

**Town of Belmont
Capital Budget Committee
Belmont Beech Street Center, Conference Room, Second Floor
Thursday Evening, November 12, 2009, 7:30 p.m.**

Mrs. Brusch called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Members of the Committee present were: M. Patricia Brusch, Mark F. Clark, John Conte, Ralph Jones, Anne Marie Mahoney and Rebecca Vose. Also present were Thomas Younger, Town Administrator; and Tim Richardson, Manager of the Belmont Municipal Light Department.

The Committee had the following material before it:

1. Agenda prepared by Mark Clark, Secretary, to which were attached drafts of minutes of meetings 2/5/09, 4/2/09, 4/30/09, 5/14/09 and 6/1/09.

At the commencement of the Municipal Light Department presentation, Mr. Richardson distributed copies of the power point slides which he used to illustrate his presentation.

Organization of Committee
(Item 7 on Committee Agenda)

Mrs. Brusch noted that the first order of business would be the organization of the Committee for the coming budget season. She called for nominations for chairman. After some discussion, Mrs. Brusch's name was the only name put into nomination. Upon motion duly made and carried, she was unanimously elected. The Committee then turned its attention to the election of a Secretary. After discussion, Mr. Clark's name was the only name put into nomination. Upon motion duly made and seconded, he was unanimously elected.

Municipal Light Department
(Item 8 on Committee's Agenda)

Mrs. Brusch explained that the principal purpose of the meeting was to evaluate the proposed motion under Article 11 on the Warrant for the forthcoming Special Town Meeting (November 16, 2009). The Municipal Light Department is requesting a capital expenditure to build a new power substation. Although the bonds that finance the new substation would be serviced by electric rates (rather than general property tax), the bonds themselves would be general obligations of the Town and thus must be authorized by Town Meeting.

Mrs. Brusch introduced Mr. Richardson, the Manager of the Municipal Light Department. Mr. Richardson distributed copies of the power point slides that he intended to use to illustrate his remarks and proceeded to explain the reasons for the Department's request. During and following Mr. Richardson's presentation, the members of the Committee asked Mr. Richardson many questions and engaged with him in extensive dialog. A motion was duly made and seconded to recommend to the Town Meeting

favorable action on the Department's request. During discussion of the motion, Mr. Clark explained that he was convinced that the project was appropriate and that from the Municipal Light Department's point of view the proposed site on Flanders Road would be appropriate. He noted, however, that he was not convinced that town-wide considerations would lead to the same conclusion regarding the proposed location. He indicated, nevertheless, that he would vote in favor of the pending motion. In fact, all those present did so. Mrs. Brusch noted that the vote was indeed unanimous because Ms. Fallon, who could not be present, had indicated to Mrs. Brusch that she favored the request.

Welcome to New Members
(Item 2 on Committee Agenda)

Mrs. Brusch noted that, thanks to informal introductions before the meeting had been called to order, people were already familiar with new members Ralph Jones and Rebecca Vose. Mrs. Brusch formally welcomed them. Ms. Vose is representing the School Committee and Mr. Jones is representing the Selectmen.

Update on New Template
(Item 4 on Committee Agenda)

Mrs. Brusch explained that the Committee was using a template for capital requests that had been developed several years ago by Michael Spiedel and Mark Clark for large capital projects involving real estate. Although several departments follow the template, it is not really suited to simpler capital purchase requests that do not involve real estate. Mrs. Brusch has undertaken a project to produce a modified template that is better suited to the sorts of capital requests that come to the Committee frequently. She did not have her current draft with her at the meeting but indicated that she would circulate her draft to the members of the Committee.

General Announcements and Discussion
(Item 3 on Committee Agenda)

Mrs. Brusch, with comments by Mr. Younger, explained the budget process that the Town is expecting to follow in preparation for the Fiscal Year 2011 budget. A proposed budget, including the proposed capital budget, will be integrated by Mr. Younger. The School Department budget, however, will not become available until February 8 according to the schedule being pursued by the new superintendent. As a result, the proposed budget will not become available from Mr. Younger until the second week of February and the Town Meeting will not consider the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2011 at the April session of the Annual Town Meeting. Instead, the budget will be considered at a later date probably following the results of an override to be put to the Town voters. Mrs. Brusch reminded the Committee that the Committee had previously indicated that it wanted money for capital items to be included in such an override proposal.

The Committee discussed what would be an appropriate schedule for itself based on this budget schedule expectation for the Town. During the discussion, Mrs. Brusch outlined for new members of the Committee the procedure whereby members of the Committee review the capital requests from each department and submit written questions to Mrs. Brusch which she, in turn, integrates and passes on to department heads. This procedure streamlines the Committee's work and is appreciated by department heads. Mrs. Brusch also explained that this Committee meets on Thursday evenings because other Town committees which are represented on this Committee meet on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesday.

After discussion, the following schedule emerged. The proposed budget will be distributed on February 10. The members of this Committee will then prepare and submit to Mrs. Brusch their questions. This Committee will meet on March 4, 11, 25, April 15 and April 29. Decisions regarding this Committee's recommendations will be made at the April 29 meeting. It is too early to schedule meetings after April 29 and it is too early to know when this Committee's written report due to Town Meeting must be submitted.

Follow-Up on State Ethics Law
(Item 5 on Committee Agenda)

The Committee discussed the need for its individual members to take a test under the state ethics law. The signed sheet required by the law is to be sent to Ms. Barbara Hagg, Town Accountant and Liaison to this Committee. The certificate of having taking the required test is to be sent to the Town Clerk.

Action on Minutes of Previous Meetings
(Item 6 on Committee Agenda)
Meetings of 2/5/09, 4/2/09, 4/30/09, 5/14/09 and 6/1/09

Mrs. Brusch called for action on pending minutes. Mr. Clark pointed out that copies of drafts of minutes of previous meetings were attached to the agenda he had distributed earlier. He also pointed out that he had questions regarding the draft of the minutes for February 5, 2009 and that the draft of minutes for June 1, 2009 contained a run-on sentence. With respect to the latter, Mr. Clark proposed that a colon be inserted following the first part of the run-on sentence and that the subject and verb be stricken from the second part of the run-on sentence. During the discussion, a general consensus emerged that the so-called Penney land is approximately the softball field and that Mr. Clark's proposed change in the draft of the June 1, 2009 minutes is satisfactory. Mrs. Brusch pointed out that it is no longer necessary to determine exactly which capital reversions were discussed on February 5 because subsequent to that all appropriate capital reversions had been reviewed and authorized. Mr. Clark indicated that he would make the changes indicated during the discussion. Upon motion duly made and seconded, all pending minutes were approved with the changes that had been discussed. The vote was unanimous among those who had been members of the Committee during the previous year. (The new members, Ms. Vose and Mr. Jones, abstained.)

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at about 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Clark