



June 1, 2005

Dear Town Meeting Members:

The enclosed Special Town Meeting Warrant contains the budget articles on which action was deferred at the April Annual Town Meeting. There is also one article proposing Zoning By-law Amendments. It is hoped that the business of this Special Town Meeting will be concluded in one evening. However, if it is necessary, Town Meeting will be continued to Wednesday, June 15.

The Town Meeting Warrant includes a descriptive paragraph after most articles explaining their purpose or intent. The packet also includes the Reports of the Warrant and Capital Budget Committees, a brief memo from Jeffrey Wheeler, Planning Coordinator, about the proposed Zoning By-law Amendments, a message from the Moderator and the Motions. The Planning Board will distribute its report at Town Meeting.

Both the Warrant and Capital Budget Committees have worked diligently with the Board, the School Department and department heads to prepare and recommend a balanced budget for FY06. One item that has complicated the work of these committees was the condition of Viglirolo Rink which requires critical repairs to make it operable for the next skating season and beyond. The scope and cost of necessary repairs is still under investigation.

By the time Town Meeting convenes on June 13, the Town will have the necessary information about rink repair work and costs upon which the Warrant and Capital Budget Committees can base their recommendations. Consequently, the motion under the Rink Article (#11) does not contain figures either for the cost of the repair work or borrowing. It is anticipated that the final figures for these items will be less than what had been originally allocated. If this is the case, both Warrant and Capital Budget Committees, at Town Meeting, will offer revisions to their recommended budgets to allocate any newly available funds.

The Board is keenly aware that the fiscal realities with which the Town has struggled to present a balanced budget for FY06 will persist into the future. The Selectmen, town department heads and the Warrant Committee have begun to discuss and devise strategies for achieving stability and predictability in future Town's budgets.. The Board has made long-term financial planning a priority and will continue to search for ways to rein in costs. The Board intends to report to Town Meeting on this topic to share the steps it is taking and the issues it has identified as critical to attaining its goal of maintaining Belmont on solid financial footing.

All of the information described above, along with a great deal of additional documentation, is included within the Town Meeting section of the Town's web page. Since it is a valuable source of information regarding this Special Town Meeting and town business generally, you are strongly encouraged to subscribe to the site. By subscribing, you will receive an e-mail each time a new document or notice is posted to the site. Please visit <http://www.town.belmont.ma.us/subscriber.shtml> to subscribe. The mail list is called Belmont Town Meeting.

We look forward to a productive Town Meeting.

Sincerely,  
Paul Solomon, Chairman  
Angelo R. Firenze, Vice Chairman  
William N. Brownsberger  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN OF BELMONT  
WARRANT FOR  
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING



BELMONT HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
JUNE 13, 2005  
7:30 P.M.

TOWN OF BELMONT  
WARRANT FOR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING  
JUNE 13, 2005  
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Middlesex, ss

To either of the Constables in said County:

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are required to notify and warn the Inhabitants of the Town of Belmont, qualified as the law requires to vote in Town Affairs, to meet at the Belmont High School Auditorium on Monday, June 13, 2005 at 7:30 p.m., and to notify and warn the Town Meeting Members to meet and act at said time and place on the following Articles, viz:

**ARTICLE 1: Reports**

*To hear the report of the Selectmen and other Town Officers. To hear the report of any Committee heretofore appointed and to act thereon.*

This article allows the Board of Selectmen and other town officers, boards and committees to report orally to the Town Meeting on appropriate matters not otherwise appearing on the Warrant. This article stays "on the table" throughout the Town Meeting to allow town officials and committees to report when necessary.

Majority vote required for passage Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

No action is necessary by the Warrant Committee.

**ARTICLE 2: Authorization to Transfer Balances**

*To see if the Town will authorize the transfer of certain balances on the Treasurer's books and Accountant's books.*

This article authorizes the transfer of balances from various sources necessary to achieve the Town's financial plan for Fiscal Year 2006 (the Budget) as contained in Article 3.

Majority vote required for passage Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

The Warrant Committee will report orally on this article.

**ARTICLE 3: Budget Appropriation**

*To determine what sums of money shall be granted to pay Town expenses for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2005 and to make the necessary appropriations for the same for the support of schools and for other Town purposes, determine how the same shall be raised, or in any way act thereon.*

This article is the appropriation of the Town's Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 budget, commencing on July 1, 2005. Typically, the Budget is broken down into several major categories of expenditures, each requiring a separate vote of Town Meeting. The budget summary and supporting information is incorporated in the

Warrant Committee and Capital Budget Committee reports which are contained in this Warrant Booklet.

Majority vote(s) required for passage Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

The Warrant Committee will report orally on this article.

**ARTICLE 4: Salaries of Elected Officials**

*To see if the Town will vote to fix the salary and compensation of each and all the elective officers of the Town, appropriate a sum of money for that purpose, determine how the same shall be raised, or in any way act thereon.*

This article fulfills the state law requiring Town Meeting to set the compensation of a town's elected officers. This article also appropriates the funds necessary to meet these compensation levels. For FY 2006, the recommended compensation levels are listed below. Please note that the Town Meeting establishes the compensation of all other municipal employees under a separate article (Article 6).

Town Moderator	\$200
Chairman of the Board of Selectmen	\$5,000
Selectman (2)	\$4,500 each
Town Clerk	\$72,435
Town Treasurer	\$67,000
Chairman of the Board of Assessors	\$2,750
Assessor (2)	\$2,420 each

Majority vote required for passage Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

The Warrant Committee will report orally on this Article.

**ARTICLE 5: Appropriation of "Up Front" Funds for Highway Improvements**

*To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or transfer from unappropriated available funds in the Treasury, sums of money for the repair, improvement and construction of highways, said money to be used in conjunction with any money which may be allotted by the Commonwealth for the said purposes, authorize the acceptance of such allotment, determine how the money raised and allotted as aforesaid shall be expended under the provisions of Chapter 90 of the General Laws, and acts in amendment thereof and in addition thereto, or in any way act thereon.*

This article seeks an appropriation to provide "up front" money for state reimbursed highway aid. The state provides highway aid, referred to as Chapter 90, to all cities and towns on a reimbursement basis. This aid is authorized by the Legislature every two or three years through state transportation bond issues. The appropriation of \$324,429 for FY 2006 is the amount projected for Belmont. These funds, when supplemented with capital budget funds, shall be used to continue the Pavement Management Program designed to extend the useful life of our roadway system. In addition, the Town has used Chapter 90 funds for design

purposes in order to "leverage" substantial federal transportation funding for major road projects (i.e., Trapelo Road).

Majority vote required for passage Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

The Warrant Committee and the Capital Budget Committee will report orally on this article.

**ARTICLE 6: Position Classification and Compensation Plan**

*To see if the Town will vote to amend the Position Classification and Compensation Plan of the Town previously adopted under the provisions of Article 11 of the General By-Laws of the Town, or in any way act thereon.*

This is a standard article appearing in the Warrant. Classification and compensation of all permanent Town (non-school) positions are included in a plan adopted by Town Meeting pursuant to section 108A of Chapter 41 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The classification and compensation of unionized employees is bargained collectively and inserted into the Plan. In 2000, the Town completed a study of the classification of all Town employees, except for civil service police officers and firefighters. The new Plan was bargained with affected Town unions and implemented. The new Plan is posted on the Town's web site and is provided with this Warrant Booklet. The compensation reflects current (FY 2005) rates unless otherwise noted. Funds necessary to implement changes associated with the Plan are included within the budget.

Majority vote required for passage Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

The Warrant Committee will report orally on this article.

**ARTICLE 7: Appropriation of Capital Expenditures**

*To see if the Town will vote to appropriate sums of money to purchase Public Safety Equipment, Computer Equipment (including consulting work), Public Works Equipment and Furnishings and Equipment for Town facilities, construct public ways, and for Building and facility and Public Works Construction, Major Maintenance and Alterations (including design work); to determine whether these appropriations shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise and by whom expended, or in any way act thereon.*

This is a standard article appearing on the Warrant to appropriate funds to support capital expenditures. While the article is general as to the categories of capital expenditures, the motion shall be explicit. The recommendations of the Capital Budget Committee for FY 2006 capital expenditures are provided in this booklet. However, as a consequence of recent discussions between the Warrant and Capital Budget Committees regarding the scope and cost of the proposed Viglirolo Rink project, additional funding for non-rink-related capital projects became available subsequent to the booklet's printing deadline. Therefore, the Capital Budget Committee will make additions to the Article 7 recommendations contained in its report to Town Meeting provided herewith.

Majority vote required for passage (two-thirds if borrowing) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

The Warrant Committee and the Capital Budget Committee will report orally on this article.

