



# Town of Bellingham

## BOARD OF SELECTMEN

10 Mechanic Street

Bellingham, Massachusetts 02019

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August 14, 2023

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, Mrs. Grant, Mr. Sahin and Mr. Hennessy. Also actively participating in the meeting was Interim Town Administrator Beth Cornell-Smith and Administrative Assistant Hilarie Allie. This meeting was accessible to the public either in-person or via the Zoom online option.

### Joint Meeting with Housing Authority

Mr. Connor explained that the Selectboard had invited the Housing Authority to hold a joint meeting due to a recent resignation on their board. He explained that a joint meeting was being held to find a replacement member. This member would serve until the next Town election which is in June of 2024 and then that person would have to run again to fill the remainder of the term to 2025. Mr. Paulhus and Mr. Fitzpatrick attended the meeting for the Housing Authority. Ms. Sacco and Mrs. Cartier were absent. Mr. Paulhus opened the meeting for the Housing Authority. Mr. Connor stated only one individual, Mr. Chris Remillard, applied to be on the Housing Authority. Mr. Remillard previously served on the Authority for 5 years. Mr. Connor asked the Housing Authority if they had any questions for Mr. Remillard and they did not. Mr. Connor asked the Selectboard if they had any questions for Mr. Remillard and they did not.

Mr. Paulhus made a motion to appoint Mr. Christopher Remillard to the Housing Authority to fill the vacant position until June 2024. Mr. Fitzpatrick seconded the motion and a roll call vote was made as follows:

Mr. Paulhus	aye
Mr. Fitzpatrick	aye
Mr. Connor	aye
Mrs. Grant	aye
Mr. Sahin	aye
Mr. Hennessy	aye

On a Paulhus/Fitzpatrick motion the Housing Authority unanimously voted to adjourn their meeting.

### Board of Health Interview

Mr. Connor welcomed Mr. Rick Gilberti and asked him to introduce himself and explain why he was interested in serving on the Board of Health. Mr. Gilberti stated he has been a resident of Bellingham for 33 years and his wife grew up here so they have deep roots in Bellingham. He stated he is a retired Somerville Police Officer having served 39 years with the department and for 13 years ran the emergency operations center. Mr. Connor asked him why he was specifically interested in the Board of Health. He stated he has been retired for 6 years and has completed everything on his to do list and saw a post on Facebook that the Board of Health was looking for members and decided he would throw his name in the hat. Mrs. Grant stated he has been recommended by the Board of Health and thanked him for his interest. There were no further questions or comments.

On a Grant/Sahin motion the Board unanimously voted 3-0-1 with Mr. Hennessy abstaining to appoint Mr. Richard Gilberti to the Board of Health for a 3 Year term.

Discussion on Chapter 111M and Chapter 111N

Chief Miller, Deputy Milot and Captain Provost presented before the Board to discuss their support for adding an article to Town Meeting which would adopt the provisions of M.G.L. Chapters 111M & 111N.

Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated when a police officer or firefighter/paramedic are injured on the job they go out on 111F (commonly referred to as OJI) and there is no loss of pay, it's not subject to state or federal tax and the employee does not need to use their sick, personal or vacation time. Chief Miller stated adopting these two provisions would allow on the job injury coverage for individuals who are only paramedics and just work the ambulance. Chief Miller stated he has been working with the Deputy and Captain Provost to come up with a staffing plan that would allow them to hire paramedics only - those not interested in becoming firefighters as well. The Town would be more attractive to individuals by offering this kind of coverage. Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated they have not been able to find any financial risk in going forward with this plan but she stated she would have her definitive findings by the next meeting. Mr. Sahin asked how many paramedics they were looking to hire. Chief Miller stated he does not have an answer to that question yet but did say 80% of their calls are medical calls. Mr. Hennessy asked if this would be out of the main station only and Chief Miller stated for now. He stated they are currently working with an outside vendor who is performing a station study/staffing study assessment and they will know more about their staffing needs once that is completed. Mr. Hennessy stated he will fully support whatever the Fire Department needs for staffing and/or equipment. Mr. Connor asked if this is something they would like to start January 1<sup>st</sup> or July 1<sup>st</sup> and Chief Miller stated if the provisions pass in November he would like to get started on this as of January 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Connor thanked them for coming in.

