

Town of Belmont
Capital Budget Committee
Chenery Middle School, Community Room
Thursday Evening, March 13, 2008, 6:45 p.m.

At 6:45 p.m. Mrs. Brusch called the meeting to order. She pointed out that Diane Stafford was ill and the School Committee would be represented at the meeting by John Bowe and Elizabeth Gibson, members of the School Committee who would alternate their attendance so they could also attend parts of a middle school concert that was going on simultaneously with this meeting. They would have one vote between them. Daniel Leclerc had also sent word that he was ill and unable to attend the meeting. Members of the Committee present at the time of the call to order were: M. Patricia Brusch, Mark F. Clark, Jennifer M. Fallon and Anne Marie Mahoney. Also present were Thomas Younger, Town Administrator, and Barbara Hagg, Town Accountant and staff liaison to the Capital Budget Committee. John Conte joined the meeting shortly thereafter. Various other Town employees, mentioned below, and James M. Russo, consultant to the School Committee, participated in parts of the meeting.

The Committee had the following material before it:

1. Agenda for the meeting prepared by Mark Clark, Secretary.
2. Drafts of minutes 2/7/08, prepared by Mark Clark, and 2/28/08 prepared by Jennifer Fallon, Secretary Pro-Tem, attached to Agenda.
3. Two documents distributed by Ms. Hagg before the meeting was called to order. They were:

- a. a spreadsheet (front and back) of FY08 capital appropriations, the next-to-last column of which shows the current balance in various accounts and the last column of which shows the agreed releases to date. The spreadsheet is captioned "Town of Belmont, FY08 Capital Expenses by Department,"

- b. an Internal memo on the letterhead of the Belmont Fire Department to Capital Budget Committee from David L. Frizzell, Chief of Department, dated March 6, 2008, regarding Fire Department Vehicle Replacement.

Mrs. Brusch suggested that the meeting begin immediately with the Committee's interview of the Community Development Department and defer action on pending minutes until after interviews with Community Development Department and the School Department.

Interview with Committee Development Department
(Item 3 on Committee Agenda)

The Community Development Department was represented by Glenn Clancy, its Director. The interview began, as usual, with a review of outstanding balances of previous appropriations. It did not, however, result in the identification of any accounts that could be reverted for re-appropriation. In explaining the balances, Mr. Clancy not only summarized the status of each project, he also made two general points: first, much of the work supervised by his Department must be done outside in good weather and thus his budgeting cycle tends to be on the calendar year rather than the fiscal year (which ends and begins in mid-summer); second, his work, which involves contracts with third parties, must be planned ahead after he is certain that money will be available for the projects he wishes to plan.

During the discussion with Mr. Clancy, the following information was developed. Mr. Clancy made the request of \$3.8 million dollars for Pavement Management knowing that this Committee could not possibly fund the entire amount. He wishes to make clear, however, the full cost of the Pavement Management Program he recommends. It looks as if an override proposal on behalf of the Pavement Management Program might be put to the voters in May or June. In

the meantime, Mr. Clancy is prepared with plans that would put to good use any funds this Committee can make available to him from general tax plus so-called chapter 90 funds (which are a funding source, not a separate program).

The lower appropriation that this Committee can make available plus chapter 90 funds would be just adequate to complete work on Cross Street. Mr. Clancy has in mind the need to be sure that sewer and drain repairs are done before pavement is undertaken. The new Senior Center requires that work (including parking) be undertaken to ensure access. Mr. Clancy expects a favorable state review of the Trapelo Road design and hopes to be in line for state funding by 2009.

Interview with School Department (Item 4 on Committee Agenda)

The School Department was represented by Dr. Gerald Missal, Director of Finance and Administration, Belmont Public Schools, Robert Martin, Director of Buildings and Grounds, Belmont School Department, and James M. Russo, President of Russo Barr Associates, Inc.

Mrs. Brusch began by reviewing with Dr. Missal the outstanding balances in accounts containing funds appropriated for previous fiscal years. Dr. Missal had prepared a list of funds that could be reverted and gave that list to Ms. Hagg. He also reported the status of funds that were not ready for reversion. As a result of the discussion, it was agreed that the following funds can be reverted: \$2,105.53 for Elementary School Phone System; \$38.48 for Butler Flooring; \$5,077.50 for Administration Building Windows and \$2,000 for Building Envelope. The first item (Elementary School Phone System) and the last item (Building Envelope Study) have already been released pursuant to other conversations.

The School Department's requests from the Capital Budget Committee for FY09 are set forth in three separate memoranda, denominated as C(1), C(2), and C(3). The Memo C(3) pertains to both town wide and School Department technology requests. It was presented in its entirety by Dr. Lee McCanne at a previous meeting of the Committee; therefore, Dr. Missal presented only the memoranda designated C(1) and C(2). He began with C(1), which contains the general capital requests of the School Department.

