

**TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, February 11, 2019
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Lawrence Memorial Hall**



Present: Nicholas O'Connor, George D. Archible, Gail Gramarossa, Brenda Q. Aldrich, Ed Boscher

Call to Order: Chairman O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

2) Sign Documents:

- a) Warrant #1933 was signed for \$542,379.34.
- b) Routine documents
- c) Approval of Minutes: Mr. O'Connor moved the Board accept the executive session minutes of December 3, 2018. Motion seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 3- yes, 2 – abstain (Aldrich, Boscher). Mr. Archible moved the Board accept the minutes of January 14, 2018. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0. Mr. Archible moved the Board accept the minutes of January 28, 2019. Motion seconded by Mr. Boscher. Motion passes 4 – yes, 1 – abstain(Aldrich).

3) Additions to the Agenda:

4) Appearances Before the Board:

- 7:03 p.m. – Pole Hearing #2019-06, Jensen Road: Ms. Gramarossa read the public hearing notice and opened the pole hearing. It is to install one JO pole (5-75) between pole 5-50 and pole 6 alongside Jensen Street. The location to be in between 26 Jensen Street and near 32 Jensen Street per the diagram submitted.

Michael Tatro was present for National Grid and detailed the project further. He has spoken with Steve Williams, Director of Public Works and three more poles will be moved further off the road at his request to make room on the road. Mr. Archible also commented that he spoke with Steve Williams who has no issues with the pole placement.

With no comments from the public, Mr. Archible moved to close the pole hearing. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.

Mr. Archible moved the Board grant petition #2019-06. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- 7:05 p.m. – Cook & Company: Jill and Sue Shillue from Cook & Company came before the Board to discuss the vote on MGL Ch. 238, Sections 21 – 22. It is a vehicle for negotiating health insurance changes. The Board did vote on it last year but did not follow up with notifying the collective bargaining units and the retirees. Cook & Company works with municipalities providing health care consulting. She explained how health insurance benefits were done through

collective bargaining prior to 2012. In July of 2012 new sections of Ch.32B were put into effect and many communities began to adopt them. Sections 21 and 22 allow the town managers to negotiate up to the GIC insurance offered to the State employees. There is a very precise process for following the statute. The first step is to notify the collective bargaining unions and retirees of the Town's intent to discuss the adoption of the statute and the potential to vote on it. If it is a positive vote the next step is to put together a very specific proposal. It is a very structured process that requires specific elements in the proposal showing the current budget would be without benefit changes, the budget with benefit changes, the potential savings and finally the mitigation plan.

Under Sections 21 – 22 the Town is required to give back to the employees and the retirees up to 25% of the first years savings (total savings not just the Town's savings) that is achieved by implementing these benefit changes. The mitigation can be offered to the employees in several different ways. The money could be given back as a premium holiday, the town could set up a health reimbursement whereby certain copays can be reimbursed or everyone could be given a flat dollar amount. The mitigation is actually part of the negotiation period.

Once the proposal has been put together it goes out to the union presidents as well as to the retirees and within ten days there has to be a meeting with the insurance advisory committee. As Belchertown does not have an insurance advisory committee (IAC) we would have to establish one. Following the meeting with the IAC the union presidents are contacted once again as well as the State retiree association to establish the PEC (Public Employee Committee). The PEC becomes the actual negotiating body. It is comprised of one representative from each collective bargaining unit plus a retiree. Once the PEC is formed the Town is required to give all of the members a list of the number of eligible members per collective bargaining unit to establish the weighted vote. The retirees regardless of the number automatically get 10% of the weighted vote and the rest is distributed proportionately. In order to come to an agreement the PEC has to have a majority yes vote.

