



**Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
Warrant Committee Remote Meeting
Wednesday, March 6, 2024
7:00pm**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: March 25, 2024
TIME: 8:51 AM

To view the recording of the meeting, please click [HERE](#).

Call to Order: Mr. Lubien called the meeting to order at 7:02pm. There were 14 voting members present.

Member	Present	Member	Present
Geoffrey Lubien, Chair	Yes	Melissa Morley	Yes
Paul Rickter, Vice-Chair	Yes	Lynn Peterson Read	Yes
Conor McEachern, Secretary	Yes	Matthew Taylor	Yes
William Anderson	Yes	Marie Warner	Yes
Tom Caputo	Yes	Jack Weis	Yes
Fitzie Cowing	Absent	Roy Epstein, Ex-officio Designee, Select Board	Yes
Susanne Croy	Yes	Meghan Moriarty, Ex-officio, School Committee	Yes
Deepak Garg	Yes	Staff	
Anne Helgen	Yes	Jennifer Hewitt, ATA & Finance Director	Yes
Robert McLaughlin	Absent		

1. Fiscal Compact Discussion and Possible Vote

Mr. Lubien displayed the current draft of the framework for the compact:

- No additional Proposition 2½ override request for at least three years.
- Reduce annual expense growth rates to bring expenditures in closer alignment with revenue.
- Pursue policies to spur revenue growth and diversify our tax base through zoning changes to promote economic development and business growth.
- Substantially reduce the reliance on one-time sources to fund the operating budget and place excess Free Cash each year generated by turnbacks or excess revenue into specific stabilization funds and capital projects.
- Invest in key initiatives to reduce future expenses, including developing in-district special education programs and identifying Town/School organizational structure efficiencies.
- Bolster much-needed town services, including revamping aging school curriculum and expanding discretionary capital for sidewalks.
- Improve communication and continue to provide transparent budgeting and formalize multi-year financial planning, including the creation of a fiscal planning group with representation from town boards/committees, town and school administration, and town residents with a goal of achieving financial stability and sustainability.
- Protect against future fiscal shocks by maintaining adequate financial reserves and a strong bond rating.
- Continue to work on developing new senior economic tax relief programs (to the full extent permitted by Mass. Law).

He reviewed the discussions that have been held about the proposal, and highlighted the last bullet (regarding senior tax relief) that was requested by the Select Board and members of the Warrant Committee. He explained that there was no wish to over-promise because this is difficult, but that the issue of senior tax relief needs to be continued to be worked on.

He emphasized that this is a framework, not the compact and that the document can be used as a guideline for the Select Board, School Committee, and Warrant Committee chairs to create a working group to produce the full compact.

There were recommendations for edits to the framework as well as questions and discussion about the document.

Ms. Moriarty explained that this has not come to the School Committee for consideration. She added that she fully supports the compact and expressed her hope that the community would see the strength of the commitment. She then spoke about her views of various parts of the framework and the task force.

There were further discussions, recommendations, and changes made to the framework.

Mr. Garg left the meeting at 7:42pm.

There was a discussion of next steps and how to get the work on the compact going, and Mr. Lubien said he would distribute the updated framework before the next meeting on March 13, 2024.

2. Other Topics Not Anticipated by the Chair

Tax Override Impact Calculator: Click [HERE](#) to access the calculator. Ms. Hewitt explained and demonstrated the online calculator. There were some recommendations and discussion about the features of the calculator.

Public Comment

Siobhan Gallagher suggested that specificity on the compact would be good and asked that there be a commitment to providing economic relief for seniors.

Adjournment

Mr. Weis moved to adjourn the meeting of the Warrant Committee. Ms. Helgen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:04pm.

Next Meeting: date/time

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary