

**Minutes  
Town of Belmont  
Financial Task Force II  
Virtual Meeting on Zoom  
Friday, May 14, 2021  
8:00am**

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: October 4, 2021  
TIME: 6:01 PM

Financial Task Force II (FTFII) Members Present: Chair Tom Caputo, Rebecca Vose, Anthony DiCologero, Patrice Garvin, John Phelan, Geoff Lubien, Floyd Carman, Mark Paolillo

Financial Task Force II (FTFII) Members Absent: Catherine Bowen, Dan Dargan

Others present: Donna Tuccinardi, Jon Marshall, Bill Anderson

Meeting was called for order at 8:02am.

### **1. Review Budget Assumptions**

#### **FY22 Budget**

The School Committee voted on 5/11/21 to approve the FY22 budget. This approved budget was \$2.07 million less than the contingent budget. Reduction slips have gone out to all personnel as of 5/14/21. Following the School Committee's vote, a balanced budget for the schools will be going to Town Meeting

The Town will be presenting a few small shifts to the FY22 Budget to the Select Board. Recurring money was found to fund a Systems Manager position.

The Massachusetts Senate released their FY22 budget. This budget does not increase state aid or restricted general aid to Belmont.

#### **Guidance from Treasury Department**

The town received two documents on Monday 5/10/21 from the Treasury Department regarding American Rescue Plan funding. This included a snapshot and summary of the ARA and a 151-page interim final rule which provides further details for the ARA. In summary, Belmont will be receiving its federal aid through the state. The town will be eligible for \$7.6 million in COVID local stability funding and the schools will be eligible for \$1 million in elementary and secondary school relief funds (ESSER III).

The same definitions from previous COVID federal aid are being used. The town can use funds for public health expenditures, negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency, to replace lost public sector revenue, provide premium pay for essential workers, and/or invest in water, sewer and broadband infrastructure. These funds will be paid in two tranches. The first portion will be distributed in June 2021 and the second payment will be distributed 12 months later. These funds can cover expenditures from 3/3/2021 to 12/31/2024

meaning the town can tap into these funds over a total of four fiscal years. The ARA has a broad interpretation of public sector revenue loss. Belmont will be able to take advantage of this funding and address revenue loss, possibly using the funds to take pressure off free cash usage or to fund a social worker in the School Department. As a reminder these are one time funds and must be used mindfully when considering recurring costs.

Mr. Jon Marshall provided an update regarding the CARES ACT funding. Belmont had originally requested \$375,000 in reimbursements from FEMA and were given \$250,000 of these costs. There is \$300,000 in round numbers that the town will be seeking but still need to do reconciliation of what we have on the books. The town needs to have estimates and known expenses submitted to FEMA and the state by June 30th for the reconciliation period. Everything associated with that needs to be spent and in hand by December 31, 2021. If the CARES Act funds are not used then it will be turned back.

Task Force members provided the following questions and comments:

- Superintendent Phelan asked what FTF2 is looking for the Schools to provide to determine the use of federal aid?
  - The Select Board is looking for an understanding on how to move forward in calculating the amount of revenue lost and for the Schools to provide guidance regarding where aid can be spent. What are the needs of the schools? Everyone needs to be united on the use of federal aid.
- Mr. Carman stated that the town needs to make sure that the residents know what's going on with the town's financial state. Maybe a monthly update at Select Board meetings would achieve this.
- At this time, we do not know the exact amount of aid the town will get so the funds cannot be appropriated yet. Bringing these funds to the Spring 2021 Town Meeting for appropriation would be challenging. There is a town meeting scheduled for the fall where the town can appropriate upcoming federal aid, if necessary.
- The town does not know what their certified free cash amount and school enrollment which, when known, will bring clarity to how the town's finances will look in the outyears.
- The Schools are mindful of how recurring costs related to personnel affect the town.
- Can the town use some of these new federal aids for the Chenery Roof repairs?

**Public Comment:**

- Mr. Bill Anderson supported the idea for the hiring of a social worker for the schools using COVID related aid. There is an opportunity to look at taking on capital projects using federal aid. Mr. Anderson suggested that the town compile a list of capital projects and use funds to take on maintenance that has been deferred.
  - Every year the Capital Budget Committee receives more requests for work than what there are resources for. The town has a 5 year plan for capital projects.
  - The town has become more of a reactive community in regards to capital improvement needs.
  - Maybe the town should consider contracting out more services for capital projects.

The FTF2 will now work on the lost revenue calculation. Ms. Garvin will work with Mr. Marshall to interpret the federal aid guidelines. There is likely a fair bit of flexibility with how the federal aid can be used. Is there a framework for how to think about the use of federal aid? The Town Administrator's office will work on these and try to get a figure together by Friday, May 21st.

Unemployment costs for FY21 from the schools will be sent to the Town Administrator.

## **2. Review of Financial Task Force draft recommendations (not discussed)**

## **3. Review of Financial Model (not discussed)**

## **4. Approval of Minutes**

### **a. November 6, 2020**

Several minor edits were recommended regarding language. Add to" the town has \$14.5 million in free cash, stabilization funds and available reserves."

### **b. November 23, 2020 (no comments)**

No comments

### **c. December 4, 2020**

Several minor edits were recommended regarding language.

### **d. December 9, 2020**

Several minor edits were recommended regarding language.

### **e. December 21, 2020 (no comments)**

### **f. February 8, 2021 (no comments)**

The meeting minutes had been previously discussed. A newly revised version was distributed to the Task Force for review.

### **G. April 28, 2021 (no comments)**

On a motion by Ms. Vose and seconded by Mr. Phelan, the Task Force voted to approve the discussed meeting minutes from 11/6/20 as amended, 11/23/20, 12/4/20 as amended, 12/9/20 as amended, 12/21/20, 2/8/21 as amended, and 4/28/21. (Motion passed unanimously, roll-call vote: Garvin, Vose, Phelan, Carman, Lubien, Paolillo, DiCologero, Caputo, voted yes).

## **5. Other Items Unanticipated by the Chair (none)**

On a motion by Mr. Phelan and seconded by Mr. Lubien, the Task Force voted to adjourn the meeting. *The meeting adjourned at 9:29am.*