Once the PEC has been set up the proposal is sent to the PEC representatives and once they have the proposal the sides sit down for a 30 day period to negotiate. She reminded everyone that Belchertown is part of the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust and that the Trust and its members vote on and set the benefit structure that will be offered effective July 1, 2019. When the Town is sitting down with the PEC to negotiate the only thing being talked about is the mitigation plan; what the proposed dollar amount is and how the Town calculated those savings and to discuss who the Town wants to give them and how they want to receive the mitigation money. If an agreement is not reached the proposal that was put together goes before a three person panel at the State level. That panel is comprised of one representative from management, one from the PEC and one impartial representative. Many, many municipalities have used the Section 21 – 22 process and to Ms. Shillue's knowledge there have only been two or three that have used the panel.

Mr. O'Connor reiterated that further discussion would need to happen with the PEC and that this process allows the Town to negotiate with all unions at the same time effectively. He also confirmed that the changes in benefits are happening whether this passes or not. Lisa Banner, Treasurer Collector also stated that this only affects active employees and retirees under the age of 65. It does not affect retirees over the age of 65.

Mr. O'Connor asked Ms. Banner for further clarification regarding insurance and the budget. She indicated that presently our budget (the employers share) is approximately 4.7 million dollars. If these changes don't go into effect or if the Town was to decide to go out and find other insurance she cautioned that those other programs come with high deductibles and higher premiums because they look at the claims history of the town. She predicts the Town would have to come up with an additional \$450,000 to cover the Town's share of the insurance. The ratio is the Town pays 70% of the premium and the employees pay 30%. An active retiree has a 50/50 split.

Ms. Gramarossa questioned what the Town had done previously since these sections have been around since 2012. Ms. Shillue commented that with the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust there haven't been changes for approximately 20 years.

Joe Shea, Director of the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust addressed the Board. He indicated that the last time there was a change in benefits was in 2001 that involved a \$5 copay. Mr. O'Connor commented that there have been some reductions in the copay structure that were first recommended last year.

Mr. O'Connor indicated he would allow folks in the audience to speak but it would be limited to residents and employees of the Town of Belchertown. Ms. Shillue had an additional comment. When there are benefit changes the employer is required to give a 60 day notification to employees. So if the benefits go into effect July 1st employees need to be notified by May 1st and keeping in mind with the statute there is at least six to eight weeks of work that has to occur once it has been adopted.

Mr. O'Connor confirmed that if we don't vote yes then the Town will have to look for other insurance. Ms. Banner stated that our option would be to go to the GIC. Another option is MIAA which the Town of Amherst uses. Ms. Banner provided a chart comparing our health insurance with several others. In her opinion staying with the Hampshire County Insurance Group Trust is in the Town's best interest.

Lynne Raymer, Chairman of the Finance Committee asked what the town's claim/loss ratio is. According to Mr. Shea the Hampshire County Insurance Group Trust is viewed as one entity by Blue Cross Blue Shield. Set financials are not done for each of the 69 member communities of the Trust. Ms. Raymer also asked for confirmation that we are getting a better deal by staying in the Trust as it is a much bigger group rather than if we went out on our own for insurance. Ms. Banner confirmed that she is correct.

Eric Weiss, Town resident mentioned that it was implied if nothing were to change at all then the cost of health insurance would go up by almost a half million dollars between now and July 1st. According to Ms. Banner it would probably be over the course of two years. He confirmed that the Town isn't looking to cover the \$450,000 gap in the budget for health insurance in one year. Mr. O'Connor confirmed that increase would not happen in just one year. He also asked for confirmation that the PEC group is the "lynch pin" in the process by which communication occurs between all bargaining units. Mr. O'Connor clarified that the intent of the statute is for the Town to be able to negotiate with all of the bargaining units at once.