**ARTICLE 8: Appropriation for Water and Sewer and Stormwater Services**

*To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money from the accounts classified as an "Enterprise Fund", pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 53F½ of the General Laws for water service, and for sewer and stormwater service, determine by whom expended, or in any way act thereon.*

This is a standard article appearing on the Warrant to appropriate funds to support the operations of the Town's water and sewer functions. Each of these functions has an enterprise fund that receives revenues from user fees. These funds then are used to fund the utility's operations. These operations are entirely self-supporting from user fees and do not receive any funding from property taxes.

Majority vote required for passage (two-thirds for borrowing) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

The Warrant Committee and the Capital Budget Committee will report orally on this article .

**ARTICLE 9: Authorization of Creation of Revolving Fund**

*To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Chapter 44, Section 53E½, of the General Laws, to authorize the expenditure from revolving funds by various Town Departments, or in any way act thereon.*

This article seeks authorization to establish a revolving fund for the Belmont Gallery of Art which the Town's Cultural Council will operate. A revolving fund allows the expenditure of user fees and other revenues for program expenses without further Town Meeting appropriation. However, the Town Meeting must annually renew the funds. At this time, the Council on Aging and Health Department each has a revolving fund for certain of their programs.

Majority vote required for passage Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Selectmen and the Warrant Committee will report orally on this Article.

**ARTICLE 10: Authorization of Bond for construction or reconstruction of Surface Drains and Sewers**

*To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for the construction or reconstruction of surface drains and sewers, to determine whether such sums shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise, or in any way act thereon.*

This article would authorize the Town to undertake significant improvements to the sanitary sewer system and to finance such work with a bond payable over a period of years. The article will accelerate the re-lining of sanitary sewers in areas where the Town has identified structural deficiencies in the existing system. Work that had

been scheduled over a period of 5 or more years will now be done in 2 years or less. Also, the proposed financing mechanism will amortize the expense and more closely align the cost to ratepayers with the life of the improvements.

Majority vote required for passage (two-thirds for borrowing)      Yes \_\_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_\_

The Warrant Committee and the Capital Budget Committee will report orally on this article.

**ARTICLE 11: Authorization for Repairs to Viglorolo Rink**

*To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for making repairs to the Skip Viglorolo Skating Rink, to determine whether such sums shall be raised by borrowing or otherwise, or in any way act thereon.*

Majority vote required for passage (two-thirds for borrowing)      Yes \_\_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_\_

The Warrant Committee and the Capital Budget Committee will report orally on this article.

**ARTICLE 12: Authorization of a Building Committee for the Viglirolo Rink Repair Project**

*To see if the Town will vote to authorize and direct the Moderator to appoint a rink repair committee, which committee shall be authorized to enter into contracts and take all actions necessary to carry out the Viglirolo Rink repair project.*

Majority vote required for passage (two-thirds for borrowing)      Yes \_\_\_\_\_      No \_\_\_\_\_

**ARTICLE 13: Amendment to Zoning By-law - Changes to Schedule of Dimensional Regulations**

*To see if the Town will vote to amend the Belmont Zoning By-law, Section 4.2, Schedule of Dimensional Regulations, as follows:*

- (a) In Footnote 2 relating to the Minimum Lot Area for the GR and AH Districts, delete the portion of text which states: "1,000 square feet per dwelling for multi-family dwellings in a GR District;" so that Footnote 2 reads as follows:*

***"But not less than 1,200 square feet per dwelling unit."***

- (b) In the Section 4.2.1 table, under the Minimum Lot Area column for the GR Districts, change the footnote number from "2" to "3".*

- (c) Add a new Footnote 3 relating to the Minimum Lot Area for the GR Districts to read as follows:*

***"But not less than 3,500 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit for two-family dwellings."***



article in the warrant. An article may not be amended but a motion may be amended by vote of the Town Meeting.

- Formal seconding will not be required on **main motions** under articles in the warrant. Seconding will be required on all other motions.
- All **main motions and proposed amendments** involving the expenditure of money must be in writing. All other motions and proposed amendments must also be in writing unless they are so brief and simple as to be easily understood when stated orally.
- All substantive amendments and motions to be offered under an Article in the Warrant must be submitted to the Town Clerk in writing not later than the close of business on the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) business day before the commencement of the session at which the Article is considered, in order to provide the sufficient time for review by Town Counsel and the Moderator and to be printed for distribution to the Town Meeting Members before the commencement of such session. The Moderator may allow exceptions to the advance filing requirement in case of motions that are easy to understand, but such exceptions are within the exclusive discretion of the Moderator.
- Except for motions involving the expenditure of money or by-law amendments, the Moderator will first recognize the maker of the motion, if he or she wishes to speak.
- Before commencing discussion on motions involving the expenditure of money or by-law amendments, the Moderator will first call for committee reports as follows:
  - **Expenditure of Money** – Warrant Committee,
  - **Capital Improvements** – Warrant Committee, then Capital Budget Committee,
  - **General By-Law amendments** – By-Law Review Committee,
  - **Zoning By-Law amendments** – Planning Board.
  
- Town Meeting Members wishing to speak should stand and request recognition by the Moderator. When recognized, a Town Meeting Member should come to a microphone and state his or her name and precinct number before commencing.
- Registered voters of the Town who are not Town Meeting Members may speak at the Town Meeting, but first must either arrange in advance with the Moderator for recognition or arrange to be introduced by a Town Meeting Member.
- Persons who are not Town Meeting Members may be admitted to the floor by invitation **but may not vote**.
- All discussion must be relevant to a motion before the town meeting. All speakers must address the Moderator; questions may be asked only through the Moderator. A Town Meeting Member who wishes to make a motion that is debatable must first make the motion and, after it is seconded, if required, the Moderator will recognize the maker of the motion to speak to it. The Moderator will not recognize a motion made at the

conclusion of a speech. This, by definition, includes a motion that would terminate debate, such as a motion for the previous question.

- The Moderator will try to recognize Town Meeting Members in the order in which they seek recognition. Unless the Town Meeting consents no person may speak more than twice upon any question, except to correct an error or to make an explanation of a previous statement. No person may speak for more than five minutes when speaking for the second time and should not seek recognition to speak for a second time until others who have not yet spoken have had an opportunity to be recognized.
- While our General By-Laws do not set a time limit for Town Meeting Members when speaking for the first time, all remarks should be concise, to the point and not excessively repetitious. Experience has shown that minds are rarely changed after the first **five minutes** of a speech.
- Section 2.7.6 of our General By-Laws provides that **all votes shall be taken in the first instance by a “yes” or “no” voice vote**. If the Moderator is in doubt as to the vote, or if any Town Meeting Member doubts the vote, the Moderator will call for a **standing vote**. Provision is also made for a **roll call vote**. A roll call vote must be requested by a Town Meeting Member **before a standing vote is taken**; the request must be concurred in by 35 or more additional Town Meeting Members; and the request must be made in connection with **final action** under an article in the warrant.
- Our By-Laws require that a Town Meeting Member who wishes to speak on an issue in which he or she or a member of his or her family has a direct financial interest or in which he or she is engaged as an attorney or consultant must first disclose this interest to the Town Meeting.
- A **motion to reconsider** a vote adopted at one session of a Town Meeting may not be made at an adjourned session of the same Town Meeting unless the mover has given notice of his or her intention either at the session at which the vote was passed or by written notice delivered to the Town Clerk by 12 o’clock noon on the first business day following the commencement of the session at which the vote sought to be reconsidered was passed. A two-thirds vote is required for reconsideration and no vote may be reconsidered more than once.
- Action on Article 4, our general budget article, will not be considered final so as to require a two-thirds vote for reconsideration, or any other procedures relating to reconsideration, until all action under that Article has been completed.

Any citizen who has questions about town meeting procedures is encouraged to get in touch with me at my office (617) 951-7477 or home (617) 489-1159 or to see me before the start of Town Meeting.

Henry L. Hall, Jr.,  
Moderator

# **WARRANT COMMITTEE REPORT**

## **Introduction**

The principal function of the Warrant Committee is to make recommendations to Town Meeting on all Warrant Articles that involve immediate appropriation of money. Similar committees in other towns are often called Finance Committees.

The Committee consists of fifteen residents (not necessarily Town Meeting Members) appointed by the Moderator for staggered three-year terms, plus the Chairs of the Board of Selectman and the School Committee. The Committee appoints one of its members to the Capital Budget Committee. The Town Accountant, Town Administrator, and Town Treasurer regularly attend meetings. The other Selectmen often attend.

This report will provide Town Meeting Members with a background and explanation of the proposed budget for 2005-2006 (Fiscal Year 2006).

### Budget Overview

The fundamental fiscal dilemma facing Belmont, like virtually every community in the state, is that year-to-year expenditures are growing at a greater rate than year-to-year revenues.

On the one hand, largely fixed costs such as health care are increasing faster than inflation; on the other, Proposition 2 ½ limits annual increases in total property taxes to 2 ½% plus growth from new development. Belmont depends on property taxes for 78.9 % of its total revenues.

