

Office of Board of Selectmen

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Selectmen's Meeting

Monday, April 4, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

Belmont Mill, Tioga Meeting Room

Present were Chairman Ruth Mooney, Selectman Jon Pike, Selectman Claude Patten, Jr., TA Jeanne Beaudin, Assistant TA Alicia Jipson, DPW Director Craig Clairmont, General Assistance Director Donna Cilley, Fire Chief Mike Newhall, Kevin Sturgeon, Sharon Ciampi, Police Chief Mark Lewandoski, Ron Mitchell, Michael Tursi, Code Enforcement Officer Mark Ekberg, Town Planner Sarah Whearty Via Zoom, Jessica Ellis- Hopkins, DTC Attorney Brendan O'Donnell.

Those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

Selectman Claude Patten, Jr. moved the minutes of the meeting held on March 14, 2022 as written; seconded by Selectman Jon Pike, and the motion passed unanimously.

Public Hearing

Chairman Mooney opened the Public Hearing at 10:00 In accordance with RSA 31:95-b to accept a grant in the amount of \$357,376.86 from the COSSAP program through the State of NH Department of Justice. The purpose of the grant is to fund a Drug Prevention, Enforcement and Treatment Officer for a 3-year period beginning in 2022.

Selectman Mooney opened the floor for discussion. TA Beaudin explained that the COSSAP Grant covers the salary, fringe benefits, cruiser, and equipment as needed for 3 years for the hired person. We have included this cruiser in with the other lease purchases. The 1st payment on the cruiser is in July. Chairman Mooney will be designated as the person to sign the documents to be sent over to Governor & Council authorizing Ruth Mooney as the signing grantor. Police Chief Mark Lewandoski stated that it mirrors the program that Laconia PD currently has, the grant came out of the Attorney General's office. We have an idea of an internal candidate that may be interested and we haven't hired anyone to back fill yet until we are 100% approved, and then we will fill the old position. Chief noted that we are not obligated to keep this position once it expires. We have to stay within the confines of the grant for the duration. The tangible stuff will stay with Belmont such as the cruiser and the equipment. Ron Mitchell asked what this officer will be doing. Chief Lewandoski explained that when someone

is arrested for drugs and alcohol, this person will help with getting them connected with help and assistance programs available in the community. They will also help those in the community who seek assistance and find resources for those in need. We are offering something that we have never had before. It will be big to have this opportunity to offer to those in need. The officer will be in plain street clothes and in an unmarked cruiser to make it more informal. General Assistance Director Donna Cilley added that Eric the officer in Laconia running this program has done a great job with this program and will serve as a great resource for us, and this program will be a large asset to Belmont. Selectman Pike motioned to accept the grant in the amount \$357,376.86 under the COSSAP program through the State of NH Department of Justice, also giving Chairman Mooney the authority to sign appropriate documents; seconded by Selectman Patten and the motion passed unanimously.

With no further comments from the public Selectman Mooney closed the Public Hearing at 10:21.

New Business

DTC Representatives- Comcast Franchise Agreement Proposal- Brendan O'Donnell was present to speak stating that the existing cable franchise agreement was signed back in 2014. The way federal and state law was set up, they originally thought there was going to be more competition. The town cannot sign into a new agreement unless it is competitive in nature. We sat and compared them side by side and compared to make sure they were both comparative in nature. One difference is the I-Net for the school system. The Comcast agreement does not include the I-Net as they are not going to build one as it is too expensive, they will instead create a technology account and pay into that. The town receives free cable service, drops, and the franchise fees, those free services are a part of the franchise fees and are subject to the 5%. TA Beaudin stated that we actually had a meeting via zoom to talk about the I-Net and where the school district is. We discussed the benefits of the franchise agreement and how it benefits the residents of Belmont as a whole. Jason from the school district discussed the option for going out and looking at I-Net options. Selectman Mooney stated that we are foolish not to come to some sort of agreement. It is obvious from the comments in the community that we need to have a 2nd option. Brendan stated that Breezeline may come back and say they don't have to pay for I-Net due to change in the law, and could charge us for that. Worst case scenario figure coming from Gilford was about \$12,000 a year for the I-Net, which would be on the school district to pay, as that fee is not so high and does not outweigh the benefits to the rest of the town. TA Beaudin added that we are only currently receiving a 3.5 % franchise fee and we could go up to 5%. We could look at increasing the franchise fee up to 1% to help cover that. One thing to remember the Comcast line will be a new line and will make a huge difference on reliability, Breezeline's lines are old. The town is not getting services for free, we get a basic cable tv drop, we pay for all the internet, they are not giving us anything for free. The school yes has been receiving the I-Net for free but that would have eventually gone away in the new Breezeline agreement anyway. The public hearing will be scheduled on April 25th at the Selectmen's meeting.

Appointment to Canterbury Committee Study- TA Beaudin commented that today we need to identify a member of the Select Board to sit on the study for Canterbury that will discuss separating the schools from Belmont. Superintendent Michael Tursi commented that by statute we have 60 days to gather a committee with the sole responsibility on the school board. What is required is 4 specific members, 1 school board member from Canterbury and Belmont and 1 Selectmen from Canterbury and Belmont. They have 60 days to have their 1st meeting and then 180 days to submit their opinion to the state board of education. If they choose to withdraw they will need to submit a plan on how that will look for both communities and has to be submitted by November 1st. The plan is really to see what would it look like for them to separate. Canterbury would have to separate and create their own SAU with a new SAU #. They will be required to operate on their own and have SAU services. Belmont will have to see how they want to operate. Canterbury did a study back in the 80's and it did not move forward. Selectman Mooney asked how many kids from Canterbury come to Belmont. Mr. Tursi responded that we have 50 in the middle school, 50 in the high school, and 100 in the elementary school, also noting that it will be an extensive time commitment for the committee members and they would be night meetings. Selectman Mooney volunteered to serve on the committee and the Board voted unanimously in favor. GA Director Donna Cilley asked what was the actual vote on this at the town meeting. Mr. Tursi responded that it was a hand raise vote and it passes by the counts made and then it passes or not.