Thomas Howell of 25 Ledgewood Circle and a former town employee feels like there are two separate issues being talked about. One is that Sections 21 – 22 are about how collective bargaining is done between the town and different units. He feels there is also the discussion that the Town should stay with the current health insurance coverage with the proposed changes versus going out to the GIC and seeing what would be available to the town. He believes they are separate issues and if they are not he would like clarification as to what is going on. Mr. O'Connor believes there are three things with the third being the rate increases themselves. He believes, seeing the numbers in front of him for different insurance benefits, that we have the best option for health insurance. Mr. Blair, a resident of Pepper Ridge stated that the reality is the town does not have to adopt Sections 21 – 22 to stay in the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust. The Board does not need to take the voice away from the people that this is going to affect most. Mr. O'Connor confirmed that the Board does not have to approve Sections 21 – 22 to stay in the Trust.

Meghan Mazzaferro from 15 Bunker Way questioned why the bargaining units can't just come to the table; she wondered why we even have to vote on it. Mr. O'Connor stated that after discussing it with Town Counsel and the Board it was felt to be in the best interest of the Town and tax payers to negotiate with all the bargaining units at one time collectively. She questioned if it's not done that way now. Mr. O'Connor confirmed that it is now done independently with each unit.

Lawrence O'Brien a town employee asked for confirmation that the PEC will only be negotiating for one year of savings and that after that the Trust will have the power to impose what they want. Ms. Shillue answered yes and that in future years if the Trust opts to implement additional benefit changes you have to go through the process all over again at which time another 25% savings would be negotiated. The Trust has already stated that they will not be looking at any changes for the next three to five years.

Mr. Howell questioned how the unions are represented if negotiations cease with the PEC and it goes to the State Board. It was confirmed that one of the three would be a member of the PEC.

Mr. Weiss questioned what happens during a contract negotiation year – does the PEC come back into play in regards to benefits. Ms. Shillue stated that if it is related to benefit design then the PEC does participate. What can't be negotiated

are contribution splits. Those occur back at the negotiating table. This is outside the jurisdiction of Sections 21 - 22. Mr. O'Connor commented that this is another clarifying point that 21 – 22 is not the whole thing it is only the benefit design. Premium changes and contributions changes will still get negotiated as they have been with the bargaining units.

Stephanie Viens from Dana Woods and MTA representative wanted Mr. Shea to give a history of how we got to where we are because a large group met with him to talk about various options last summer about “doomsday” with the Trust and what the number was that we had to worry about. He did meet with the teachers last year when the proposed changes were being looked at for July 1, 2018. Those changes were postponed. The Trust is in very good financial shape. Three years ago the Trust began having rising premiums due to medical/prescription costs. Several member communities began questioning what kinds of changes could be made to help. There’s not much that can be done either premiums continue rising or the benefits get tweaked. The 70 units at that time began talking of tweaking benefits in order to keep the premium rates from going up every year. He did meet with the MTA and a number of other unions twice. The MTA representative from this area was invited and spoke to the committee of the Trust in September of 2018. The Trust decided to tweak the benefits even further and three of the copays were adjusted downward. With these adjustments the Trust is financially still in pretty good shape and the premium rates will remain the same. As of June 30, 2017 the last audit showed the reserve for the Trust is down to \$18 million. Since then our claims have stabilized somewhat and with good investing the reserve has moved into the \$21 million range.

Mr. Blair expressed his concern that Mr. Shea had told the unions that \$13 million was the low point where we would really need to be worried. He feels that now that Mr. Shea has stated the reserves are back up to \$21 million there are changes that don’t need to be made with the plan coverages. He feels the \$100 and \$200 copays/deductibles are hurting the people who are the most sick and families. The 25% mitigation is nice but the Board should be sitting down and talking to the employees about these changes. He feels that Sections 21 – 22 takes only allows the unions to talk about the 25% mitigation and not the entire plan.

Andrea _____, a resident of town for 25 years has experience with other municipalities who have voted Sections 21 – 22 in and she wants to compliment everyone for having a dialog as it is way more explanation then she ever received in the district that she works in. She asked the Board to look at this careful as it has been devastating in the district she works in.

Mr. O'Connor feels that the discussion is back to conflating two issues. One issue being the cost going up and the collective bargaining. Andrea expects the cost to go up but also feels shame on the Hampshire County Trust for not incrementally raising costs over the years.