State aid has been the key variable. During most of the 1990s, major increases in state aid allowed the town to balance its budget without program cuts. In fiscal 2004, the town had to contend with a \$1.2 million or 17.5 percent reduction in state aid. State assistance remained virtually level in fiscal 2005, and we anticipate only a small increase in fiscal 2006.

<i>Revenue Item</i>	<i>FY05 \$ Million</i>	<i>FY05 % of Total</i>	<i>FY06 \$ Million</i>	<i>FY06 % of Total</i>
Property Tax	\$53.4	78.5%	\$55.3	78.9%
Motor Vehicle Excise	2.6	3.8%	2.6	3.7%
State Aid	6.6	9.7%	6.7	9.6%
Fees & Permits	2.1	3.1%	2.1	3.0%
All Other	3.3	4.9%	3.4	4.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$68.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$ 70.1</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The \$70.1 million budget for fiscal 2006 largely preserves the same level of services despite increasing only \$2.1 million or 3.2 percent from fiscal 2005. This is possible because of a number of special factors which are not likely to recur in future years. These include relying on \$800,000 of cash reserves and saving almost \$500,000 on solid waste collection with the end of the NESWEC contract, as well as a smaller increase in health insurance costs for town employees because of savings in 2005 (premiums less than anticipated and level policies).

<i>Expense Item</i>	<i>FY05 \$ Million</i>	<i>FY05 % of Total</i>	<i>FY06 \$ Million</i>	<i>FY06 % of Total</i>
---------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------	----------------------------

Salaries & Wages (Town & School)	34.4	50.6%	36.5	52.0%
Health	7.7	11.3%	8.2	11.7%
Retirement	3.0	4.4%	3.3	4.7%
School Non-Sal	3.5	5.1%	4.0	5.7%
Spec Ed Tuition	2.5	3.7%	2.6	3.7%
Town Non-Salary	3.9	5.7%	4.2	6.0%
Solid Waste Collection	2.7	4.0%	2.2	3.1%
Capital Expenditures *	2.8	4.1%	1.9	2.7%
Debt Payments	4.6	6.8%	4.5	6.5%
All Other	2.9	4.3%	2.7	3.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68.0</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>70.1</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* Capital Expenditures in FY05 included some major one time appropriations: Wellington School Design (\$350,000), School Elevators upgrade (\$97,000), Claflin Street Parking Lot (\$260,000), and purchase Modular classrooms (\$279,440). All these except the Claflin Street Project were approved at special town meetings. In FY06 \$206,000 of capital expenditures for Information Technology was moved from the capital budget into the operating budget (town (\$125,000 and schools (\$81,000)).

Nevertheless, following the cuts of recent years and the relentless cost pressures, virtually all town departments and the schools are being asked to do more with less and are reaching the point where they cannot deliver the quality of services expected by the residents of Belmont. To preserve this level of services will require additional investments in the form of periodic overrides of Proposition 2 1/2. Barring some major unforeseen favorable circumstance, we will need such an override for fiscal 2007.

In recent years the Warrant Committee has mounted an intensive and continuing effort to find savings wherever possible. These initiatives have helped address the fiscal problems, but efficiencies cannot change the fundamental fact that, as a town of homes with limited land, there will always be a close connection between the level of taxes collected from homeowners and the level of services provided in our community.

Over the past two years the Warrant Committee, in collaboration with the Selectmen, School Committee and Capital Budget Committee, have made a major effort to educate Town Meeting Members and the public about the town's fiscal realities and problems. We will continue to reach out to the citizens so they understand better the long-term fiscal dilemma confronting the town.

### Separate Articles

Some elements in the budget are presented to Town Meeting in separate articles, even though the amounts in those articles also appear in the Budget Table. This year these articles are:

Article	Purpose	Amount Budgeted	Budget Table Line
STM 4	Salaries of Elected Officials	\$161,225	030, 040, 080, 090
ATM	Noncontributory Pensions	\$ 60,000	099
ATM	Contributory Pensions	\$3,248,436	099

STM 5	Chapter 90 (Roads)	\$324,429	313
STM 7	Capital Budget	\$1,873,704	798

## **REVIEW OF DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS**

### **General Government**

#### **Introductory Comments:**

As was the case last year and previous years, The General Government departments highlight the issue of short staffing and aging software business systems. The town as a whole has substantial software business system replacement needs. A decision needs to be made as to whether these needs shall be reviewed by the Warrant or Capital Budget Committees. Software procurement needs to be evaluated and selected based on its impact town-wide. In any event, whatever committee that this is assigned to should include members who are technologically proficient in the evaluation and application of computer and software technology.

In several General Government departments there is a lack of lower level staffing. This results in department managers or other senior staff having to handle telephone calls, citizen's visits, copying and routine correspondence. This is not an efficient use of their skills and it is demoralizing. The departments have experienced turnover of senior management. Training budgets have been cut impacting personal skill set development. The goals set for the various departments must be relative to the capacity of the available resources to perform those tasks. Many of the functions performed by these departments are mandated by state and regulatory requirements.

#### **Town Administrator – Office of the Board of Selectmen**

(Lines 040, 042, 046 and 050)

Belmont has recently hired a new Town Administrator, Tom Younger, who started this spring. Of the budgeted positions in the office, the Assistant Town Administrator position remains unfilled at this time. Staffing capacity is critical especially now, with the transition that is taking place.

The office, with only 3.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) personnel, has the following responsibilities and is seeing increased demand in many areas such as policy analysis and implementation, program and project policy analysis and implementation, program and project management, and management, constituent services, committee support, and crisis management (e.g., Burbank School oil release) from many constituents. They have a need to be able to quickly find historical information and documents, but this is hampered by the absence of a record archiving and tracking system and adds to the department's work load. Approximately 25% of the department's time is spent responding to requests for information or problem solving (through phone, email, snail mail or appearance at the front counter). The public works consolidation, budget planning enhancements, early retirement incentive, health insurance changes, and other issues all bring with them increased demands on the staff in the office.

## Policy Concerns

Many AAA-rated communities have at least three “centralized” management positions. Belmont should consider implementing a Board Administrator/Executive Assistant model seen in communities such as Framingham, Lexington and Arlington. Additionally the Town should consider creating a full-time management or analyst intern position.

### **Information Technology** (Line 050)

The Town IT Department is responsible for approximately 200 computers and 65 printers located in 12 buildings townwide. This responsibility encompasses installation, configuration, purchasing, licensing, security and support of the technology along with staff training, future planning and purchasing of technology. The funding for IT capital purchases is now included within the operating budget (\$125,000) rather than the capital budget. This is reflected in the budget increase between FY05 and FY06 of \$176,416. The budget went from \$171,647 up to \$348,108.

All Town technology purchases are either performed by, or cleared through, this office. The equipment includes: desktop computers, laptops, monitors, printers, PDA’s, Fax machines, LCD projectors, network copy machines, scanners, plotters, and application software.

Services include providing help desk support for approximately 230 users in the following departments: Fire, Police, Treasurer, Assessors, Accounting, Town Clerk, Selectmen, Human Resources, Building Services, Community Development (Engineering, Planning), Light, Council on Aging, DPW (Highway, Water, Cemetery, Parks and Facilities), and administering and supporting the financial management system, both hardware and software, and administering and maintaining the town website.

The current staff of two cannot support functions of departments and those items needed under the Development of a Town Technology Plan. For the majority of this fiscal year only one of the positions was filled. The FY06 budget includes three positions. The department receives 10 calls per day average with an average time to resolve of 45 minutes per call. This requires one person just to maintain Town department operations.

## Policy Concerns

1. Geographic Information System (GIS). This system is needed to link all geographic database information in the Town. A GIS will significantly reduce the staff time needed to produce data necessary for many projects such as sewer and storm water analysis, abutters’ lists for building projects, and future zoning and planning.

2. Training. A minimum of 4 classes monthly of staff training would assist in reducing the number of help calls. There is no permanent training facility, but space has been allocated for training in the Homer Building. The department has to make personnel time available for preparing training materials and conducting the training sessions.

3. The ongoing replacement of approximately 20% of Town's desktop computers each year, with an average time to configure and replace being six hours, is a yearly time commitment of a minimum of five weeks.
4. Centralize Website administration for consistency of appearance, ease of use and increased content and accuracy.
5. Evaluation of a new financial software package to replace Systems & Software (S&S), a new Payroll/HR system and an IT help/desk tracking software.
6. Datacenter for financial system database, GIS Database and document archiving and Assessors' Data Cards.
7. The Town needs a redundant fiber network as part of the Disaster Recovery Plan.

**Town Accountant**  
(Line 070)

The Town of Belmont must comply with Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) recommendations and prepare statements that meet those requirements. This has increased internal work required to prepare GASB compliant statements. Each year new requirements are being added. The department has a need for increased internal auditing. There has been an increase in requests for information and analysis from the Board of Selectmen and Warrant Committee. The Warrant Committee has recommended that the department acquire new financial management software (including a fixed asset module) that would alleviate current state reporting problems for both the Town and School Departments. It would also obviate the current practice of departments keeping "shadow budgets" because of lack of reporting capabilities.

