

Structural Change Implementation Committee
Minutes
December 5, 2023
Remote Meeting via Zoom

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: March 20, 2024
TIME: 10:07 AM

Members present: Tim Bucciarelli, Larry Link, Paul Rickter
Members absent: Vicki Amalfitano, John Kolterman
Other attendees:

Meeting was called to order at 7:14pm.

Summary of SCIG reports on making Assessors appointed

Mr. Bucciarelli presented the summary that he and Ms. Amalfitano have written summarizing the ideas written up in the Structural Change Impact Group (SCIG) report that relate to the Town Meeting article moving the Board of Assessors to be an appointed body. The committee discussed the summary and made suggested edits, noting that the original idea ([#416 - Appoint Member to Board of Assessors](#)) makes multiple references to appointing a Select Board member to the Board of Assessors, which is not the same as the proposal before Town Meeting. To provide Town Meeting members more complete information, the summary includes a summary of idea [#216 - Appoint All Positions \(except Select Board/Moderator\)](#) which provides a more complete picture of the concept of appointing positions instead of electing them. Mr. Bucciarelli will make further revisions and we will review at our next meeting before distributing to Town Meeting.

The committee then discussed some current issues in Belmont that relate to the Board of Assessors. Mr. Rickter noted that Select Board members have mentioned that progress on PILOTs (Payments in Lieu of Taxes) potentially paid by non-profit property owners has been limited by lack of cooperation with the Board of Assessors. Mr. Bucciarelli suggested that the committee could do more to encourage collaboration with groups that might be independently working on the same idea without realizing it. He noted the work of the Vision 21 Implementation Committee as well as individuals (for example, Angus Abercrombie & Dan Barry) who appear to be interested in pursuing change in Belmont.

Discussion on status of priority ideas

Mr. Rickter observed that there appears to be interest in moving forward on senior tax relief, which was written up in the SCIG report as idea [#164 - Tax Relief for Seniors](#). The SCIC did not identify this as a priority idea, because it has neutral financial impact, but it still appears to be an idea that is generating interest. Mr. Rickter recounted a meeting he had with Town Administrator Patrice Garvin, Assistant Town Administrator Jennifer Hewitt, Aaron Pikcilingis, and Joe Bernard regarding actions Town Meeting could take to expand property tax relief for seniors. Belmont is doing almost everything allowed under state law on senior tax relief, but we could still set up a program where taxpayers voluntarily contribute to a fund that could make grants to seniors. In addition, we could pursue a home rule petition to provide more senior tax relief beyond state law allows, but that will take time.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present, so there was no public comment.

Next Meeting

The committee agreed to schedule our next meeting for January 2 at 7pm.

Adjournment

The committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:50pm

Minutes submitted by Paul Rickter

Ideas under consideration:

- [Idea #23 - Increase Revenues from Grants](#)
- [Idea #33 - Civil Service](#)
- [Idea #101 - "Payments In Lieu Of Taxes" for Non-Profits and Private Schools](#)
- [Idea #268 - Pension Liabilities/Retirement Board Savings](#)
- [Idea #269 - Transfer Health Care Insurance to the GIC](#)
- [Idea #36 - Review Town Owned/Used Property for Best Use](#)
- [Idea #39 - Establish Budget Guidelines](#)
- [Idea #107 - Reevaluate Town Zoning with Master Plan](#)
- [Idea #275 - Real Estate Transfer Fees](#)
- [Idea #378 - Supplemental Tax Assessment on New Construction](#)
- [Idea #391 - Allow Hotels and B&Bs in Bylaws](#)