Code Enforcement Update- Code Enforcement Officer Mark Ekberg gave an updated list on the recent properties he is involved in and working on. Mark stated that previous practice was action would not be taken unless an official complaint has come forward. Mark has taken a different approach and is willing to look into a complaint regardless if a complaint was officially submitted by letter. TA Beaudin commented that one of the conversations that Mark and her have had is the length of time the legal process takes. Mark has expressed to TA Beaudin what it might take for him to take to do that process. It is too much for a 24-hour part-time position and it will be something that we may want to consider in the future. Mark does have a very extensive list that he is working on and anything that we can do to support him in this process is hugely beneficial to the town. The RSA states that it just needs to be a rep and not necessarily a lawyer, and overall will be less costly and we won't have to deal with an added layer of scheduling and Mark feels he is very capable of relaying the facts with the best of them and who better than himself as he is the one who is dealing with the cases from the get go.

LRPC TAC Appointment- Town Planner Sarah Whearty is requesting that Sarah Whearty be re-appointed to fill the voting position on the LRPC Transportation Advisory Committee for the 2022-2024 term. Also requesting that Brian Jackes be appointed to fill the currently vacant position for the 2021-2023 term. Selectman Pike motioned to accept the appointments of Sarah Whearty for the 2022-2024 term and Brian Jackes for the 2021-2023 term as members to the LRPC TAC; seconded by Selectman Patten and the motioned passed unanimously.

Fire Department New Hire- Fire Chief Mike Newhall commented that we had a few applications for the positions that we had advertised. Mike has chosen Trevor Gilbert and James Hayes to fill the positions. Selectman Pike motioned to accept the hiring of Trevor Gilbert and

James Hayes to the Belmont Fire Department; seconded by Selectman Patten and the motion passed unanimously.

Traffic Ordinance- TA Beaudin commented that the Chief of Police had requested that we take a look at our traffic ordinance as some things had been outdated. Before you is the revised parking ordinance. The times of parking hours and days were adjusted and the parking lot across from the old corner meeting house removed from the list and we added the times and the dates. Selectman Mooney motioned to accept the new amended traffic ordinances as presented relating to traffic as recommended by the police chief; Seconded by Selectmen Pike and the motion passed unanimously.

Other New Business

Speed limit sign – The Police Chief has put forward a grant for a flashing speed limit sign. The grant is for \$5,398 from All Traffic Solutions. Chief indicated that they were initially going to put it in front of the Elementary school. It is a moveable sign, it can send us data on recorded speeds. Selectman Pike motioned to accept the grant for a purchase of the Shield 12 Speed Display and associated equipment in the amount of \$5,398; seconded by Selectmen Patten and the motion passed unanimously.

Abatement request on a water bill- The homeowner of 8 Stark Street had a leak underground between the connection and the home where they had to hire a contractor to fix the leak at a significant cost and are requesting an abatement on the difference in the water bill. Selectmen Pike motioned to grant the abatement to adjust the bill to match what the prior bill was; Seconded by Selectman Mooney.

Beautify Belmont Clean Up Days- TA Beaudin discussed our annual Beautify Belmont will be held starting April 22nd and run through April 24th. This will run concurrent to Earth Day. Public Works Department will collect the bags on Monday the 25th. Blue bags can be collected at TH or at the Highway Garage.

Tax Collectors Deeds- TA Beaudin stated that the TC/TC has brought forward to the Board properties at 9 Durrell Mountain, 4 Leisure Lane and a property on Horne Road that are on her list to be deeded. She has also had contact with Mr. Dupont with some properties over at Pine Gardens but has not heard any word from him.

Public comment

Ron Mitchell stated that he is here today with the new Library Trustee Jessica Ellis-Hopkins. She is here trying to figure out how Town Politics work. Ron also commented that the trails are looking really good and the trash is being picked up and no graffiti on the bridges so far.

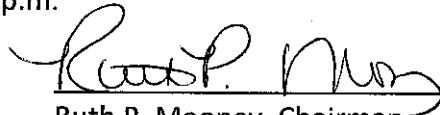
Park- TA Beaudin noted that there has been excessive litter at the park and most recently graffiti, and vandalism. The cameras in the parks are old, the server is in the bath house. We have a request into the company to come out and take a look at the status of the cameras. We may need to replace them. Sharon Ciampi suggested we post on social media when the vandalism and littering occurs and maybe she can get others in the community to help out and pick up the trash.

Non-Public


Chairman Mooney moved to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 11:53 a.m.; roll call was taken and those present and voting were Jon Pike, Ruth Mooney and Claude Patten. Also present were TA Beaudin, ATA Jipson and Town Planner Sarah Whearty via Zoom.

Chairman Mooney closed the non-public session at 12:43 p.m.

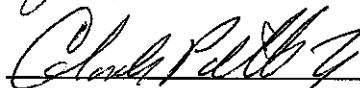
The meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m.



Ruth P. Mooney, Chairman



Jon Pike, Vice-Chairman



Claude B. Patten, Jr., Selectman