Staffing continues a 2.6 FTE. The overall budget for this department in FY05 was \$236,798 and will be \$297,340 in FY06.

**Policy Concerns:**

1. Consider reclassification of Staff Accountant to Assistant Town Accountant, who could devote 1-1.5 days a week to internal auditing. Space in Homer Building does not allow for any increase in staffing.
2. Consider changing to a Finance Director model with one person overseeing all financial operations and the implementation of performance measures.
3. The town audit cost for KPMG comes out of the Accountant's budget. The contract for the town auditor is coming up for renewal. It may be cost effective to put the request for a town auditor out to bid. The Permanent Audit Committee has recommended this process.

**Town Clerk//Elections/Legislative**  
(Lines 010, 020 and 030)

Staffing in this office has been reduced from five full time employees to three full time employees over the last few years, resulting in the employees often working on necessary tasks on their own time because the regular hours are used to answer residents' requests. The budget for FY05 was \$124,011 and will be \$136,384 in FY06.

The Town Clerk's office is for many people the main point of contact with the town. The office provides the following services: gathering vital statistics; processing marriage intentions, hunting and fishing licenses passports, dog and cat licenses and mail-in voter registrations; locating child support offenders; providing business certificates, certifications for the Board of Appeals and birth certificates; selling CRT and appliance disposal stickers and Belmont Historical Society items. The office is open during some evening hours for the convenience of residents.

**Policy Concerns**

1. Federal and State mandates, particularly since 9/11, are imposing new obligations on the office.

2. The anticipated McLean and Uplands projects will increase the number of Town residents requiring services from the office of the Town Clerk.

**Human Resources**  
(Line 055)

The Human Resources department supports 320 Town employees and provides health, dental and life insurance benefits support to them as well as 500 retirees and 330 school employees with a staff of 2.6 FTEs. The FY05 budget of \$187,132 will increase to \$207,411 in FY06.

The role of the HR department includes: the administration and classification of pay plans, recruitment and employment; maintenance of employment records and compliance with all applicable state and federal employment laws; the administration of health insurance, life insurance and flexible spending plan benefits for all employees and retirees; collective bargaining, contract compliance and grievance administration; and the administration of workers' compensation and unemployment claims administration

In addition, the HR department provides training and professional development such as: time management, customer service, progressive discipline, discriminatory behaviors, conducting interviews, primary responder to grievances and the administration of employee policies and procedures. The Human Resource department has also taken on new responsibilities over the past year: administration of a Town dental plan, adoption of Section 18 (of Ch. 32B) which requires monitoring retirees eligibility for Medicare upon reaching age 65, and increased involvement in Labor Relations.

## Policy Concerns

1. Due to the passage of Medicare Part D, retiree drug coverage, the Town will need to have an actuarial study performed to determine Federal reimbursement eligibility. This study will be coordinated by Human Resources and the funding for this study appropriated within the general fund.

2. Additional staff. The Department has identified the need for an Administrative Assistant and an Intern.

### **Treasurer and Collector**

(Lines 090 and 091)

The Treasurer's Office/Tax Collector is responsible for collecting real estate taxes, auto excise taxes and other revenues along with performing the role of parking clerk. The elimination of the parking clerk position has forced other people to pick up those responsibilities, because the automated system minimized, but did not eliminate, the need for this role. The change to the new quarterly tax billing has resulted in additional work for the office. Also, the home rule petition that was filed by the Town to allow for the unique Modified Quarterly Tax Billing system has required an additional software cost and ongoing support cost for the Town.

The department is looking into the automation of office procedures, the use of new technology and employee retention issues. This office contains many low grade clerk employees, creating retention issues and resulting in a significant number of staff transfers moving to other town departments as better paying positions around the town open up. Coupled with this is the problem that it takes a long time to become an effective accountant. Current FY05 staffing levels are 8.2 FTEs and this will be 8.5 FTEs in FY06. The FY05 budget of \$513,588 will increase to \$531,458 in FY06.

## Policy Concerns

1. Consider reorganizing the department to increase the 30-hour position to 35 hours, upgrade positions to be competitive with other departments, and implement a cross-training/education program on all aspects of operations.

2. Replace S&S (financial management) and payroll/HR software, automate tracking of accrued sick and vacation time and posting of payments directly to the general ledger, and eliminate duplicate data entry.

### **Assessors**

(Line 080)

The Assessor is required by Massachusetts law to list and value all real and personal property. Valuation is subject to ad valorem taxation on an assessment roll each year. The "ad valorem" basis for taxation means that all property should be taxed "according to value". Assessed values, in Massachusetts, are based on "full and fair cash value", or 100 percent of the fair market value.

The Town of Belmont reassesses each and every year, subject to a Massachusetts Department of Revenue's statistical review. This is done so that the property taxpayer pays his or her fair share of the cost of local government, in proportion to the amount of money the property is worth, adjusted on a yearly basis rather than every three years. A relist and remeasure of all properties in town is done on an ongoing basis.

The Belmont Assessors' office must appraise and assess approximately 8000 parcels of property. It is also responsible for responding to all requests for abatements on tax bills in Belmont. Staffing will remain level at 3.4 FTEs. The FY05 budget of \$329,270 will decrease to \$315,403 in FY06.

### Policy Concerns

In order to accomplish the tasks for which the office is responsible, the Assessors' office maintains the records of town properties. Included in these databases are the sketches of homes and pictures that are now available on-line. The data are currently being warehoused outside of the Town's computer system due to the size and characteristics of the database. It may be desirable to bring this in-house at some point in the future.

### **Police Department** (Lines 110, 125-145)

The mission of the Police Department is crime prevention and the provision of public safety to the citizens of the community. The Department is comprised of seven different programs; Administration, Patrol Services, Detectives, Traffic, Community Services/D.A.R.E., Records and Joint Public Safety Communications.

The staffing level at the end of FY04 was 48 sworn officers. The current FY05 budget staffing level includes 47 sworn officers and the current actual staffing level is 45 sworn officers. The FY06 budget reflects staffing level including 47 sworn officers. The FY06 budget for the Police Department is \$5,115,630. This compares to an FY04 actual amount expended of \$4,853,203 and an FY05 budget of \$5,050,081. The increase in FY06 budget over the FY05 budget is \$65,549 and is primarily related to wage and health benefit increases as well as an increase in the overtime budget in anticipation of the retirement and transfer of Patrol officer personnel.

The FY06 staffing budget, as noted above, includes 47 sworn officers. This consists of 37 officers dedicated to Patrol Services and 10 officers that handle most of the other functions of the Department; Administration, Detectives, Traffic, Community Services and Records. The current staffing level for sworn officers is 45 with an allocation of 35 officers to Patrol Services. Patrol Operations is the Police Department's number one priority, so two patrol officers should be hired to fill the budgeted but vacant positions.

The Joint Public Safety Communications' Program provides emergency telecommunications to citizens of the community and to all the Town Departments. It is responsible for answering all emergency and non-emergency calls for both the Police and Fire

Departments. In addition, it answers all after-hours calls for the Light Department and the Public Works Department. The Communications Center is staffed around the clock every day. The staffing level at the end of FY04 was 11.64 FTE's which included 1 Operations Manager, 1 Communications Supervisor, 8 Dispatchers and 1.64 per diem Dispatchers. The FY05 budget staffing level includes 11 FTE's which includes only 1 per diem Dispatcher. The FY06 budget is for level staffing.

### **Fire Department** (Lines 150-195)

The mission and primary roles of the Fire Department are: fire suppression response, fire prevention/education, hazardous materials response and medical emergency response.

The current FY05 budget includes a total staffing level of 57. This total includes: 52 firefighters in fire suppression (four teams of 13 firefighters) and 5 in administration (Chief, Assistant Chief, Fire Prevention Officer, Assistant Fire Prevention and Training Officer, and one civilian handling office administration). The FY06 budget includes, with the addition of an administrative assistant to assist fire prevention activities, a total staffing level of 58.

The total FY06 Fire Department budget is \$4,185,000 vs. an FY05 budget of \$4,096,000 and an estimated FY05 actual of \$4,068,000. Hiring new firefighters at lower wage steps to fill retirement vacancies has partially offset increases in health benefit costs in the department. Overtime, which is historically a high proportion of the Fire Department budget, is recommended at \$295,000, equal to the FY05 budget level.