The first item on C(1) is a request for a security system for schools. This request engendered a great deal of discussion with representatives of the School Department and among members of this Committee. Much of the discussion centered around the role of the Security Committee, appointed by the Selectmen, and the proper role of this Committee. Members of this Committee pointed out that the Security Committee has expertise that this Committee lacks; that the School Security Program does not seem coordinated with the Town wide program; that the School Department's approach seems "frontloaded" rather than providing a smooth program that can be funded similarly over a number of years; that the school proposal does not seem to be in accordance with the outside consultant's recommendations.

In response, the representatives of the School Department observed that the outside consultant had not taken into account factors that the School Department believes are relevant, including the ability of older students to read and follow directions, the need to treat all school children in Town even-handedly according to criteria that parents will accept and the likely life of each of the school buildings involved.

Furthermore, the original annual funding proposal made by the Security Committee had not been endorsed by the School Committee. Dr. Missal made it clear that in his opinion at least the three on-going elementary schools should be done at once. Furthermore, if replacement of the Wellington School is delayed, that school should be done also. Mrs. Brusch suggested that the Wellington could be bid as an "add/alternate" to a contract for the other three elementary schools so that the School Department could pick up the Wellington as needed. Representatives

of the School Department made the following additional points. In the last fiscal year, some of the non-school functions of the Town had their needs taken care of; now it would be appropriate to address some of the needs of the School Department which for some of its functions should have a priority higher than some of the remaining non-school functions. It is beneficial that as many schools as possible be done under one contract so that any parts that are purchased will be interchangeable throughout the system. Moreover, any equipment not needed in its intended location because of building delay could be shifted to another location. The School Department believes that it makes sense to request \$150,000 for the work it is to accomplish in FY09; whatever the non-school departments choose to undertake in FY09 should be in addition to that.

Next, the representatives of the School Department turned to the memo denominated C(2). This memo, which enumerates projects resulting from the School Department's Building Envelope Study, also engendered a great deal of discussion with the representatives of the School Department and among the members of this Committee.

Dr. Missal introduced the Building Envelope Study by explaining that he has in mind that the projects resulting from the Study might be tackled in a five to ten years span. This would mean an appropriation of somewhere between \$1.1 million and \$1.7 million each year. He made it clear, however, that he thought at least the first five items (\$410,000) should be included in FY09.

Ms. Fallon stated that in her view the Building Envelope Study should be dealt with as the roof project had been dealt with; that is, this Committee should recommend a stated annual amount to be appropriated for the Building Envelope Project, leaving it to the departments to determine how that money should be spent. Mrs. Bruschi, citing other examples in which departments had asked for funds to maintain landscaping and pavement, observed that the fifth item (driveway at the High School) could not be construed as a "building envelope". Dr. Missal responded by saying that the High School driveway project could be addressed separately from the building envelope but the project still needed to be addressed with funds. There ensued a general and lively discussion that concerned the fine line between preventative maintenance and capital reconstruction. During the course of the discussion Mr. Russo explained that sometimes exterior wall cleaning will delay the need for repointing. Mrs. Fallon noted that the cost of asphalt is rising. Mr. Clark noted that the same theory (protecting the "skin" of a building in this climate because breach of the "skin" accelerates deterioration) can be applied to pavement as well as to walls. Mr. Clark also observed that the Police Station feasibility study recommended reuse of the current Library and that such a recommendation would call into question anything that is done on the north side of Concord Avenue. He expressed the desire that a comprehensive approach to the north side of Concord Avenue be undertaken.

Dr. Missal speculated that it might be possible to incorporate facilities that would replace the White Field House into a new library project. Ms. Fallon observed that the School Department would need to be compensated for any loss of playing fields. Ms. Fallon also observed that the need for an override was apparent from the current discussion and that this Committee would look forward eagerly to the report of the Capital Project Overview Committee. Mr. Younger reported that his daily routine puts him in a position to observe the High School driveway and that it truly needs attention. He mentioned that the current condition presents a safety concern for students.

Following discussion of memo C(2), the representatives of the School Department went back to items on memo C(1). The numbers of the following paragraphs correspond to the numbers of items in that memo.

(2) The School Department wishes to replace the stairs on the outside of the White Field House because it has concerns that a temporary repair is not adequate. Signs and an alarm intended to restrict the use of the stairway to emergencies are not heeded and use of the stairs is not supervised. Frequently, students use the stairway as a shortcut to the playing fields. The

lockers on the second floor of the Field House are in use for girls' teams. The requested appropriation would provide a fire escape type of stairs with a canopy. The building provides locker rooms and storage space in showers for hockey and football. The basement contains asbestos and would not be usable by students.

(3) The translucent panel appropriation is for panels facing the fields (west side) of the gymnasium and panels in the swimming pool room.

(4) Installation of a boiler taken from the school administration would entail some asbestos mitigation in the White Field House.

(5) Conversion of the Butler boiler from oil to gas would then allow pulling out the underground oil storage tanks. There are only about five underground storage tanks remaining at the schools. Although the schools currently have interruptible service, the gas company will be bringing in lines from some distance to service this installation. It is not yet known whether gas pressure will be an issue.

(6) The first step in determining the work needed regarding the High School laboratories is to engage an architect. This work could be postponed.