Cecelia Goncalves, one of the math teachers from the high school, read her reasons as to why the Board should vote no on adopting Sections 21 – 22. Mr. O'Connor commented that the Board is not just representing the collective bargaining units

but every taxpayer in the Town. The costs are going to go up and they are going to need to be paid for and the Board is representing all of the taxpayers.

Briand Meehan of 28 Warren Wright Road and a Belchertown High School teacher, in looking at the increases and one of the people who falls into the higher use category he sees himself thousands of dollars out per year with them. This in turn makes it difficult to pay his other bills. He is scared by these changes. Mr. O'Connor commented that speaking for himself the Town has a very good plan. Many people have had to deal with these kinds of increases over the last 15 years. It is a very good plan and is better than any of the others that area available.

Nancy Barnes a Belchertown resident and paraprofessional questioned if there was a reason that all units couldn't collective bargain with the Hampshire County Trust on increases. Mr. O'Connor stated he has two concerns; meeting with each unit and managing all of the taxpayers in Town. The increases need to be accommodated for in some way. The major changes are going to be collectively bargained if there are changes in the future.

Mr. Howell feels that one of the reasons the Board should deny this is because it's a bad idea to collectively separate this idea of health care insurance changes and negotiate them separately. He feels keeping health care in with everything else is a benefit to both sides in terms of flexibility and negotiation. There can be a greater give and take if there are potentially more issues on the table that can be talked about.

Lisa Banner speaking as a town employee stated there are about 450 employees that are in collective bargaining units. There are also a number of employees that are personnel bylaw and they are not able to negotiate this. They have to take what is handed to them and she asked that those employees are also remembered in this discussion.

Mr. Archible indicated he saw finance committee members in the audience and wanted to hear from them as he was confused before he got here and is even more confused after hearing everything. He wants to know what is best for the Town not just for a specific group.

Lynn Raymer, Chair, Finance Committee said that what is being talked about is a plan design change. Plan design is different than employee/employer contributions. Plan design is a change in benefits. We currently have a plan that calls for copays. There are also plans that go into deductibles. We are in an extremely advantageous plan. She works at a private boarding school and they are experiencing 30% increases in their premiums and they don't have copays. They have a \$3,000 and \$6,000 deductibles on individual and family basis. So they are paying 30% higher premiums and \$6,000 out of pocket. She went on to explain how insurance companies work and what percentage they like to be at in paying out claims. She also explained how quickly reserves can be gone through.

Mr. Weiss asked if he could ask one process question. If the Board chose to table this or take no action on this tonight and instead chose to put together a committee

comprised of units that might eventually populate a PEC or something like it whereby there could be communication with a meeting where those that are being affected get a chance to talk to each other, would the Board consider doing that? Mr. O'Connor has concerns with that given the timing, this has already been delayed by a year to try and make this more palatable.

Ms. Gramarossa asked a follow-up question to Mr. Weiss's question. She questioned what our options are for the timing, what is the absolute drop dead deadline? Ms. Shillue indicated that if we are to use 21 – 22 we have maybe a week or so in order to get everything accomplished by May 1st.

Mr. Archible was in a union and doesn't want to take anything away from the unions but he can't see what is being taken away from them. He is not ready to vote as he doesn't know what is being taken away. He went over the information many times this past weekend and now listening to everyone he is confused.