#### Policy Concerns

1. While all of the Fire Department roles noted above continue to be important, the number of calls to which the Fire Department must respond continues to be heavily weighted toward medical emergency. This follows a similar national trend. The majority of resources (equipment and staff), however, have been focused on suppression rather than fire prevention or medical emergency. Some of the results of this are: no plans review officer (recommended by the Chief but unfunded), limited commercial block inspections, lagging oil burner/alarm inspections, only one ambulance, and no Belmont first responders being trained in advanced life support. The addition of an administrative position represents a small step towards increasing resources devoted to fire prevention. The Warrant Committee has recommended and continues to recommend that the Selectmen request the Fire Chief to propose appropriate objectives for fire prevention and medical care and to recommend how best to provide a mix of resources for a well-balanced program of suppression, prevention and medical response.

2. The Department supports and continues to investigate opportunities to share resources with surrounding communities. This is a key element in increasing fire prevention and medical emergency capabilities in the town during times of severe budget constraints.

## **PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **Belmont School Department**

(Line 200)

The School Department budget of \$33,005,399 is an increase of 6.7 percent over FY05. More than half (52%) of this increase is due to health insurance and special education costs, which increased 13% and 9.8%, respectively, over last year. School Department salary costs increased 4.4% over FY05, as the FY06 budget retains all teaching positions from last year and adds 3.4 FTEs. These positions are termed "Critical Needs" and consist of (a) 1.0 FTE mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act, (b) .9 FTE in pre-school special education necessitated by enrollment increases, and (c) 1.5 FTE behavioral specialists (social workers) strongly urged by the middle and elementary school principals.

The School Department continues to do an exemplary job in managing a large, complex budget in difficult economic times. By far the largest components of the school budget are salary costs (65% of the total budget), special education (18.9%) and health insurance for active and retired employees (14%). School Department personnel involved in labor negotiations have worked hard to achieve conservative wage increases recently. Controlling special education costs is a very different and probably more difficult challenge. The School Department is acutely aware of this problem and works effectively to manage special education costs within the constraints imposed by federal and state law. Special education is now such a large and increasing component of all school budgets that a concerted, regional effort is needed to work with political representatives to understand and control these costs. Finally, increases in health insurance costs for active and retired employees threaten to undermine the entire budget, both on the school and Town side. In contrast with special education, controlling Belmont's health insurance costs, while difficult, may be achievable locally, without the need for legislative change. It is imperative that all involved in Town government work toward this end.

### **Policy Concerns**

1. Possible use of contractors. The School Committee and School Department should explore the possibility of contracting services that are performed by School Department employees with their attendant immediate benefit costs and long-term retirement liabilities. This examination should encompass all functions that are not a direct part of the instructional mission of the schools. The School Department should be asked to justify why craft and trade functions readily available in the marketplace (e.g., electrician and food service), or professional services similarly available, should be performed in-house.

2. Accurately estimating attrition and special education. The School Department consistently underestimates both staff attrition and special education costs. Although the two items usually offset each other, it would be a better practice to estimate the true anticipated cost of special education. There will come a time, perhaps soon, when staff attrition does not exceed the budget estimate while special education costs continue to escalate at a predictable rate.

3. Alumni development position. The School Department is in the fortunate circumstance to benefit from not insubstantial grants and gifts from private sources, principally the Foundation for Belmont Education. Some highly regarded public schools (such as Brookline and Boston Latin) have been able to attract significant contributions from alumni, behaving much like private secondary schools in this regard. Belmont might benefit from having a full-time alumni development and private fundraising position within the Belmont public schools.

4. Technology in schools. Technology spending is an increasingly significant component of the school budget. Investments in technology should lead to improved productivity. Productivity is measured by comparing the amount of goods and services produced

with the inputs that were used in production. As technology spending has increased in Belmont's schools, there does not appear to have been a corresponding increase in labor productivity. Productivity should receive greater emphasis in the choices of technology investments.

**Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School**  
(Line 205)

Minuteman Regional High School ([www.minuteman.org](http://www.minuteman.org)) is a four-year public regional high school serving Belmont and fifteen other member towns. Minuteman provides a combination of rigorous academics and preparation for college and career exploration. Its major objectives are to: provide students with skills for entrepreneurial and management careers; provide pre-college, pre-career training for high school students; provide learners with motivation and preparation for college paths; provide superior access to science and technology career paths; and provide for mentoring advantages of business, industry and college partnerships.

The proposed Minuteman budget for FY06 is \$15,699,155 which represents an increase of 2.31% from the previous year. Belmont's estimated fiscal FY06 assessment from Minuteman is \$586,962. This represents a 5.39% change for FY05 proposed over FY05 actual. Minuteman based the FY06 revenue projections and proposed assessment on the Governor's FY06 budget proposal. As the Massachusetts legislature considers the Governor's proposal, these figures could change. Belmont is assessed for 35.28 students (total Full Time Equivalent or FTE). There are 28 FTE students enrolled in grades 9-12. Included in this number are 16 students receiving special education services. There are also 4.28 afternoon program students with an additional 3.00 Reduced Charge FTE corrected, for a total of 35.28 for FY06. The per pupil cost for Belmont is \$16,637, which includes a basic differential level of \$4,250 for Special Education students.

The following issues are major factors contributing to the FY06 budget increases in operating expenses and proposed district assessments: Minuteman anticipates flat or level funding of Chapter 70 state aid and state regional transportation reimbursement; Minuteman anticipates a 9% increase in state required minimum contributions and a drop in Chapter 74 Nonresident Tuition; and Minuteman anticipates increases in health insurances, benefits, property insurances, utilities and energy costs, student transportation costs, teacher and staff salaries (2%), and an overall increase (2.3%) in operating budget.

**Community Development**  
(Lines 302-306)

The Office of Community Development is responsible for building, engineering, and planning. Glenn Clancy has recently assumed leadership in this department. The budget for FY06 is level service with the recommendation addition of a full-time engineering/inspection position to augment the department's engineering capabilities and cover roadway and sewer/drain inspection work that is presently being done on a contract basis. The cost of this position will be shared on an equal basis with the Sewer Department. The Community Development Department will also be adding a building inspector to help handle forward progress of development on either the McLean or O'Neill properties. It appears that some McLean development is already underway. Increased revenues from

building permits would cover the associated expenses of this inspector. The overall staffing from FY04 to FY06 with these 1.5 new positions will rise from 9 FTE to 10.43 FTE.

The Director of Community Development is actively promoting the design and development of a Graphical Information System (GIS) for Belmont. The Water and Sewer enterprise funds will start the project for their departments in this fiscal year.

**Building Services**  
**(Lines 324)**

The Building Services Department is responsible for managing and maintaining the Town Hall, (old) Municipal Light Department building, Police Station, Senior Center, fire stations, Highway Yard buildings and the Homer Municipal Building which is expected to come on line in June of 2005.

The level service budget is being supported for FY06. While there are a number of uncertainties posed by the management of the new Homer Municipal Building, which has state-of-the-art systems, the proposed budget appears to reasonably estimate the overall expenses of the department. Kevin Looney, the department manager, continues to identify staffing needs for his department. Although a working supervisor is needed, funding is not available in the current fiscal year. There has also been an identified need of a custodian for the Senior Center. This is being budgeted in and supervision provided by the Building Services Department. This changes the overall staffing level between FY04 to FY06 from 4.34 positions to 5.34 positions.

**Public Works Department**  
**(Lines 310-366)**

The town has consolidated its public works functions in the Public Works Department. The benefits of consolidation have been evident in operational efficiencies and improved service to the public, as the Department is better able to marshal the town's resources to meet ongoing needs. Improved service delivery has been particularly evident in snow removal, where in the past a more fragmented organization resulted in underutilization of equipment and personnel. Before consolidation, highway department vehicles could sit unused during a snowstorm because employees from outside the highway department were not available to operate them. Now the consolidated department can more effectively match equipment to personnel by utilizing cemetery and water department employees to carry out what had traditionally been a highway function. By the same token, highway department personnel and equipment can be utilized on cemetery and water department functions.

There is one additional position in the cemetery division recommended for public works in FY06 because the Highland Meadow cemetery is expected to become operational soon. In addition, the person in this position will be able to assist with other public works functions when not engaged in cemetery duties.

The Public Works Department staffing levels by division for FY04, FY05 and FY06 are as follows:

**Public Works Department, FTEs Funded**

	FY04	FY05	FY05 Actual	FY06 Proposed
Administration	2.88	2.88	2.88	2.88
Highway Maintenance	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Sewer Maintenance	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
Stormwater Maintenance	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Municipal Garage	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Forestry	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Delta & Grounds Maintenance	2.49	2.49	2.49	2.49
Solid Waste Collection	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Parks & Facilities	6.04	6.04	6.04	6.04
Cemetery	4.81	4.81	4.81	5.81
Water Administration	2.76	2.76	2.76	2.88
Water Distribution	13.63	10.63	10.60	10.63
Totals:	57.61	54.61	54.58	55.73

**Health Department**

(Lines 520-522)

The Health Department budget includes programs for Health Administration, Animal Control, the Sealer of Weights and Measures and Youth Services. The goals of the Department include preventing disease, engaging in activities to promote health, and enforcing the animal control by-law and Board of Health regulations to ensure the health and safety of Town residents. The goals of the Youth Services Program, which is administratively part of the Health Department, are to plan events and coordinate a calendar of events for the community's youth.