Land Donations

Mrs. Betsy Cournoyer stated it happens often that residents are looking to donate land whether it be because the land is in tax title (they have stopped paying taxes on it) or the property is land locked and unbuildable. She stated if the property is in tax title it goes to Town Meeting for the residents to vote and accept the land and waive the taxes. She stated the other type of donation occurs when someone owns a piece of land that is unbuildable and the owner is sick of paying taxes on it. The owner would then write a letter stating they would like to donate their land. She stated she makes a packet with everything that is needed to identify the land and then the Town will inspect the land and make a decision and recommendation as to whether or not the Town will accept the land. She stated the specific parcel in front of them is in tax title and will be put on the Town Meeting Warrant. On a Connor/Grant motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to accept the parcel of land located on Beech Street known as Map 4 Parcel 33 subject to the approval of the building inspector.

Depot Street Property Acquisition

Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated the Board needs to accept the Deed in preparation of the closing next week and Mrs. Grant confirmed this Deed is for the sliver of land adjacent to where the new DPW Administration Building will be built.

On a Grant/Sahin motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 that pursuant to the vote taken under Article 22 of the May 24, 2023 Annual Town Meeting, to acquire, for general municipal purposes, a portion of the Depot Street property owned by VW Equity, LLC for consideration of \$45,000, and to execute, and to authorize Michael Connor to execute, on behalf of the Selectboard, any and all acceptances, settlement statements, affidavits, and other documents necessary or appropriate to accomplish said acquisition."

Appointment of Katrina Carrozza

Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated this is the new administrative assistant position for the conservation and planning department that was discussed at a previous meeting. She stated Mrs. Carrozza has been working for the Town on a part time basis. She is recommending the Board appoint Mrs. Carrozza to the administrative assistant position in the planning and conservation department.

On a Hennessy/Grant motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to appoint Katrina Carrozza as the administrative assistant for the conservation and planning department.

March / April/ May / June Abatements

On a Sahin/Hennessy motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to approve the March Abatements in the amount of \$3,072.85, the April Abatements in the amount of \$22,148.29, the May Abatements in the amount of \$18 and the June Abatements in the amount of \$7,156.22.

Gift/Grant Award

Mrs. Cornell-Smith presented a grant that was recently awarded to the Police Department. She stated Lieutenant Russell and Kerry Rapose work hard every year to obtain this grant. Lieutenant Russell explained to Mrs. Cornell-Smith that these funds are used for smaller items not in the budget. For example, additional bullet proof vests or a replacement water heater.

On a Grant/Hennessy motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to accept the gifts and grants as listed herein, with said expenditures to be under the direction of the parties noted.

Fund#	Amount	From	For/Purpose	Spending Authority
4120	\$55,942	EOPSS (Executive Office of Public Safety and Security)	E911 Supportive & Incentive Grant	Police Chief

Capital Improvement Committee Appointment

On a Grant/Sahin motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to appoint Mike Hennessy as the Selectboard representative to the Capital Improvement Committee for a 3 Year Term.

Minutes

On a Grant/Sahin motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to approve the July 17, 2023 minutes as submitted.

Mr. Connor stated as a reminder the Special Election will occur on Tuesday August 29<sup>th</sup> from 7AM – 8PM in the gymnasium of the Bellingham High School.

Pearl Street

Mrs. Cornell-Smith explained that the Selectboard had awarded a contract to Zero Point for the placement of a Solar Battery Storage project back in 2021 at the site of the former Pearl Street Mill and they were looking for another extension to begin the project. She stated this was presented to the Board last month and since there were new members and a new Fire Chief they advised Zero Point that they would review the contract again and get back to them. She stated that the department heads met with a representative from Zero Point and a few questions and concerns surfaced as far as possible contamination to the Charles River. Mr. Tim Aicardi further explained that the Town has yet to see a final site plan design. He stated battery storage is a relatively new thing and where this site is right next to the Charles and there is no site plan they couldn't make a decision or recommendation as to whether it was a good fit for the Town at this time. He stated it doesn't mean it might not be worth looking at again in the future. The Board was in agreement that they would not extend the permitting period for an additional six months as requested.

On a Connor/Grant motion the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to take no further action at this time and not extend the contract for battery storage at the Pearl Street location. Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated KP Law would draft a Letter of Notification that will be sent out to the applicant.

