

Meeting Minutes: Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC)

2017 SEP 20 AM 9:21

For: Town of Belmont

Date: May 16, 2017 @ 19:30

Location: Belmont Town Hall, Conference Room 4

Video archive: <https://youtu.be/T2almyQCfx8>

DRAFT MINUTES

[Minutes are sent to the Town Clerk, [belmont-ma.gov!townclerk](mailto:belmont-ma.gov!townclerk) when approved]

Key:

VM = Voting ITAC Member

NVM = Non-Voting Member

FBL = Friend of Belmont Library

TS = Town Staff

Voting Members Present:

- Paul Roberts <[gmail.com!paulroberts](mailto:gmail.com!paulroberts)> (chair) (VM)
- Jim Berets <[verizon.net!jberets](mailto:verizon.net!jberets)> (VM)
- Charles Smart <[verizon.net!cnsmart](mailto:verizon.net!cnsmart)> (founding chair) (VM)
- Dan Ellard <[gmail.com!ellard](mailto:gmail.com!ellard)> (VM)
- Glenn Wong <[gmail.com!glennpwong](mailto:gmail.com!glennpwong)> (VM)

Town Staff and Non-Voting Members Present:

- Robin Tillberg (IT Manager, Belmont Municipal Light Department)  
<[belmontlight.com!rtillberg](mailto:belmontlight.com!rtillberg)> (TS)

The Meeting is called to order...

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 PM. Discussion of the minutes from March ITAC meeting minutes. There was a minor edit suggested by member Glenn Wong. Minutes were unanimously adopted as amended.

Comments from the public...

There were no comments from the public. Paul relayed a comment/request from a community member that the Town website needed a revamp. There was a brief discussion of this as a possible area for ITAC to explore as a committee or through one of the existing subcommittees.

Question on Town Manager search...

Charles Smart raised a question about the status of the Town Manager search and whether any progress had been made on that. The sentiment was that there wasn't a decision on hiring a new Town Manager that was imminent.

Report from BMLD...

Robin Tillberg reported to the Committee on the status of technology issues at Belmont Municipal Light Dept. (BMLD). He said the current focus of BMLD is on bringing systems online to support the new Blair Pond substation. These include access control system, video camera system, HVAC and SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) system to monitor and control the substation.

Paul inquired about where BMLD was in the process. Robin said most of the back end (database) work was complete and that IT staff were working on testing the displays for the SCADA System user interface.

Paul inquired about what kind of IT assets were located at the substation. Robin said that there were fiber optic cables from the light department HQ on Prince Street, a couple of switches, a workstation to control the security access as well as a DVR to store captured surveillance video, controller for the HVAC system and SCADA server and workstation.

Glenn inquired about when the substation would "go live." Robin informed the committee that the substation was energized and that the load for the Town would be switched to the substation in the next couple of months. The old substations would be eliminated over the next decade.

Town Web Site discussion...

There was discussion of the Town's web site. Jim Berets inquired whether the Town has someone whose job is to maintain the town web site. Robert Reardon previously occupied that position but has moved on.

Charles Smart inquired as to whether there were plans to update the web site and who might be the right person to ask about that. There was consensus that Dave Petto and or the acting Town Manager would be the best contacts on plans for the web site.

There was a discussion of some of the shortfalls of the site, namely:

- it is text heavy
- information is often posted in PDF format, making it difficult to access and view easily
- information is sometimes out of date, depending on the committee
- the process of updating the website is often manual and cumbersome, requiring many individuals to make simple changes

Charles mentioned that you want the site to be manageable but not too decentralized.

Subcommittees and OML...

Dan Ellard inquired about MA Open Meeting Law and subcommittees. Glenn indicated that the *Technology, Cyber Security and Public Health Subcommittee* would meet on May 22<sup>nd</sup> for its first meeting to review the scope of the subcommittee and what it wanted to tackle. Glenn will

report out to the group on the substance of the first subcommittee meeting at the next full committee meeting.

Charles Smart asked for clarification as to whether subcommittees needed to be governed by MA OML. Paul explained guidance from Belmont Town Attorney George Hall that all subcommittees or other similar bodies (study groups, etc.) need to meet in accordance of MA OML.

21<sup>st</sup> Century Committee report out...

Paul updated the committee about the first meeting of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Committee subcommittee. Some of the topics under consideration are:

- + how to streamline committee meeting processes
- + how to increase public awareness of/engagement in committee business
- + leveraging technology to break down barriers between committees and the public

Glenn suggested talking to larger committees about their pain points. Paul agreed that surveying other town committees about their experiences, areas for improvement. Paul also talked about the need for ITAC to make a clear report out to the community (including other committees).

Dan Ellard raised the question of automated notification of residents “with standing” in an issue, as is done with abutters. The idea would be for “digital abutters” or something like that. Could be residents, business owners, etc. Paul talked about social media sites like NextDoor and Facebook and the need to post information to those sites. Paul discussed new variations on kiosks that are electronic and centrally managed.

Charles wondered whether other communities/cities had done to enable features like “digital abutters.” Paul said the committee would look at what other towns are doing.

Jim noted that digital identities (unlike mailing addresses) are less permanent and more variable. Charles noted that the Town already collects emails for many residents for different purposes.

Jim noted that he was interested in joining the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Committee subcommittee. The process for adding him to the subcommittee was discussed and it was decided that Jim could simply join the subcommittee without any specific parliamentary action by the Committee. Paul said he would add Jim to the email distribution list for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Committee subcommittee.

Remote participation and OML...

Paul updated the Committee on the latest guidance from Town Counsel on Committee members attending committee meetings virtually. George Hall indicated that Committee

members should only silently observe such meetings rather than asking questions, even though members of the public are allowed to ask questions.

There were questions and discussions of this guidance as well as the procedure by which remote participation would be allowed. (Per approval of Board of Selectmen.)

Jim Berets inquired what guidelines exist for how and when remote participation is allowed. If approved would it be only for hardship, business travel, etc. or would it be open ended? Paul said he did not know but would inquire.

There was a discussion of other ways to improve interactivity in committees. Committee/Meeting rooms might be better outfitted with audio and video equipment to facilitate this. There were discussions of costs and other barriers.

Other business...

Dan Ellard inquired whether there were any issues passed down from Town, School or Belmont PD. Paul indicated that there had been no communications from them. Dave said that department participation in ITAC had improved in the last two years and that it was important to continue that. Paul agreed and said there would be a strong effort to get all departments to attend the Q4 Full Committee meeting.

Paul indicated there were questions about input on the hiring of the next Town Manager especially around issues related to the use of technology, data analysis, cloud technologies, etc. The Committee had anticipated inquiring of David Petto about that issue, however he was not present.

There was a discussion among members of what types of questions might be worth asking. While the Town Manager is not expected to be an information technology pro, they should think in terms of leveraging technology to solve problems. Candidates who were not hostile to technology but tech savvy would be preferred, especially given the increasing role that technology plays in town operations. It was decided that we would encourage Dave to attend our June 28 meeting so that this issue could be discussed.

Glenn suggested next steps: have a conversation with Dave Petto and gauge his interest in having a conversation and/or attending the next ITAC meeting. Paul and Phil could meet with Dave as a sidebar. Alternatively, Dave could meet with voting members and brief them on the Town Manager hiring process. Charles said that would be preferable.

Scheduling next meeting

Members voted to hold the next ITAC meeting for Voting Members on June 28<sup>th</sup>.  
The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.