The staffing levels funded for FY04, FY05 and FY06 (proposed) are as follows:

	Full-time equivalents		
	FY04	FY05	FY 06
Health Administration	4.0	4.15	4.15
Animal Control	1	1	1
Weights and Measures*			
Youth Services	.96	.48	.48

\*annual stipend of \$5,000

The budget by program for FY04 (actual), FY05 (budget), and FY06 (proposed) is as follows:

	FY04 (actual)	FY05 (budget)	FY06 (proposed)
Health Administration	\$226,025	\$234,250	\$246,056
Animal Control	53,680	65,100	65,100
Weights and Measures	6,584	5,430	5,430
Youth	<u>26,246</u>	<u>42,306</u>	<u>42,306</u>
	\$312,535	\$347,086	\$359,892

Bringing the Youth Services Program under the aegis of the Health Department has increased the workload of the Department, although program planning is the responsibility of the Youth Commission (appointed by the Selectmen), and program execution is the responsibility of the Youth Coordinator, assisted by Youth Commission members and volunteers. The Sealer of Weights and Measures was also integrated into the Department in FY04.

The State mandates that local health departments perform food service inspections; respond to residents' complaints about possible health and safety violations in rental housing; review plans for changes proposed by food service establishments; investigate nuisance complaints; monitor day camps, swimming pools, tanning salons and sewerage systems; follow up on infectious diseases; provide flu clinics; act as a depository for vaccines; and participate in community emergency preparedness planning. In addition, the Belmont Board of Health's regulations require the Department to participate in biotechnology licensing, monitoring abrasive blasting by parties, dumpster permitting, and non-smoking compliance. Further, the Health Department regards the following as extremely important even if not mandated: disposal of

hazardous products, licensure of day care and after-school programs, social services outreach, blood pressure clinics and a dental program for kindergartens. The workload of the Department increases as more demands are made upon it, and time and personnel must be ready at all times to respond to emergency situations.

### Policy Concerns

1. **Regionalization and Collaboration.** Belmont will need a half-time nurse (currently the nurse's employment is for only 10 hours a week). It would be an opportunity to share a full-time nurse with another community such as Lexington or Winchester. Although the State has established seven regional health districts, they are too large (Belmont's district has 27 communities), and more workable regionalization must be established.

2. **Competitive Compensation.** As is the case in other departments, Belmont must offer pay and salary grades that will attract competent personnel.

3. **Mental Health and Social Services.** The Department suggests that to meet increasing social services and mental health needs, the Town may want to increase staff or hire contract professionals.

4. **Emergency Preparedness and Increased Regulation.** The Health Department has significant obligations with respect to planning for nuclear, chemical, infectious disease, radiological or explosive emergency. New State mandates continually add to Health Department responsibilities in many areas, such as recent increased swimming pool and day camp regulations. The Health Department staff is extraordinarily dedicated, but they are small in number. If regionalization/collaboration do not reduce their workload, it is likely the number of staff will increase or that contract professionals will need to be hired.

### **Council on Aging (Line 540)**

Like the rest of Massachusetts, the population of Belmont is graying. The Council on Aging (COA) reports and a survey of Belmont's seniors conducted by the League of Women Voters confirms, growing interest among seniors in a variety of activities that help them keep learning, stay healthy, and maintain social contacts. According to the COA director, currently approximately 38% of Belmont's seniors use the Senior Center.

The recommended FY06 Budget for the COA is \$477,786, a level from FY05. The budget has changed this year in that the Revolving Fund has increased to \$40,000 (from \$20,000 in FY2005). The programs and recreations services that are self supporting will be handled through the revolving fund. The total number of FTEs for the department (including those funded by outside grants) to 8.58. Increased, dedicated custodial services are recommended to improve health and safety conditions at the Senior Center such that seniors don't fall as a result of spills and unkempt walkways, and the heavy lifting associated with activity set ups and tear downs doesn't fall to seniors and volunteers. At press time an increase of one custodian to the Building Services has been added to address these needs.

As for programming, staff continues to be asked to do more with less. Prior year cuts in program staff hours, plus a transfer of responsibilities from the Recreation Department for the coordination of trips, have led to reduced services in some areas and an over-reliance on volunteers for basic departmental functions. A revolving account for programs was approved by Town Meeting. It allows the COA to collect program fees and pay program expenses without separate Town Meeting approval.

An important issue not addressed in the proposed budget is the anticipated loss of \$7,500 in federal grant funds for drivers that help seniors get to and from medical visits. The COA director has stated that she will have to cut other programs to compensate for this loss of funds, expected in October 2005.

### Policy Concerns

1. **Driver Pay.** In addition to the issue of expiring funds for transportation services, COA has found that the current pay scale for drivers is too low to attract and retain qualified drivers. This leads to high turnover, service disruptions and potential liability issues for the Town.

2. **Expiring Lease.** The current lease for the Senior Center at Our Lady of Mercy expires in May 2006. An interim home will have to be found for the Senior Center to prevent serious disruption of services that many residents depend on. One suggestion has been to move programs temporarily to the trailers behind Belmont High School when the Homer Building and the School Department renovations are complete, but this has yet to be determined. The schematic design for a new Senior Center, to be located on Beech Street adjacent to Town Field, is now complete, but voters must approve a debt exclusion before the new Center can be built. Private fundraising to offset the costs of the building is currently underway.

3. **Demand and Sustainability.** With the baby boomers retiring in the next 10 years and a new Senior Center on the horizon, demand for senior programming can be expected to rise dramatically. Information from the League of Women Voters' survey, the U.S. Census and other sources should be analyzed carefully to determine the types of programs seniors want most and the extent of their ability/willingness to pay for certain types of programs to help offset costs. In addition more can be done to explore the feasibility of shared programming and services with nearby towns.

4. **Planning.** There is a need to analyze and plan for the projected operating costs of the proposed new Senior Center. Factors to be considered include the \$90,000 that the Town will no longer be paying in rent, the increased size of the proposed building, its energy efficiency as designed, and anticipated revenue from rental fees for off-hours use of the Center. Another issue that must be studied is the cost effectiveness and desirability of contracting out the proposed meals program vs. staffing it with Town employees.

### **Veterans' Services** (Line 560)

A State statute requires the town have a Veterans' Agent who is appointed annually by the Board of Selectmen. The position is now a sub-department of the Health Department with a member of the Health Department serving in this position. The responsibilities of the Veterans' Agent include advising veterans, providing financial aid to qualifying veterans with proved need, and directing veterans to the Veterans Administration medical facilities. The Agent is also responsible for coordination with all veterans' organizations to plan and operate all veteran events and programs.

The FY06 budget totaling \$19,250 includes a \$12,000 stipend for personal services. It is level-funded and provides for level service. The Department's FY05 budget includes \$4,400 for financial assistance with a total budget of \$19,250. The actual FY04 expenses were \$14,480.

Policy Concerns

The State statute permits two or more towns to establish a veterans' services district with one director serving all member towns. The Town continues to explore the possibility of forming or joining such a district. As the number of veterans increases from post-WWII conflicts, the demands on the Veterans' Agent are also likely to increase.

**Library**  
(Lines 610-630)

Belmont Public Library's mission is to provide free and equal access to information and ideas, and to serve the diverse interests of the community through a wide range of resources. It has six service programs: Adult/Reference, Young Adult, Children, Circulation, Technical Services and Branch Libraries; all are covered under three cost centers: Administration, Public Services and Technical Services.

Staffing levels by cost center for FY04, FY05 and FY06 (proposed) in full-time equivalents funded are as follows:

	FY04	FY05	FY06 (proposed)
Administration	3.38	3.38	3.38
Public Services	19.08	19.08	19.08
Technical Services	3.8	3.8	3.8

The budgets for FY04 (actual), FY05 (budget) and FY06 (proposed) for each cost center are as follows:

	FY04 (actual)	FY05 (budget)	FY06 (proposed)
Administration	\$ 335,224	\$ 348,382	\$ 358,070
Public Services	918,620	960,926	990,657

Technical Services	<u>209,382</u>	<u>217,238</u>	<u>220,557</u>
TOTAL	<u>\$1,463,226</u>	<u>\$1,526,645</u>	<u>\$1,569,298</u>

Policy Concerns

1. Competitive Compensation. Although Sunday opening hours (staffed by part-time personnel) have been maintained, there is not enough money in the budget to offer the time-and-a-half pay scale often offered by neighboring communities, so it is sometimes difficult to hire people for these hours. The Technology Librarian’s salary grade may be too low to attract a person with the skills needed to support the Library’s more than 60 computers and increasing dependence in technology.