Mrs. Grant recapped the events of Bellingham Days. She stated as a result of the rain on Thursday the carnival was unable to open. She stated the remainder of the weekend was a huge success and each of the organizations, Friends of Bellingham Music and Operation Graduation for the class of 2024 was able to profit \$3600 each. She stated she cannot say enough good things about the staff of the Parks, DPW, Fire and Police and said the mobile command center that they set up was awesome. Mrs. Cornell-Smith thanked her and said kudos for a job well done.

Member Committee Updates:

Mr. Sahin stated he was on the OPM Selection Committee for the treatment of PFAS & TTHM at Bellingham's Hartford Ave Filtration Plant. He stated the committee interviewed two candidates and they were both well qualified but the company they ultimately selected has worked on PFAS projects in the past and is currently working on a project in Medway. He stated he thinks it will be a great fit for the Town.

Mrs. Grant stated she is a part of the Age and Dementia Friendly Community Committee and that becoming an Age and Dementia Friendly Community is a huge undertaking and will take close to a year to get the certification. She stated she is on the DPW Building Committee and they are looking to go out to bid for the building very soon. Mrs. Grant has also been supporting the Community Garden this season and Micky DeFosses who has been running the garden will be in to give an update on the season sometime this fall.

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Finally she stated Bernadette Rivard would like to start brainstorming with the Board members on better ways to communicate with the residents. Mr. Connor pointed out a past discussion about a message board that could be placed where the old Dominos building was located. Mrs. Grant suggested looking into possible grant money to fund this project.

#### New Business

Mr. Hennessy pointed out a post that had appeared on social media concerning the condition of the park at Silver Lake as well as the landscaping itself. He stated he went down to the park to check out the condition and stated there were people grilling and drinking. He told them this wasn't allowed and suggested we have police monitor the park on a regular basis and have better signage. Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated she just recently visited Silver Lake Park and she would be meeting with the Parks and Recreation Department in other communities to come up with a plan to get this park back up and running to where it should be. She stated they will be coming up with a capital plan as well. She stated it does need some immediate work and that will get started this week and she will ask the police to visit the park on a regular basis.

#### Town Administrator Report

Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated Community Paradigm has posted the Town Administrator position and all resumes are due in by September 8<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Grant asked if it was possible to find out how many residents filled out the survey and Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated she would find out that information. In addition, the CFO position will be posted soon. Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated she met with several department heads as well as the DOT regarding the rain garden (storm water basin) in front of the middle school. Mr. Aicardi stated they were informed at the meeting that this project was started early and was never finished and unfortunately it grew into weeds. He stated all the plantings have been planted and they would be cleaning it up this week.

Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated she has been meeting with Mrs. MacKinnon on a weekly basis and she is working on year-end closing and has provided a check list to keep track of everything else that is going on financially.

She stated the Inspector General's office is offering a free training for procurement and Mr. Jesse Riedle will be doing the training.

She stated all the road projects are on schedule and the chip sealing will begin soon.

Mrs. Cornell-Smith stated there have been lots of comments about the traffic flow now that the Town Center project is complete. She stated traffic must now yield going South on South Main Street headed up the hill towards Wee Folk Daycare. She stated the traffic pattern had been wrong all these years and the State has corrected it. She stated there are other concerns with the traffic patterns and the way the streets have been marked. She informed the Board Mr. Riedle is working with the State on these concerns.

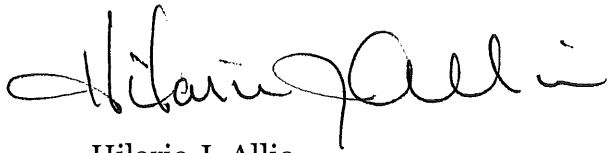
Mr. Connor asked if Mr. Aicardi knew when the utility poles between Blackstone Street and Town Center would be moved and he did not have a status.

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Mr. Aicardi asked if the Board could get a group together to come up with a design plan for the open lot where Dominos used to be and suggested incorporating the message board that Mr. Connor had suggested earlier. Mr. Connor asked Mr. Aicardi to take the lead on this.

On a Grant/Sahin motion, the Board unanimously voted 4-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hilarie J. Allie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Hilarie J. Allie  
Administrative Assistant