



Town of Bellingham

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

10 Mechanic Street

Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

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April 1, 2024

The Selectboard meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM in the Arcand Meeting Room by Chairman Michael Connor. Actively participating in the meeting were the following Board members: Mr. Connor, Mr. Sahin, Mr. Hennessy and Ms. Odabashian. Also actively participating in the meeting was Interim Town Administrator Denis Fraine and Administrative Assistant Hilarie Allie. This meeting was accessible to the public either in-person, via the Zoom online option or ABMI Cable TV.

Police Department Pinning Ceremony

Police Chief Fitzgerald explained he would be recognizing two recent promotions within the department: Sergeant Steve Daigle to Lieutenant and Officer Kevin Heenan to Sergeant. Friends and family gathered to witness the pinning and celebrated with applause and pictures. Representative Soter presented both gentlemen with a citation for their promotions.

Citizen's Input

There was no citizen's input for this meeting.

Vets Package Store Violation Discussion

Mr. Connor welcomed Mr. Brett Remillard from Vets Package Store and explained Mr. Remillard had failed a compliance check at his establishment. Lieutenant Daigle stated all licensees had been notified that compliance checks would take place and Mr. Remillard confirmed that he did in fact receive the notification. Lieutenant Daigle explained Mr. Remillard sold to an underaged individual and did not ask for identification. Mr. Connor stated the Board was following previous procedures where the licensee would come before the Board to discuss. Mr. Remillard acknowledged his mistake and stated it would not happen again. Ms. Odabashian asked Mr. Remillard if he had an ID scanner and he stated he did not. She advised that it might be a wise investment. Mr. Remillard stated that he had confiscated several fake IDs in the past few months. The Board agreed ID scanners are another level of deterrence and will look to the ABCC for a recommendation and will discuss it at a future meeting.

Jesse Riedle, DPW Director Bids and Paving Projects Update

Mr. Riedle presented before the Board with a request to award two recent bids.

On a Sahin/Hennessy motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to award Contract 2024-NMMP, North Main Street Roadway Milling & Paving to the low bidder PJ Keating subject to appropriation at Town Meeting.

Under discussion Mr. Riedle stated the bids for the base (portion of North Main) and alternates (street completion) came in about half of the cost they were anticipating.

On a Sahin/Hennessy motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to award Contract 2024-WMRV Roadway Resurfacing 2023 Water Main Streets to the low bidder A.F. Amorello & Sons, Inc. of Worcester, MA.

Under discussion Mr. Riedle explained this paving will finish up the water main replacement projects on Cedar Hill Road and Standish Road.

Mr. Riedle explained he anticipates a cape seal project to begin late spring/early summer. Various roads will be a part of this project that begins with a course rough surface but will finish with a smooth top coat. The process will be disruptive for a few days but will allow the Town to address more streets as it is a less involved process than a mill and pave process. He stated residents will receive notification and literature about the procedure. Mr. Fraine congratulated his department on receiving a grant that will install a rapid flashing beacon at the SNETT crossing on Lake Street.

School Department – FY25 Budget Presentation

Mr. Peter Marano and Ms. Erica Monteiro appeared before the Board to provide an update on the school department budget. Mr. Marano began by explaining that the budget is based on five pillars: Academic Excellence, Communication, Culture and Climate, Social and Emotional Well-Being and finally Technology Use and Implementation. All budget requests must fall into one of those five categories. He stated the enrollment for the current academic year is 1922 students and they predict that in ten years the enrollment will be 1600 students even with all the new development. Mr. Marano stated the school is a member of NESDEC – the New England School Development Council. They provide a comprehensive student enrollment study on an annual basis. They look at past years and future years and driving factors such as the number of births in town and the number of expected births and trends in housing developments. A decrease in enrollment is a trend they are seeing all over New England. Families are having fewer children and families have other schooling options such as vocational schools, charter schools, school choice, home schooling and private schools.

Ms. Monteiro stated approximately seventy percent of the budget is contracted salaries and the remaining comes from non-salary expenses such as special ed, transportation and district operating costs. Any reduction in salaries comes from unfilled positions that were added during COVID and no longer needed. Salary additions include four new positions in the district including an English teacher at the high school level, two assistant principals at the elementary level and an additional ELL teacher. Mr. Marano and Ms. Monteiro stated there may be a possibility that the school department will come before the Select Board to utilize funds in the Special Ed Reserve Fund but will look for grants and other funding to be fiscally responsible before doing so.

In summary the total budget request is \$34.9M, an increase of 4.19% from last year.

Zoning Article Amendment for Special Town Meeting

On an Odabashian/Hennessy motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to send Article 1 of the Special Town Meeting set for May 1, 2024 back to the Planning Board for review in accordance with G.L. c. 40A, Section 5 and Planning Board Procedural Rules Section 2.1.

Minutes

On an Odabashian/Hennessy motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to approve the March 18th minutes as submitted.

New Business

Mr. Connor welcomed Police Chief Ken Fitzgerald. Chief Fitzgerald explained that he along with a selection committee met with three potential architects for the locker room expansion at headquarters. He stated the selection committee unanimously chose a firm out of Whitinsville that had less experience with public safety but had a wealth of information when it came to locker rooms and facilities. They were also very responsive and came to the meeting with a basic design. Chief Fitzgerald stated Mr. Don DiMartino put out a RFP for \$250,000 and this firm stated they were confident they could show a completed design reflecting that cost.

On an Odabashian/Sahin motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to utilize ARPA funds and award the design contract to Terva of Whitinsville, MA.

Mr. Connor asked how the true population of the Town could be determined and Ms. Odabashian and Mr. Fraine both confirmed the most accurate number is the census.

The Board set the following meeting dates: May 20th, June 3rd and June 17th. Once the new Board is elected and reorganized the Board will pick the remaining meeting dates.

Town Administrator Report

Mr. Fraine stated the capital requests for the spring Town Meeting are before the Capital Improvement Committee right now and the Board will most likely hear the requests at the first meeting in May.

Mr. Fraine stated he was made aware of complaints about Silver Lake Park not being open. Mr. Fraine explained the park remains closed from Thanksgiving to Patriots Day due to the condition of the access road during the winter. He stated the Town uses a service company as well as a resident throughout the entire year to chase the geese away. He stated that he could talk to the Conservation Commission about possibly repairing the access road to allow it to be used all year long. He explained residents are charged \$10 for the season to help defray from the costs of the lifeguards. The YMCA provides three lifeguards a day to guard the lake and the expense to the Town is roughly \$8000 per year. Mr. Fraine stated the MBTA Community Committee has been working hard at complying with the State mandates and have recently learned they may be able to address the zoning requirements by placing an overlay over existing properties such as the Curtis Pond Apartments and The Charles. This would significantly reduce the impact and burden on the community.

Mr. Hennessy publicly thanked Chief Miller and Chief Fitzgerald for their efforts.

On a Connor/Sahin motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Hilarie J. Allie
Administrative Assistant