

**Belmont Warrant Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**FINAL**  
**February 13, 2013, 7:30 p.m.**  
**Chenery Community Room**

Present: Chair Lynch; Members Allison, Baghdady, Brusch, Dash, Epstein, Gammill, Grob, Helgen, Manjikian, McLaughlin, Millane, Sarno; BOS Chair Paolillo; School Committee Representative Slap

Members Absent: Libenson

Chair Lynch called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

***Presentation of Town Budget***

Mr. Kale reviewed the budget process, which began back in December with department head meetings. He indicated that department budgets were reviewed in January with the budget team, noting that the Board of Selectmen has also met with the School Committee and Belmont's state representatives.

Mr. Kale then reviewed the budget assumptions incorporated in the FY14 budget.

- State Charges - 1% instead of estimated 2.5% increase
- Minuteman Assessment - \$858K instead of estimated \$987,000 estimate
- Retirement Assessment - 6.7%
- Capital Budget Adjustment – Minus \$200K one time allocation to operating budget
- Chapter 70 and UGGA - level funded instead of 2% increase

Mr. Kale reported that the total budget for FY14 is \$91,531,020, which represents a 2.1% increase over the FY13 adjusted budget. He indicated that the budget submission did not include \$ 684,350 for Belmont in state aid contained in the Governor's FY14 state budget.

He indicated that property taxes make up 81% of total revenue. Mr. Kale reviewed other revenue sources; including in part state aid, building permits, meals taxes, ambulance receipts, and cash reserves. Mr. Kale noted that salary and benefits make up 69% of total expenditures. Other expenditures include Non-Salary, Capital Budget, Capital Fund – Road and Debt Service.

Mr. Kale identified several initiatives to generate additional revenue: the new ALS system, the wiring inspector services partnership with Watertown, the Recreation Department's discontinued position and restructuring within the Community Development Department.

If additional funding were to be available, Mr. Kale identified programs for consideration. He indicated the programs were not in any particular order of priority.

- Additional Capital Budget funding
- Facilities Maintenance
- School Positions
- Police Department - School Resource Officer
- Health Department – FT hours for Youth and Family Services
- Council on Aging – Summer Hours for Social Worker
- Fire Department – Two Fire Fighter positions
- Public Works – Two additional positions

Mr. Kale finished by presenting the budget challenges going forward.

### ***Presentation of School Budget***

Dr. Kingston noted that weekly meetings with the Town Administrator’s Office have been helpful and valuable. He acknowledged the work of the SC Finance Subcommittee as well as the Warrant Committee’s Education Subcommittee. He said that FY14 relies too heavily on one-time money, which is of concern looking ahead to FY15 and beyond.

He briefly reviewed the strategic goals that inform budget priorities. Dr. Kingston defined three budgets: a ‘true level service budget’, a “roll-ahead budget” and an “available revenue budget.”

Dr. Kingston then reviewed the budget assumptions contained in the FY 14 available revenue school budget.

- Level Funding of Chapter 70
- Grant Funds – Remain Same as FY13
- Retirement Assessment - 6.7%
- Athletic Fee Based Funds – Remain at 60%
- Discretionary Fees – Remain Constant

Dr. Kingston noted that salaries are the biggest cost driver. He said the “step and lane” system needs to be addressed, as it is clearly not sustainable. He indicated that one-time LABBB credit and one-time Revolving Fund chargebacks would be used as additional revenue sources.

Dr. Kingston outlined the adjustments to expenditures needed to meet the available revenue budget, which include service cuts, holding material and supply expenditures to FY13 level and the elimination of 7.75 FTEs. He also identified services that are not included in the available revenue budget, such as a School Resource Officer, reduction of class size, additional support staff, new elementary math series, additional funding for extracurricular programming, a reduction in fees or funding for materials to meet increased enrollment.

Dr. Kingston indicated that the School Department and Committee will continue meeting with the Warrant Committee Education Subcommittee as well as the Town Administrator's Office. Public hearings on the budget will be held and a final FY14 School budget will be delivered at a later date.

Chair Lynch thanked the presenters. There was no discussion.

Chair Lynch encouraged subcommittees to meet and begin reviewing the budgets.

### ***Minuteman Update***

Member McLaughlin noted that he met with Minuteman representatives and reiterated Belmont's position. He said the Minuteman Superintendent has a \$50K grant to study the future of Minuteman going forward. A subcommittee has been formed and Member McLaughlin is a member. The process for member towns to leave the district is among the topics that will be studied.

BOS Chair Paolillo said that the "working group" from Belmont is also meeting to discuss the size and scope of the new facility. He added that no progress has been made thus far. He added that there is no incentive for non-member towns to join the district.

### ***Approval of Meeting Minutes***

The minutes of January 30, 2013 were deferred until the next meeting.

### ***Updates: Board of Selectman, School Committee, Planning Board***

**Board of Selectmen:** Chair Paolillo noted that the Board is meeting with department heads starting next week. He said the Board continues to meet with the school department as well. He said the Board would like to host Precinct Meetings in late March.

**School Committee:** SC Rep Slap noted that the School Committee has been focused on developing the budget.

**Planning Board:** Member Baghdady noted that the Planning Board has been working on the Cushing Village project and preparing various articles for TM.

### ***Public Contributions***

There were none.

Member Allison suggested that the WC consult with Treasurer Carman regarding the fiscal impact of an override on residents. She said the use of one-time money in the

FY14 budget should be analyzed, e.g., free cash, health reserves. She said that the state aid issue should be discussed in more detail, as opposed to waiting for the state number to be definitive.

BOS Chair Paolillo said that the health reserve fund issue will be examined in detail. He said he agrees that the debt service demand going forward will need to be further evaluated. He said the issue of implementing additional structural reform measures will also be considered.

### ***Adjournment***

Member McLaughlin moved to adjourn at 9:04 pm.

Submitted by Lisa Gibalerio  
WC Recording Secretary