointed by the Board of Selectmen or the members of the sitting board. The positions which are appointed are as follows: Conservation Commission, BRATT, Alternate members of the Zoning Board and Planning Board and Heritage Commission. Check the website for available opportunities.

There are other community volunteer opportunities and highlighted to the right are just a few of the projects that have been organized by dedicated volunteers. If you have questions about volunteering or wish to volunteer for the Town, please contact the Town Administrator at Town Hall. Volunteers are critical to making the various functions of the Town operate effectively.

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.” - Elizabeth Andrew