



Town of Bellingham

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019
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April 26, 2023

The Selectboard meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Don Martinis. Actively participating in the meeting were the following Board members: Mr. Martinis, Mrs. Grant and Mr. Connor. Also participating in the meeting was Interim Town Administrator Beth Cornell-Smith, Administrative Assistant Hilarie Allie and CFO Mary MacKinnon. This meeting was accessible to the public either in-person or via the Zoom online option.

Capital Requests for Annual Town Meeting:

Building Maintenance – Tim Aicardi appeared before the Board to discuss the request for the following capital items:

- Exterior Painting of the body of the Old Town Hall for a total of \$20,000 being requested.
- Roof Replacement and Boiler Removal at the South Fire Station for a total of \$60,000 being requested.

Mr. Martinis asked how long the paint job would last on the Old Town Hall and Mr. Aicardi stated it depends on sun exposure – he was unsure when the last time it was painted. With regards to the roof at the Fire Station there is no record of the last time it was replaced but the shingles are curling and the roof is leaking in several spots.

Mr. Connor asked Mrs. MacKinnon if there was any reason financially not to approve the requests of the various departments. Mrs. MacKinnon stated that there is not and all funds for these requests have been verified. She further stated that these requests have been reviewed and supported by the Capital Improvement Committee as well as the Finance Committee.

Police Department – Lieutenant Russell appeared before the Board to discuss the request for the following capital items:

- 2023 Ford F150 Responder Pick Up Truck to replace a 2016 Ford Explorer in the amount of \$76,368 being requested.

He stated the officers are constantly using their own vehicles or borrowing vehicles from the DPW to transport bulk items such as items needed for road closures, stolen items and community events. Mr. Connor asked if this vehicle would be used as a patrol vehicle and Lieutenant Russell stated it would be used by one officer only. He stated if the department used it only as a specialty vehicle it would sit and rot.

DPW – Jesse Riedle appeared before the Board for to discuss the request of the DPW, Stormwater, Water, and Cemetery for the following capital items:

- Columbarium #4 along with site work for a total of \$45,000 being requested.
- Silver Lake Dam Upgrade – Design and Engineer costs for a total of \$41,120 being requested.
- Generator Repair at Well 7 & 8 on Hartford Ave for a total of \$65,000 being requested.
- Design and OPM Fee for PFAS & TTHM upgrade at Hartford Ave Filtration Plant for a total of \$2.1M being requested.
- Tree Warden – Continuation of tree limb removal and stump grinding on priority items for a total of \$40,000 being requested.

Town Administrator – Mrs. MacKinnon spoke on the following capital requests:

- DPW Administration Facility – Land Acquisition of 20-foot-wide piece of land adjacent to property for a total cost of \$45,000 being requested (includes all fees and cost of land).
- DiPietro Access Road to add a bus lane for a total of \$45,000 being requested.
- DPW Administration Building for a total of \$2.5M of borrowing authorization which Mrs. MacKinnon stated would be funded with short term debt during construction and then once final costs are determined permanent funding would be determined at a later date.

Mr. Connor asked how we simplify this process and followed with how the spending limits for the various capital projects are determined. Mrs. MacKinnon stated she works with the department heads and determines the priority of all the requests and works off the projection list for future needs. Mrs. Grant suggested the Town do a Capital Summit.

School Department – Mr. Marano and Mr. Houston appeared before the Board to discuss the request for the following capital items:

- 14 Passenger Bus for the athletic department for a total cost of \$65,000 being requested.
- WIFI Access points at all schools – upgrading for a total cost of \$76,953 being requested (this is half the cost of the upgrade as the other half is being funded by a grant).
- BMS – 6 Additional parking spots by the flagpole to include handicap parking and lighting up the flagpole by the parking for a total cost of \$50,392 being requested.
- BHS Cafeteria and Hallway floors due to a water main break for a total cost of \$32,065 being requested.
- BHS Cafeteria chairs and tables to be upgraded for a total cost of \$84,180.

On a Grant/Connor motion the Board unanimously voted 3-0 to approve all the Capital Items over \$50,000 and all the Non-Capital Items under \$50,000 as a whole as presented by Mrs. MacKinnon, CFO.

On a Connor/Grant motion the Board unanimously voted 3-0 to award Contract 2023-WRBG Wrentham Road Bridge Guardrail Improvements to the low bidder NEL Corporation of Middleton, MA in the amount of \$204,305.00.

On a Grant/Connor motion the Board unanimously voted 3-0 to award Contract 2023-SRVS Stump Removal on Various Streets to low bidder Charron Tree Services of Bellingham, MA for the completion of the Base Bid and Alternative Items 1 through 4 in the amount of \$63,480.00.