2. Resources. The Library works to maximize resource availability through its membership in the Minuteman Library Network, a consortium of 35 public libraries and 6 academic libraries in Metrowest Boston, by cross-training its own personnel to provide greater staffing flexibility and by training the staff and the public on the online catalog and the Internet. The Library’s computers are now all PC’s, which are important information resources (the number of patrons using the Internet has more than doubled since 2001) but which also require significant maintenance and staff involvement. The Library has begun a DVD collection and a CD talking book collection. The budget for the Library does not include money for an inflation adjustment for the acquisition of books and periodicals or to subscribe to the number of online databases used by its patrons. The Library budget for materials is the minimum required for eligibility for membership in the Minuteman Library Network.

3. Increased Demands on Staff. Each year the Library has more than a quarter of a million visitors, circulation over half a million items and more than 15,000 meeting attendees. These numbers continue to rise, along with the intensity of usage of the computers. Even with level funding, the services provided are increased. This cannot continue. The Library faces demands for increased assistance with school programs and collaboration with the Youth Commission, increased young adult services, Sunday openings September through June and additional hours for the children’s department. The staffing level is 26.6 full-time equivalents compared with 37.3 for Arlington, 39.8 for Watertown and 29.6 for Concord.

4. Capital Needs. Belmont Library patrons use the computers intensively. The addition of laptops with wireless connectivity would supplement public workstations and create a mobile computer lab for training and outreach. A software program is available that would limit the amount of time a patron used the internet and monitor the wait list.

**Recreation Department**  
(Lines 650-660)

The recommended budget for FY06 is a level service budget that allows for the continuation of current programs. The budget projects a 2% increase in revenues from recreational programs but still comes nearly \$100,000 short of covering the total costs of running the department (including administration). The department requested a new sound system for the

rink and a small amount of funding for special events at the parks. These items were not included in the recommended budget due to lack of funds.

The ice-making equipment at the ice skating rink has now failed, leaving next winter's hockey and skating programs in jeopardy. The Town is exploring options for replacement of the equipment and other upgrades that could extend the life of the rink for 10 years or more. Whether or not these investments are approved by Town Meeting and/or the voters, the budgeted costs and revenues associated with programs operated at the rink may change significantly from what is currently reflected in the budget.

### Policy Concerns

1. Revenue vs. Cost: The Warrant Committee brokered an agreement several years ago with the Recreation Commission whereby program revenues were expected to cover all of the costs of running the department. This goal has not been achieved in recent years. There was a decline in both pool memberships and camp enrollments in FY05 which adversely affected the department's bottom line. The Recreation Commission has approved some new strategies to try to raise revenues in FY06, but if these don't work, should the Town continue to operate these programs at a loss?

2. The Commission has decided to increase the cost of day passes to make pool memberships more attractive and to offer discounted memberships in June. In addition, the Commission will lower the age for camp eligibility and try several new offerings in an effort to boost camp enrollment. While these steps are important, a more thorough market analysis is needed to determine what programs residents want and what fees they are willing and able to pay. On balance, fees must be set to cover program costs (perhaps with allowances to be made for lower income residents).

3. Staffing: The department has begun implementing online registration for programs. Once staff has mastered the technology, online registration should free up staff time. In addition, some staff time (perhaps 5 hours/week) appears to have been freed up by the transfer of the coordination of senior trips to COA.

4. Facility Conditions and the Bottom Line: The skating rink has already failed. If it is repaired and upgraded, the possibility for raising revenues associated with its use by engaging professional management should be explored.

5. The Underwood Pool has outlived its economic life and is at serious risk of failure. Its poor condition may have already negatively impacted revenues from its use, and this trend can be expected to continue for as long as it is operable. These facilities are an important part of the fabric of the community, and plans for their replacement can no longer be postponed.

### **Non-Departmental Expenditures** **Debt and Interest** *(Lines 700-710)*

This is the current amount necessary to pay the current principal and interest on the Town's borrowing for FY 2006:

<i>Bonds</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Principal due</i>	<i>Interest due</i>	<i>P &amp; I</i>	<i>Offsetting Rev.</i>	<i>Offsetting Rev. Source</i>
Chenery Middle School	10 of 19	\$ 1,090,000	\$ 555,923	\$ 1,645,923	\$ 1,645,923	Debt Exclusion & SBAB reimbursement
MWRA Bond 4	2 of 10	\$ 65,000	\$ -	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	Water receipts
Title V loan (septic)	5 of 22	\$ 3,170	\$ -	\$ 3,170	\$ 3,170	MWPAT <sup>2</sup>
GO Bonds <sup>1</sup>	5 of 15	\$ 370,000	\$ 90,040	\$ 460,040	\$ 240,700	Municipal Light Dept.
BHS Athletic Field & Track	3 of 10	\$ 220,000	\$ 56,100	\$ 276,100	\$ 276,100	Debt Exclusion
Town Hall Complex	3 of 20	\$ 600,000	\$ 413,610	\$ 1,013,610	\$ 1,013,610	Debt Exclusion
Fire Station	2 of 20	\$ 500,000	\$ 391,750	\$ 891,750	\$ 891,750	Debt Exclusion
Communication Tower	2 of 10	\$ 15,000	\$ 3,938	\$ 18,938		
Temporary Sewer Loan Repayment	annual		\$ 280,000	\$ 280,000	\$ 280,000	Sewer Receipts
Short-term borrowing <sup>3</sup>	annual	\$ -	\$ 355,000	\$ 355,000		
Tax abatement	annual	\$ -	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000		
<b>BUDGETED AMOUNT<sup>3</sup></b>		<b>\$ 2,863,170</b>	<b>\$ 2,151,361</b>	<b>\$ 5,014,531</b>	<b>\$ 4,416,253</b>	

*Notes:*

- <sup>1</sup> General Obligation Bonds: Principal and Interest for several capital projects including the Light Department Building, new ladder truck, Town Hall renovations, Town Hall Annex plans, School Technology, and Cemetery plans. This expense is partially paid for by the Electric Light Department
- <sup>2</sup> Massachusetts Water Pollution Abatement Trust
- <sup>3</sup> Additional debt service for additional Communication Tower, Cemetery, Skating Rink, Land Purchase on Concord Ave, and Financial Software.

Respectfully Submitted,  
M. Patricia Brusch  
Margaret M. Callanan  
Philip Curtis (Clerk)  
Lynne Doblin  
James Fitzgerald  
James C. Heigham  
Dianne Hobbs  
William Hofmann, III  
Ralph Jones (Vice Chair)  
Linda Oates  
Mark Paolillo  
Geoffrey L. Tillotson  
Robie White  
Michael J. Widmer (Chair)

*Ex Officio:* Paul Solomon (Chair, Board of Selectmen)  
Elizabeth Gibson (Chair, School Committee)

**TOWN OF BELMONT  
CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT  
JUNE 2005**

Fiscal 2005 was notable for the approval by Belmont voters of a debt exclusion for the replacement of the Town's three existing fire stations with two new stations – a main station on Trapelo Road and a sub-station on Leonard Street in Belmont Center. In March of this year, a Special Town Meeting approved another \$1.5 million in debt to cover a cost overrun over the original \$13.1 million estimate, and the Board of Selectmen is seeking approval from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue to borrow these under the originally-approved debt exclusion. In connection with the new fire house project, in February 2005 another Special Town Meeting remanded custody of the Waverley Fire Station to the Board of Selectmen for disposition, and approved amendments to the Town's zoning bylaw in anticipation of receiving developer proposals for the purchase and re-use of the Station. Although it is a decision to be made by a future Town Meeting, it is anticipated that sales proceeds from the existing fire stations will be used to offset the cost of the new stations.

Commenting on the fire station cost overrun, which is due primarily to a world-wide double-digit increase in the price of construction materials, the Belmont Citizen-Herald recently editorialized that "In a town with a long history of deferring construction and maintenance of public buildings, the long-term implications are frightening." The Capital Budget Committee agrees strongly with this premise, and finds that despite our long-standing advocacy for sufficient funding for the upkeep of the Town's buildings and infrastructure, escalation in our capital needs continues to challenge the Town's ability to remain even. While we are grateful for the funding which has been made available in prior years, we continue to hope for the financial resources to fund our ongoing capital requirements at an annual rate of \$3 million or more. In the meantime, the annual capital budget appropriation at its current level must be considered non-discretionary, and not as a source of funds to balance the operating budget. And while we acknowledge progress on several fronts, we hope also that political consensus will emerge eventually around a comprehensive phasing and funding plan encompassing all of Belmont's large capital project needs.

The February 2005 Special Town Meeting also approved the creation of a building committee for a new Wellington School and the expenditure of schematic design funds. The schematic design for the new senior center is now complete, and a private fundraising effort is underway in preparation for seeking voter approval for that project sometime in calendar 2005. The space programming and feasibility study for the Highway Department yard should also be completed in calendar 2005, and is awaited with interest.

