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**BELMONT WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
APPROVED (ON NOVEMBER 18, 2015)  
OCTOBER 14, 2015, 7:30 P.M.  
CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM**

Present: Chair Libenson; Members Alcock, Dash, Gammill, Helgen, Lisanke, McVay, McLaughlin, Mennis, Sarno, Schreiber, Starzec; BOS Chair Baghdady; School Committee Rep. Slap

Town Administrator Kale (arrived at 8:13 p.m.)

Members Absent: Epstein and Fallon

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chair Libenson.

Chair Libenson began by reviewing the agenda order and then turning to the first item.

*Approval of Minutes*

The minutes of 9/30/15 were unanimously approved.

The minutes of 10/7/15 were approved with two abstentions.

*Minuteman Update*

Member McLaughlin gave an update on the new high school facility proposed for Minuteman Regional High. He reported that, during the summer, despite the written objection (in a letter) from the Belmont Board of Selectmen, the Massachusetts School Building Authority had approved for processing to the next stage of their process a 628-student school. Mr. McLaughlin commented that, as of October 1, the number of enrolled students from member towns was only 362. The preliminary cost of the proposed school has been estimated to be \$144,900,000. The Minuteman administration and building committee will hold a public hearing in Belmont on November 10<sup>th</sup> at the Beech Street Center.

Mr. McLaughlin distributed a handout from Minuteman that included projections for fiscal year 2020, purporting to show Minuteman's operational and capital budget in that fiscal year. Mr. McLaughlin commented that he doubted many of the assumptions supporting the Minuteman budget handout. Finally Mr. McLaughlin summarized the process of approving the debt, which requires the unanimous consent of each of the Town Meetings of the 16 member towns, or, in an alternative approach, a straight majority in a district-wide, Minuteman-sponsored ballot vote held in all 16 member towns.

There followed a discussion, with questions by member Helgen and comments by Chair Libenson, regarding whether the member towns would in essence be subsidizing non-

member towns for both the operational and capital costs of such a new Minuteman school.

### *Pension Report Discussion and Vote*

Chair Libenson reviewed the recent handouts: a cover letter draft, and the recent version of the Pension Report.

Member Mennis began by reviewing the feedback to the draft report, and listed three specific considerations:

1. make sure Selectman Williams is comfortable with the report
2. make sure the request from Town Meeting is being honored
3. include areas where more information is needed and identify potential next steps

Member Mennis said that having a report in place will be helpful as a reference point. He added that Selectman Williams has read the report and is comfortable with it. He suggested that, toward the end of the report, the WC include a statement that it (the WC) will continue to work with the Retirement Board and the BOS on the funding schedule and on exploring the POB option.

Member McLaughlin noted that the report identifies Belmont's challenges and vulnerabilities, but it could do a better job assessing the impact on the operating budget. Also, the report does not include an overall strategy. He suggested that the WC advise the Retirement Board concerning what it thinks is best. Member Gammill suggested that the report does meet the objective of the amendment and that the amendment itself did not call for recommendations about strategies.

The WC then discussed to what extent that it (the WC) should lay out various strategies. Chair Libenson noted that the impact of the funding schedule is discussed in the report. However, he added, declaring the optimal strategy for the town in managing this obligation is not the WC's role.

Member Dash agreed. The report, he said, meets the requests put forth in the TM article. The information is now available for TM, absent a specific WC recommendation.

Chair Libenson stated that the WC can opine on any proposal that is put forth concerning the funding of the pension obligation. Member McLaughlin agreed that this report is not the final word on the topic.

The WC then discussed the potential operating budget impact, based on various assumptions.

Member Mennis reviewed edits to the report, page by page. The WC offered further edits and suggestions to the document. The Aaa rating was discussed, both Moody's and

Standard and Poor's (S & P). Member Sarno suggested that some of the data (concerning the assumptions) could be made more clear for TM members. Member Schreiber suggested that the report state that teachers are not a part of the "town" pension program. Some of the language surrounding the funding schedule was adjusted. Member Gammill spoke to the "all in" investing of money concept versus spreading it out over many years.

Further discussed was the way in which this money would be invested, e.g., POBs, stock market. Member Helgen noted that the rate of return is a variable assumption. Member Lisanke raised an issue concerning the interest rate reflected in the report (4.75%). This rate, he suggested, is too high.

Chair Libenson raised the topic of setting Belmont on a path of "betting on the spread" – with POBs. This is not something municipalities typically do.

*Member Gammill moved:* That the Warrant Committee authorize its Chair to release for distribution to Town Meeting Members the Committee's Pension Report, as requested in Article 12 (B) as passed by the 2015 Annual Town Meeting on June 1. The Chair should prepare the Pension Report based on the draft provided to the Warrant Committee members on October 13, 2015, the Committee's discussion of the draft on October 14th, and non-substantive (proofreading) edits.

Member Mennis offered short remarks concerning the report's conclusion. As a next step he suggested that, should any proposals be put forth, the WC will "work with the Retirement Board and other town officials as necessary".

The WC expressed support for the motion.

Member Mennis raised the issue of the WC meeting with the Retirement Board.

The motion unanimously passed, as amended (the insertion of B after Article 12).

Chair Libenson noted that the draft report will be polished and adjusted based on tonight's adjustments and sent to the Town Clerk.

### ***Adjournment***

Member McLaughlin moved to adjourn at 9:31 p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Gibalerio  
WC Recording Secretary