(7) The handicap accessible portapotties now in use for the football games are an embarrassment. Many people wind up using the restrooms at the nearby service station. Mr. Clark renewed his comment that this proposal is one of many items that should be addressed in a comprehensive plan for the north side of Concord Avenue.

(8) When this project (energy management system for the Chenery Middle School) was considered by the ESCo Committee; it was determined that the "pay back" would be too long. Ms. Fallon inquired whether this project could be phased so that the design work could be undertaken as a first step. Mr. Martin observed that now that the School Department has an in-house electrician, most of the wiring for a project like this can be done in-house. Ms. Gibson, participating on behalf of the School Committee, inquired whether the Chenery Building Committee could undertake this project with its remaining funds. Mrs. Brusch reported that the building committee's remaining funds could only be used for "punch list" items remaining from the original contract and some closely related debt service purposes. An opinion had been received from the Department of Revenue concerning this matter although some disagreement concerning the issue remains.

(9) Dr. Missal observed that this issue (a new maintenance facility) will become critical when the School Department loses its maintenance facility at the current Wellington School. Ms. Fallon asked whether this request could be made part of the Wellington Project. Mrs. Brusch pointed out that this expense would not be eligible for state reimbursement and suggested that the project could better be part of a High School master plan. She does not want to do anything that could jeopardize the Wellington Project. Mr. Younger reported that Lexington has a joint town and school facility. He suggested that Belmont might consider a similar arrangement.

Action on Minutes of Previous Meetings
(Item 2 on Committee Agenda)
Meetings of 2/7/08 and 2/28/08

Mrs. Brusch called for consideration of pending minutes, referring to the fact that drafts of the previous meetings' minutes were attached to the Agenda. During the discussions it was pointed out that in the first full sentence of paragraph II.B. of the minutes of 2/28/08 the "is" might more accurately be "would replace." Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the meeting of 2/7 and 2/28/08 were approved as presented with the slight change in wording previously mentioned.

Review and Updates and Preliminary Discussion of FY2009 Budget
(Item 5 on Committee Agenda)

Mrs. Brush began by reporting that she had discussed generators with Dr. McCanne. Dr. McCanne was not then prepared to make a recommendation regarding generators. Mrs. Brusch pointed out that agreement with the Historic District Commission on the siting of a generator for the Homer Building is not within the purview of this Committee.

Ms. Fallon inquired whether this Committee would be called upon to fund the outfitting of the truck (no. 9) being transferred from the Department of Public Works to the Fire Department. The minutes of the meeting at which this transfer was discussed seemed to indicate that the cost of such outfitting would be borne within the operating budget but Mrs. Brusch will speak with Mr. Castinino to confirm.

Mrs. Brusch reported that an issue had arisen concerning the reversion of \$17,000 from the Board of Cemetery Commissioners. This sum has originally been appropriated for a sewer line that had never been built. The Commissioners expect that a sewer line will eventually have to be built in connection with a future building project. They propose to retain funds for that event, which may be as much as five years in the future. Mrs. Brusch will speak with Ellen O'Brien Cushman, chairman of the Board of Cemetery Commissioners, pointing out that the Cemetery Commissioners are not empowered to reappropriate money. The Capital Budget Committee will seek the reversion of those funds.

The Committee next turned to the matter of a calendar for the rest of the spring budget season. Mrs. Brusch inquired when the Committee's report for Town Meeting would be due. Mr. Younger indicated that a date had not yet been set. During the discussion, it was reported that neither Mrs. Brusch nor Ms. Fallon would be able to attend a meeting on March 27. When the Committee returned to that aspect of the calendar, a consensus developed to cancel the meeting scheduled for March 27 and take a final vote on recommendations for a FY09 capital budget at the meeting on April 3; the Committee's report would be due thereafter. In the meantime, the Committee discussed possible subjects for the report and Mr. Clark undertook to begin a draft of the report. Suggestions included the building envelope study, the need for funding, the need for attention to sidewalks and driveways that are neither envelope of buildings nor part of Pavement Management, and the progress of the Capital Planning Committee.

Mr. Younger reported that he is seeking payments in lieu of taxes (commonly known as PILOTs) from two private schools in town (Belmont Day School and Belmont Hill School). The generator for the antenna site and the reverse 911 capability are among the projects that Mr. Younger is pursuing.

The Committee next proceeded to an informal discussion of each of the capital requests made for the FY09 budget, taking them in the order presented by Ms. Hagg in her spreadsheet. Each member of the Committee indicated with regard to each entry whether he or she was inclined to approve the expenditure or was uncertain. Ms. Gibson undertook to report the discussion to Dr. Stafford and Mr. Conte undertook to tally the result of the informal discussion.

Ms. Fallon iterated that she wished the Committee to consider the status of stairways, walkways and pavement in connection with the building envelope study. She is concerned that those expenses might be overlooked and thus become "orphans." Mrs. Brusch indicated that she is concerned that some of these expenses are maintenance and should not be met from the capital budget allocation.

Adjournment
(Item 6 on Committee Agenda)

The meeting was adjourned at about 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Clark