Mr. Boscher summarized the discussion and asked to be correct if he was wrong. The Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust approved these new copays effective July 1, 2019. That part is non-negotiable as it has already happened. Mr. Archible commented that the teachers have a problem with that. The teachers feel this is not accurate and that they should have a say in changes. Mr. Shea from the Insurance Trust confirmed that these changes were voted on and are going into effect July 1st. Mr. O'Connor commented that these changes have been voted on and are going to happen July 1st. He commented that now the discussion is how they are going to be paid for. Mr. Boscher continued that Belchertown must resolve by May 1st or the insurance coverage would go through some change at that point. Ms. Banner commented that the Town must be able to accept the payments that will be added as of July 1st. We have to go with the design of the Insurance Trust or we will have to go somewhere else. Mr. O'Connor commented that the Town would have to find hundreds of thousands of dollars in the existing budget, we are not generating new revenue so there would be cuts required to facilitate that. Mr. Boscher continued with summarizing what he heard regarding this discussion. Failing to increase the copays will lead to double digit increases in the premiums if we stay in the program. Ms. Banner confirmed that Blue Cross actuarial looked at some of the Town's numbers and they came up with like a 9% increase in a single HMO plan. He confirmed with Mr. Shea that the claims experience had been in the positive in previous years but now they are on the rise. He was told that approximately four years ago the claims did deteriorate but a year ago they began to stabilize. During the time when they were not stable the Trust did utilize about \$9 million of that reserve. The Trust decided that they either had to tweak the benefits or raise the premiums. He confirmed that Sections 21 – 22 allows the Town to negotiate with all of the collective bargaining units at one time. This specific negotiation is for the plan design only. Bargaining is still used for up to 25% savings in the first year. Ms. Shillue confirmed that the 25% mitigation is part of the 21 – 22.

Ms. Aldrich likes that they can sit at the table and design the plan of bargaining units and if there is any worry the teachers have a larger portion of the negotiations. She likes that they can all sit together and come up with the plan.

Ms. Gramarossa still feels like she needs a little bit more clarity and apologized if it is reiterating some stuff. She feels it would be helpful for her to hear one more time what is negotiable under the PEC, what gets talked about there and what is still left for each bargaining unit to deal with individually if we are enacting this.

Ms. Shillue reiterated under 21 – 22 the statute allows negotiation of the plan design, the benefits as well as the mitigation plan. Because we are part of Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust the plan design is what it is. The Insurance Advisory Committee through Hampshire County (which is comprised of 69 municipal groups) has voted what the plan design is going to be July 1st. We would not be sitting down to negotiate the plan design but would be negotiating the mitigation, the amount of the mitigation and how it would be delivered to the employees. Everything else would be outside of 21 – 22 and would be done through collective bargaining.

Mr. Boscher asked for confirmation that the other collective bargaining units know about this plan. He was told that they are aware. Mr. O'Connor also mentioned that the non-bargaining units are going to get hit with this regardless of the vote. He reiterated that the Town needs to come up with the money and it's a matter of who is going to pay for it. He believes the best way is to create parody amongst all of the collective bargaining units in town as it is the fairest way to do it. He does feel the Board should have consensus with this vote and if the members need some time we should give it.

Mr. Archible moved the Board postpone the vote to adopt MGL Ch. 32B, Sections 21 – 22. Ms. Banner suggested the Board hold a special meeting as their next meeting isn't for another two weeks. Regardless as to whether to Board votes to adopt this or not the May 1st deadline still applies. Ms. Gramarossa is open to a special meeting but would like to reach out to the other collective bargaining units in town so they are aware of these discussions. It was agreed that the Board will meet on Tuesday, February 19, 2019 at 6:15 p.m. Mr. O'Connor tidied up the motion to say that the Board will table this vote till the 19th of February scheduling a special meeting at 6:15 p.m. in the Selectmen's meeting room. Motion seconded by Mr. Boscher. Motion passes 5 – 0.

- 7:35 p.m. – Finance Committee and School Committee: This was a joint appearance of the Finance Committee and School Committee before the Board of Selectmen along with Superintendent Coffin. The superintendent and school committee have been have been talking for quite a while to look at the configuration of the grades in our school system, to look at cost effectiveness of our school buildings and the way education is delivered now. They would like to make a request to submit a letter of interest or an application of interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) that would allow them to start researching and looking into the strong possibility of building a new school which would replace the Jabish Brook Middle School. This would allow the closing of Cold Spring School at the same time. The schools could be reconfigured and aligned for a better educational curriculum. One of the requirements of submitting

the application is that the School Department receives a letter of support from the Board of Selectmen.