This past summer, a task force established by the Board of Selectmen to recommend a site for a new library returned with a very interesting plan. The proposal would have reconfigured the L-shaped Town-owned site containing the existing library and Underwood Pool so as to accommodate a new library of up to 50,000 square feet and a new pool, along with approximately 100 shared parking spaces; "daylighted" a portion of the Wellington Brook currently contained in a box culvert running through the site; and improved area storm water drainage and traffic circulation. Despite the Selectmen's approval of the plan, the Library Trustees and Recreation Commission subsequently decided to go separate ways on projects within their respective sites. The Library Trustees have completed a feasibility study, intend to seek a matching state library construction grant for a new library on their current site, and obtained successfully the endorsement of the 2005 Annual Town Meeting for their grant proposal with the understanding that this project is contemplated within a ten to fifteen year time frame.

The 2005 Annual Town Meeting also approved the negotiated acquisition of the Magsam residence at 303 Concord Avenue for \$825,000, to be paid for with a twenty-year borrowing within the Proposition 2 1/2 levy limit. The FY06 debt service will be paid from funds made available by the Capital Budget Committee. We have also agreed to make funds available for the FY06 debt service associated with a new financial management software package to be utilized by town and school departments; the plan is to finalize this proposal and bring it before a Special Town Meeting for approval during the upcoming fiscal year.

Significant capital projects still on the board for future action include the Belmont High School renovation, the Highway Department yard, the police station, the Viglirolo Rink and the White Field House. Major capital needs which are of an ongoing nature and should be funded as such include pavement management, improvements to the sanitary and storm sewer systems, the water main and meter replacement program, and upgrades and replacements to Town and School information technology infrastructure.

During the Spring of 2005, the Capital Budget Committee conducted its annual process of reviewing departmental capital funding requests. Town departments submitted a total of \$5,513,029 in Fiscal 2006 capital requests for our consideration. The Capital Budget Committee recommends that the June 13, 2005 Special Town Meeting appropriate \$3,105,229 pertaining to these requests. (Including the Magsam acquisition discussed above and approved previously at the 2005 Annual Town Meeting, these figures are \$6,338,029 and \$3,930,229, respectively.)

These figures do not include a proposed borrowing within the Proposition 2 1/2 levy limit for remedial improvements to the Viglirolo Rink, or a proposed long-term Sewer Fund borrowing for improvements to the Town’s sewerage infrastructure. The Capital Budget Committee will report orally on the borrowing proposals.

Pursuant to Warrant Articles 5 and 7 of the June 13, 2005 Special Town Meeting, the Capital Budget Committee recommends that Town Meeting appropriate \$1,992,729 in Fiscal 2006 capital expenditures, as follows:

**Sources of Funds**

General Tax (Article 7)	\$1,668,300
Chapter 90 Receipts (Article 5)	324,429
Subtotal	\$1,992,729

Uses of Funds

<b>Public Safety:</b>	
Replace 1988 frontline pumper truck	365,000
Purchase automated fire department shift filling software	35,000
Replace three police cruisers	111,600
Replace 50 police handguns and security holsters	16,000
Upgrade fire alarm signal digitizer	18,800
<b>Education:</b>	
Replace public address systems at BHS, Burbank and Winn Brook	80,000
<b>Finance:</b>	
Consulting for replacement financial management software package	50,000
<b>Community Development:</b>	

Pavement & sidewalk management program	624,429
Public Works:	
Purchase 15,000 lb GVW dump truck	46,200
Replace 1996 street sweeper	117,700
Building Services:	
Re-point Town Hall	390,000
Re-point Police Station	48,000
Continue facility and life safety repair program	90,000
Subtotal, Articles 5 and 7	\$1,992,729

Pursuant to Article 8 of the June 13, 2005 Special Town Meeting Warrant, the Capital Budget Committee recommends that Town Meeting appropriate a further \$1,112,500 in Fiscal 2006 capital expenditures, as follows:

### Source of Funds

Water Receipts	\$851,800
----------------	-----------

### Uses of Funds

Water Department:	
Water main replacement program	\$647,300
Replace 1989 backhoe and purchase hydraulic hammer	96,000
Map and model water distribution in GIS system	65,000
Purchase GIS file server with licenses (split cost with Sewer Department)	18,500
Update water distribution system study	25,000
Subtotal	\$851,800

### Source of Funds

Sewer Receipts	\$260,700
----------------	-----------

### Uses of Funds

Sewer Department:	
Replace 1991 front-end loader	\$87,500
Replace 1986 four-wheel-drive pick-up truck	39,400
Community Development Department:	
Map and model sanitary and storm drainage in GIS system	115,300
Purchase GIS file server with licenses (split cost with Water Department)	18,500

Subtotal \$260,700

Subtotal, Article 8 \$1,112,500

Among the many requested improvements which the Capital Budget Committee considers important and worthy but which could not be funded this coming year are, for instance, upgrading the phone and voicemail systems at the Memorial Library, the Belmont High School and the four elementary schools; purchasing a sixteen-foot-cut lawnmower with trailer for the Public Works Department; replacing the second fuel oil burner at the Winn Brook School; and continuing the five-year program to replace translucent panels in the BHS field house.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph P. Barrell  
M. Patricia Brusch  
Mark F. Clark  
John Conte  
Angelo R. Firenze  
Donna V. Griswold  
Michael J. Speidel

## MEMORANDUM

To: Town Meeting Members  
From: Jeffrey A. Wheeler, Planning Coordinator  
Date: May 31, 2005

Re: Article 13 of June 13, 2005 Special Town Meeting Warrant

Attached are two (2) versions of the Schedule of Dimensional Requirements – Area Requirements, s. 4.2.1 of the Belmont Zoning By-laws, which show proposed changes affecting the General Residence Zoning Districts. The annotated version shows what the current Schedule provides (strikethrough text) and the proposed changes to it (bold text). Please note that there is currently no FAR for the GR Districts, hence the “--“ indicated on the Schedule. The amended version of the Schedule shows how it will read if Article 13 is adopted by Town Meeting.

### Reasons for the proposed zoning amendments –

1. Amending Footnote 2 –

Multi-family dwellings are not allowed in the GR District anymore. In 1988, Town Meeting amended the Zoning By-Laws to prohibit garden apartments (multi-family dwellings). Therefore, this provision referring to multi-family dwellings in GR is not necessary anymore.

2. Inserting Footnote 3 and amending lot coverage and FAR -

The citizen petitioners believe that the character of their neighborhoods is changing and they do not want this to occur. They do not want the GR districts to be just two-family structures, but want to preserve single-families as well. While these amendments do not preserve single-family structures, they do restrict the size of buildings and additions.

**Proposed Zoning Amendments for General Residence Zoning Districts**  
(May 4, 2005)

**4.2 Schedule of Dimensional Regulations (annotated version)**

4.2.1 Area Requirements (for General Residence Zoning Districts)

	<b>MINIMUM LOT AREA</b>	<b>MINIMUM LOT FRONTAGE</b>	<b>MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA RATIO</b>	<b>MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE</b>	<b>MINIMUM OPEN SPACE</b>
<b>DISTRICTS</b>	<b>SQ. FT.</b>	<b>FEET</b>		<b>% OF LOT</b>	<b>% OF LOT</b>
GR	7,000 <sup>23</sup>	70	-- .5	<del>30%</del> 20%	40%
AH	85,000 <sup>2</sup>	100	--	30%	40%
LBI	--	20	1.25 <sup>1</sup>	--	--

- 1) In an LBI District, a floor area ratio up to a maximum of 1.5 may be allowed by Special Permit from the Board of Appeals (see §4.4).
- 2) ~~But not less than 1,000 square feet per dwelling unit for multi-family dwellings in a GR District, 1,200 square feet per dwelling unit in an AH District.~~
- 3) **But not less than 3,500 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit for two-family dwellings.**

**4.2 Schedule of Dimensional Regulations (amended version)**

4.2.1 Area Requirements (for General Residence Zoning Districts)

	<b>MINIMUM LOT AREA</b>	<b>MINIMUM LOT FRONTAGE</b>	<b>MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA RATIO</b>	<b>MAXIMUM LOT COVERAGE</b>	<b>MINIMUM OPEN SPACE</b>
<b>DISTRICTS</b>	<b>SQ. FT.</b>	<b>FEET</b>		<b>% OF LOT</b>	<b>% OF LOT</b>
GR	7,000 <sup>3</sup>	70	.5	20%	40%
AH	85,000 <sup>2</sup>	100	--	30%	40%
LBI	--	20	1.25 <sup>1</sup>	--	--

- 1) In an LBI District, a floor area ratio up to a maximum of 1.5 may be allowed by Special Permit from the Board of Appeals (see §4.4).

- 2) But not less than 1,200 square feet per dwelling unit in an AH District.
- 3) But not less than 3,500 square feet of lot area per dwelling unit for two-family dwellings.