

BELMONT WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

APPROVED (AT THE OCTOBER 7, 2015 MEETING) 2015 OCT -8 AM 8:56

JUNE 10, 2015, 7:30 P.M.

CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM

Present: Chair Libenson; Members Dash, Epstein, Fallon, Gammill, Helgen, McLaughlin, Sarno, Starzec; BOS Chair Baghdady; School Committee Rep. Slap

Town Administrator Kale

Members Absent: DeStefano, Grob, Manjikian, Mennis and Schreiber

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Chair Libenson.

Chair Libenson began by informing the WC that this will be the last meeting of the fiscal year; the WC will resume meeting in September. He reviewed the nominating committee role and process.

He then reviewed the evening's agenda and turned to the first item on the agenda.

Debrief: Fiscal Year and WC Role, including survey

Member Epstein offered that, meeting fewer times, as the WC did this year, was for the better. He then spoke to the production of the WC report. The biggest contribution of the report is the narratives. The data is basically drawn from the budget book. It would streamline the process if the budget book presented data tables in the format used in the WC report. The data would then be controlled by the Town Administrator and the WC could "cut and paste" the relevant tables into the report.

Mr. Kale described the streamlining process that has occurred. Member Dash noted that there is information in the report that is not in the budget book, e.g., department head insights, wish lists, etc. BOS Chair Baghdady agreed with the notion of streamlining the report, as the WC is comprised of a volunteer group. Member Fallon offered that the TM presentations were very well done. She then spoke to the importance of the department head conversations and incorporating this information into the report.

Chair Libenson informed the WC that the information meetings for TM members will be reinstated. This "training session" of sorts will provide TM members with basic information concerning how TM works as well as basic budget concepts, e.g., levy limit, state aid terms, etc.

Member McLaughlin offered that it might be helpful to provide a timeline for the agenda items. Some agenda items take 90 minutes, others take five minutes.

The WC then discussed how much time should be spent exploring subcommittee issues,

and whether Department Heads should make WC presentations or not. The WC seemed to agree that, on meaningful topics, more information (from Department Heads) might be helpful. BOS Chair Baghdady added that it does involve a lot of preparation for Department heads to speak at a WC meeting. He reminded the WC that they each meet with the Selectmen, in a televised meeting, during budget season.

Member Epstein said it would be useful if the WC had more contact with the Capital Budget Committee (CBC), which oversees a large budget. Member Fallon explained the process that the CBC undertakes each year. She said that the CBC would probably welcome the WC's feedback.

Discussion: Summer Work

Chair Libenson stated that, concerning summer work, Member Mennis will work in the OPEB/Pension areas. He raised the topic of the financial report ("dashboard project") used in Lexington, as surfaced by Member Helgen. Member Epstein said that the document is impressively detailed and required a lot of work to produce. But he questioned what specific administrative goals were served. He suggested identifying five or ten specific trends that would be useful to monitor. Member Dash agreed that data collection in itself might not serve a meaningful purpose. Member Fallon said it might be valuable and that the project could be appropriately scaled for what is useful for Belmont.

Chair Libenson said he appreciates data, but data is only useful if it informs the decision-making process. Member Helgen said that the "trend lines" seem helpful as well as the comparisons to comparable towns. Member Sarno asked how this work would relate to the work of the Financial Task Force?

Chair Libenson mentioned the usefulness of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in certain business settings. He said the dashboard project could be revisited in the fall.

BOS Chair Baghdady offered that there are many priorities facing the town. He said he is not sure, given the existing work of the FTF, that this report will rise as a top priority. However, it might be useful for the WC to explore in more detail those items which will have a large impact on Belmont, e.g., Uplands, Cushing Village, Pension, OPEB.

Member Gammill asked about the OPEB report. BOS Chair Baghdady said that there will be a working group formulated on OPEB. A WC representative would be useful.

The WC briefly discussed its role in the OPEB working group.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 5/13/15 were unanimously approved.

The minutes of 5/20/15 were approved with two abstentions.

The minutes of 5/27/15 were approved with two abstentions.

Updates: Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Planning Board, and Minuteman

Board of Selectmen: BOS Chair Baghdady reported that the BOS signed a contract to renew the 10-year cable license with Comcast. He thanked key members of the negotiating group and provided the highlights of the new agreement. He then provided brief updates on Cushing Village and the Uplands. He said the Cushing Village work could begin this summer. He also provided a brief update on the sale of Woodfall Road.

Member Dash said the new pool should open on Monday, August 10 with an opening party the following weekend. He explained some of the details of the new pool.

School Committee: SC Rep Slap reported that the SC approved some adjustments in fees for after-school programs and other programs (BATS). Breakfast and lunch fees will be raised by 25 cents. The Kindergarten fee has been raised, but it is still not known what will happen at the state level with regard to the grant.

Minuteman: Member McLaughlin reported that Minuteman will meet to discuss the district-wide vote for approving the bonding and borrowing capacity (for the proposed new facility).

Adjournment

Member McLaughlin moved to adjourn at 8:28 p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Gibalerio
WC Recording Secretary