Eric Lebeau, Director of Building and Grounds for the School Department prepared a presentation for the Board. He gave the background as to when the schools were built. There are major building components that are in need of replacement and if we wait another 20 years or so they will be even harder to maintain due to the age of the buildings. Spending money on the upkeep of the older buildings takes away money for teaching materials. A new school will allow us to recognize the need to provide facilities that meet the 21st century learning needs. It will also recognize the need for efficient options for grade alignments and to ease transitions for the students and their families.

He went on to say that the masonry walls and steel beams make up the exterior walls of the Jabish Brook Middle School and provide no insulation. The roof is 25 years old and will be in need of replacement. The windows don't allow for the installation of window air conditioners. The school has an outdated generator that only powers the refrigerator, freezer and heating equipment. He continued on with a list of things that need to be updated with this school.

There was a question asked about money having been made available to repair the Jabish Brook Middle School roof several years ago. The Board of Selectmen doesn't believe it was Jabish Brook but rather Chestnut Hill Community School roof. Lynne Raymer, Chair of the Finance Committee asked what the total deferred maintenance is on the Jabish Brook School. Mr. Lebeau commented that the capital plan calls for \$2.5 million on Jabish Brook Middle School over the next five years. It includes the roof, abatement and replacement of asbestos floor tile, phone system replacement, the bleachers in the gymnasium, locker room renovations as well as some other renovations/replacements. It was questioned how much it would cost to upgrade the electrical and the windows. Mr. Lebeau could not answer what the electrical would cost as that hasn't been looked at yet. A study was done prior to him being hired that showed a 50 year payback. It was not worth putting the money into replacing them.

Steve Rose, Finance Committee member stated we are talking about spending \$2 million vs the cost of a brand new school at the cost of \$40 million with the State picking up half of that. He questioned how it makes sense to spend \$20 million vs \$2 million. Mr. Lebeau commented that he is only talking about over the next five years. In five years the building will need more maintenance. Ms. Raymer commented that was what she was asking what the total cost of the maintenance is. Mr. Lebeau commented that we have two school buildings that roughly cost \$300,000 a year to run with basics. You have to add to that the capital improvement projects that the buildings will need over the next 20 years so he thinks we are looking at \$15 million. Mr. Rose feels that building a bigger school is going to cost more money to maintain. Mr. Lebeau is not sure. It's possible which is why we need the feasibility study. This is what the MSBA does – they look at everything. Mr. O'Connor reminded everyone that right now we are just talking about doing a feasibility study only. This is not a discussion about building a new school. Mr. Rose questioned how much a feasibility study would cost the

town. Mr. Lebeau indicated it starts around a half million dollars and can go up from there. Mr. Aponte questioned if there is any reimbursement from MSBA for the feasibility study or if it is the cost to the Town. He was told that there is a partial reimbursement from MSBA but Mr. Lebeau doesn't know the dollar amount. Mr. Lebeau doesn't know what the right answer is; does the town just need to renovate these buildings, do we need a new building. In order to figure it out the Town needs to do the feasibility study.

Mr. O'Connor feels he is hearing that there is an impression that the Town has outgrown the schools but enrollment isn't the issue as it is down some. Mr. Lebeau agreed that we have not outgrown the buildings.

It cost double the amount to heat Jabish Brook which is 70,000 sq. ft. than it does to heat Swift River School which is 80,000 sq. ft.

The Cold Spring School is an outdated physical structure. There are no computer labs or meeting rooms. The school does not have a library or a gymnasium. The roof has been replaced. The windows in the school are less energy efficient and have limited functionality. It was asked if the pre-school side of the building has had any lead paint chippings. That side of the building has been de-lead. Their biggest problem is that the heating system is antiquated. It's an old steam heating system. The pipes run underground in tunnels which are hard to get at. There is no way to increase the efficiency of the steam heating system.