FY24 Budget Update

Mrs. MacKinnon presented the Board with an FY24 Budget update regarding departments with adjustments. She stated the biggest adjustment is with the school department for \$100,000. This will be used for staff and materials to cover the maintenance of all the grounds located on Blackstone Street. An agreement will be put in place that will outline the services that will be provided for this funding. Mrs. Grant asked if this would have to be part of collective bargaining and Mr. Marano stated job descriptions have already been created and they have outlined what the responsibility of the job will be. Mrs. Grant asked why BVT's budget increased by almost \$40,000 and Mrs. MacKinnon responded that there was an increase in the state's calculation of the required minimum contribution as well as an increase in the BVT Budget. Mr. Connor asked about the contingency line in the Town Administrator's budget and Mrs. MacKinnon stated she is recommending this addition to the budget to allow for flexibility in case an issue arises in which the Town did not budget for previously. Mr. Connor said that he did not think the recommendation of \$10,000 was adequate. He suggested a higher number if there was room in the levy capacity and stated whatever wasn't used could roll back into free cash. Mrs. MacKinnon agreed with this, and the Board recommended putting \$50,000 into this line item. They all agreed \$25,000 would be for professional services in anticipation of hiring a consultant team for Mr. Fraine's pending retirement in November of 2024 as well as \$25,000 for unexpected costs. Finally, Mr. Connor asked where Mrs. MacKinnon would like to see free cash at the end of the day, and she stated between \$750,000 and \$1.5M. Mr. Connor stated this helps him see what capital items should be approved. Mrs. MacKinnon stated she likes to look at capital items on a priority/needs basis as well as future needs basis.

On a Grant/Connor motion the Board unanimously voted 3-0 to approve the additional 2% COLA increase for the Norfolk County Retirement System retirees.

On a Grant/Martinis motion the Board voted 2 in favor with Mr. Connor opposing approving the extension of the Beer & Wine and Malt Beverage License for Vohn's Restaurant for outdoor dining and patio service per the Governor's executive order.

Housing Authority Tenant Representative

On a Grant/Martinis motion the Board unanimously voted 3-0 to appoint Mr. James Fitzpatrick as the Housing Authority Tenant Representative for a 5-year term.

Under discussion the Board agreed that Mr. Fitzpatrick is best suited for the position but wanted to thank all the residents that applied. The Board appreciates their willingness to serve.

New Business

Mr. Martinis publicly thanked the Board of Health and all the volunteers that made the Earth Day clean up in Bellingham a success. He stated it would be great if the Board of Health organized this event in the fall in addition to the one in the spring.

Mrs. MacKinnon stated she and Mr. Fraine had met with a representative from Senator Rebecca Rausch's office and they would like to set up a time to come out and meet the Selectboard. She also stated the Senator's office is soliciting earmark requests anywhere from \$10,000 to \$125,000 from the state budget by way of an application process. Mrs. MacKinnon stated Mr. Fraine had been working on this previously. The Senator is a big supporter of educational issues, climate change issues and any projects nearing completion. Mrs. MacKinnon took the liberty to meet with Jesse Riedle, DPW Director, and they discussed requesting money for the splashpad. Currently the splashpad is not recycling the water but uses fresh water and as a result saturates the area. This is not optimal and they are having drainage issues. Mr. Martinis suggested improvements to the playground equipment and Mrs. Grant suggested the one at the Town Common. Mrs. MacKinnon suggested the third earmark item request could be the work that is needed at the South Fire Station. The Board was in agreement with this.

Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated the Town had received a letter from MMA (Massachusetts Municipal Association) requesting a letter be sent on behalf of the Town to the CCC (Cannabis Control Commission). As a background, legislation was recently passed that was in support of business owners and making the regulations easier for them to enter the market space. One of the implications of this new legislation that was passed would affect Community Host Agreements by nullifying all of them. The Town of Bellingham currently has three but only one is currently in place. The legislature has tasked the CCC with defining this new legislation and the Town would be requesting the CCC uphold all Community Host Agreements that are currently in place.

On a Grant/Connor motion the Board unanimously voted 3-0 to draft a letter and send it to the Cannabis Control Commission in regard to upholding all the current Community Host Agreements.

Town Administrator Report

Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated the Memorial Day parade is set for Sunday May 21st and with the current construction underway they are looking at an alternative route.

Bellingham Days – Mrs. Cornell-Smith has been working with Mrs. Grant to make sure all contracts and permits are in place for this event which is scheduled for August 10-12. Mrs. Grant stated as of now everything that needs to have been completed has been done. Mr. Martinis reminded the audience to get out in vote at the local Town election and thanked everyone for their support.

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On a Grant/Connor motion the Board unanimously voted 3-0 to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilarie J. Allie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Hilarie" being more prominent and the last name "Allie" following in a similar style.

Hilarie J. Allie
Administrative Assistant