There is no fire suppression system in either of these school buildings. It is on the capital improvement plan. Mr. Boscher feels that since both schools have no fire suppression system in them there is no reason to continue on with this presentation. He moved the vote to take the next step with the feasibility study. Mr. LeBeau commented that there are appropriate steps that need to be taken before we can get to the feasibility study. We have to be invited into the MSBA grant program.

The school committee recommends closing Cold Spring School and talk about renovating or demolishing Jabish Brook and putting a new middle school in. Ms. Raymer questioned that there was no discussion about Tadgell School. Mr. Lebeau commented that when/if the MSBA gets involved it will definitely be a bigger part of the discussion. He reviewed what the new transition for students would look like. The superintendent commented that educationally and developmentally having students in a school for three years is much more stabilizing for them. Ms. Raymer questioned if the number of students enrolled did not allow for Chestnut Hill School to be 4th – 8th grade as it was supposed to be? The superintendent commented that we don't have that capacity right now. She told Ms. Raymer that even with the decline of enrollment there are more special education programs now that require single classrooms or other types of learning spaces.

The MSBA works with local communities to create affordable, sustainable, and energy efficient schools. It receives a dedicated funding stream of one cent of the 6.5 cents of Massachusetts sales tax. School districts are required to submit a Core

Program Statement of Interest. The window to submit this closes on April 12, 2019. On average between 100 and 120 school districts from the Commonwealth apply to get into the program and only about half of them are accepted. Mr. Lebeau outlined the process that the MSBA uses. It is a long process and could be anywhere from five to seven years before even having a shovel in the ground if we are able to build a new school. Mr. Lebeau also went over the areas that we have available if we were to build a new school.

There is no money involved to submit an application to the MSBA. If we are accepted into their program the Board of Selectmen will need to certify that we are ready to figure out how to pay for the feasibility study when the time comes.

The Town Administrator explained some of the pros and cons with using the land that the EDIC earmarked for a middle school. There is some wetlands and the dirt road that could be used currently has no utilities on it. This land is adjacent to the Chestnut Hill Community School. He also commented that the land near the Jabish Brook Middle School that is currently for sale will sell. The lot that is paramount with this discussion is the lot that is contiguous with the driveway going in. He feels the town should take a good, hard look at buying the land that is contiguous with the driveway. If we never use it the town can always sell it. Mr. Aponte, finance committee member was in agreement.

Mr. Boscher moved the Board set in process developing a statement of interest. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 5 – 0.

5) Discussion/Action Items:

- a. Appoint Recreation Member to Lakes Committee: Ms. Aldrich presented the details to the Board. Ms. Aldrich moved to appoint John Soja to the Lakes Committee as the Representative of the Recreation Department. Motion seconded by Ms. Gramarossa. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- b. Appoint Member to Memorial Committee: Mr. Archible presented the details to the Board. Per the recommendation of Ray Janke, Chairman of the Memorial Committee, Mr. Archible moved to appoint Patrick Loftus to the Memorial Committee, term to expire June 30, 2019. Motion seconded by Mr. Boscher. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- c. Appoint Member to Conservation Commission: Ms. Gramarossa presented the details to the Board. Per the recommendation of the Conservation Commission, Ms. Gramarossa moved to appoint Heather McCann to the Conservation Commission, term to expire June 30, 2019. Motion seconded by Mr. Archible. Motion passes 5 – 0.
- d. Accept Senior Center Outreach Aide Resignation: Mr. Boscher presented the details to the Board. The Board acknowledged the resignation of Cristina Welch as Outreach Coordinator at the Belchertown Senior Center, effective February 14, 2019. A thank you letter will be sent to Ms. Welch for her service to the Town.
- e. Accept HCOG Representative Resignation: Mr. O'Connor presented the details to the Board. As we all know the Town voted to leave the Hampshire Council of Governments at last year's town meeting. No further action needs to be taken in regards to that and we are coming up to the year notice that needed to occur. Our Hampshire Council of Government representative is resigning citing health issues.

He sees no reason to reappoint as we are on our way out of that group. A letter will be sent to Mr. Barnett thanking him for his many years of service.

- f. Award Bid #2019-04 – Corr-Welch Forest Management Project: Mr. Archible presented the details to the Board. The land is across the street from Tractor Supply. Per the recommendation of Steve Williams, Director of Public Works, Mr. Archible moved to award the bid to LeClerc & Son Forestry & Logging, 91 Rockrimmon Street, Belchertown in the amount of \$8,275.90. Motion seconded by Ms. Aldrich. Motion passes 5 – 0.
 - g. Vote to Surplus Vehicles and Equipment: Mr. Archible presented the details to the Board. Steve Williams, Director of Public Works is asking to surplus the following equipment: 1987 Chevy D-30, pickup; 1999 Chevy GMT 400-pickup; 2000 Ford Ranger; 2003 Chevy Silverado pickup & 8ft. fisher straight plow; 2011 Ford Crown Victoria sedan ad a 2000 Ford Ranger that was previously surplused but the bidder didn't take possession of it. Mr. Archible moved the Board surplus the vehicles and equipment as requested. Motion seconded by Mr. Boscher. Motion passes 5 – 0.
 - h. Miscellaneous Matters:
- 6) **Town Administrator's Report:** Mr. Brougham updated the Board on the following:
- Pathfinder will hold its annual budget meeting on Wednesday, March 13th at 7:00 p.m. Please let the office know if you will be attending so we can let Pathfinder know.
 - Keith Poulin had come in previously and talked about the concept of a hometown hero award. They are trying to work through the logistics and a recent question has been asked as to who will make the determination of who might be honored with that award. It could be the Board of Selectmen, the Veteran Service Advisory Board, or a combination of the two. They are trying to firm up the language in the protocol. Mr. O'Connor would prefer that the candidate come from the veterans' association and the Board endorsing it. The same would hold true for the first responder's award. Mr. Brougham confirmed that the Veterans' Agent and/or the Veterans' Service Advisory Board should choose the award recipient.

7) **Review of Weekly Mail:**

8) **Individual Board Members' Reports:**

Mr. Archible: Mentioned the passing of Gerry Desilets. He was a member of the American Legion. He was always in the parade holding the flag. His service is tomorrow and requested that the town seal be lowered for the day.

The new DPW truck that was approved last year is in and what a Cadillac!

Ms. Gramarossa: She has been in touch with Jim Barry about the solarized program. The next step is to apply with the State. We will get Mr. Barry's help completing the application and submitting it.

The Cultural Council is actively working on getting ready for Art's Week which will happen in April.

Mr. O'Connor: Sent out his condolences to the Higgins family who lost their son over the last month or so.

Ms. Aldrich: The Board has an invitation to the Accreditation Ceremony for the Belchertown Police Department on February 26th.

The Recreation Department is moving ahead with the disc golf course.

On Friday night she judged Project Runway. The outfits that the students designed and sewed were amazing.

Saturday night the Library had their Wine and Cheese event. It was a great time.

Mr. Boscher: Attended the budget meeting for the Senior Center. He was very pleased with their attention to detail. He is looking forward to their presentation to the Board of Selectmen for consideration.

It was an awesome Wine Tasting event inside the library. He learned a lot of the history of the building. There are a lot of people that care about the library.

9) **Questions from the Press:** None.

10) **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Gary L. Brougham, Town Administrator

Board approved/endorsed: March 11, 2019

Board of Selectmen - Town of Belchertown

Endorsed by a majority:




Nicholas O'Connor, Chairman

George D. Archible



Gail Gramarossa

Brenda Q. Aldrich



Ed Boscher