

- **Belmont Warrant Committee Meeting Minutes**

- **FINAL**

- **April 25, 2012, 7:30 p.m.**

- **Chenery Community Room**

- Present: Chair Allison; Members Baghdady, Bruschi, Dash, Epstein, Grob, Libenson, Lynch, Manjikian, McLaughlin, Sarno; Selectman Jones; School Committee Representative Slap

- Members Absent: Becker, McHugh and Millane

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

- Chair Allison began by reviewing the evening's agenda.

- ***WC Report Overview***

- Chair Allison asked the WC members to review the WC overview report. She noted that the subcommittees will need to give input into the recommendations in section 3b. Chair Allison then distributed the BOS's supplemental budget requests/votes.

- Regarding the overview, the WC discussed which points required highlighting for TM members. The health insurance plan design change was raised as a notable point.

- The WC then discussed the highlights of the FY13 budget, noting that health design savings would occur in FY13.

- Chair Allison noted that the Highlights from Departmental Budgets section (3) will need to be shortened. The WC offered adjustments to this section. Member Lynch noted that the executive summary's role is to offer engaging highlights, not necessarily points that will be covered in the report. Chair Allison noted that under Education, there is risk built into the budget as one-time funds (surplus in health care insurance trust fund) are being used for recurring expenses. She asked Member Sarno to comment on enrollment and resources data. Member Sarno noted that the use of aides has increased, and that the student/teacher ratios have remained constant. Chair Allison said there is no evidence that Belmont Minuteman enrollment numbers have been increasing.

- Regarding Health Care, Selectman Jones offered that health claims have been less than anticipated. The WC discussed that it is difficult to know if this is a reliable trend going forward.

- Regarding General Government, Chair Allison requested that the WC view the supplemental budget requests allocated to General Government. She noted that "much" is awaiting the new Town Administrator (TA). The WC discussed the strengthening of the new TA role. Under Public Safety, Member Libenson noted that the overtime costs

may need to be highlighted. Under Public Works, points 2 and 4 were struck from the overview. Member Libenson suggested noting that the new Facilities Director position is currently being created.

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- Regarding the Risks and Concerns section (4), Chair Allison raised the topic of potential infrastructure failures, e.g., the Underwood Pool and the Rink. The WC discussed and Chair Allison removed it from the list. She then removed “issues with disability and early retirement” from the list. More detail on Minuteman (as a risk and as a concern) will be added in this section. Member Sarno suggested omitting “health care and pension” as an FY13 risk/concern, noting that it is a FY14 risk.

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- FY14 Outlook (and Beyond) will now contain the Aging Infrastructure (e) section. Chair Allison noted that there is no pay (or performance) incentives for highly trained professionals on either the school or town side. To do so causes a financial burden for pension payments. The WC discussed how this would work and what its financial impact would be for the town.

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- Member McLaughlin wondered if the costs of new developments (Uplands and Cushing) should be included in FY14 outlook and beyond. Member Libenson suggested SPED costs be included in this section. Chair Allison suggested that each WC member submit his/her top four FY14 and beyond concerns.

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- Chair Allison then asked if an evaluation section should be included (at the end of the report). Member Baghdady suggested offering an email address in order to receive feedback.

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- ***Review of “Macro” Budget Numbers as Voted by BoS and SC***

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- Chair Allison informed the WC that the numbers are getting close to final. She noted that Table A is a useful handout regarding the budget. Selectman Jones said that the Assessors will give their final number soon and that the state will decide its final local aid numbers in late May. The Senate budget will be released May 16.

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- ***WC Concerns Regarding “Micro” Budget Numbers***

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- Chair Allison said that the BOS has voted on supplemental town budget requests that were not included in the original budget. She requested that WC members review the document listing the BOS supplemental budget appropriations, which total \$352K. Chair Allison read through the list of allocations and noted the specific budget that the allocation will impact. The WC analyzed the adding of full-time hours to the Clerk’s part-time office employee, noting that the benefits costs will need to be identified. Member Epstein asked where this \$352K in funding was coming from, and if the allocations were in the budget as of yet? Chair Allison replied that this money is being funded by increases in recurring revenues and that these items are now in the budget. Selectman Jones noted that \$57K is being turned back to free cash. He said that he may need to develop a “backup plan” if state aid does not come through. Chair Allison

reviewed the new available revenue numbers: \$80K of discretionary funding, the town's share of new revenue (meal's tax and ambulance fees, \$187K), and \$142K in health care plan design – which is roughly \$400K.

- Member Brusch asked how the Library increases would impact the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR). Selectman Jones explained that some of the Library's allocation is "one-time" and won't impact the MAR. Member Brusch then asked about funding OPEB (\$105K), establishing a SPED stabilization fund (\$250K) and the Facilities Maintenance fund (\$150K). Chair Allison noted that these amounts account for \$505K of one-time revenues. Member Brusch suggested that these amounts be added to the WC report. Chair Allison agreed.

Discussion of Plans for Finalizing the WC Report

- Chair Allison noted that TM members would like 10 days to study the report, which means the report needs to be mailed on Friday, May 4. She noted that the subcommittee reports will need to be finalized by Friday, April 27. The WC will receive report copies early next week and the report will be reviewed at the Wed., May 2 meeting.

- The WC returned to the discussion of the BOS approved supplemental budget items. Member McLaughlin raised a question on the Town Clerk's salary consideration. Selectman Jones said he will circulate narrative provided by departments to support the budget supplemental increases. Various WC members raised the issue of how to perceive of these increases in the report. Chair Allison suggested calling this section "additions." More discussion ensued.

Updates: Board of Selectman, Planning Board, School Committee

- ***Board of Selectmen:*** Chair Allison noted that the BOS updates have been outlined within this meeting.

- ***Planning Board:*** Member Baghdady informed the WC that the Special Warrant has two items that will involve the PB: the solar energy by-law, and a citizen's petition for Palfrey Square (regarding an overlay district). He explained the overlay expiration issues. The citizen would like to extend the petition until December 31st, which will require PB approval. Member Baghdady explained the term "overlay," which adds another layer of zoning to the existing layer of zoning.

- ***School Committee:*** SC Representative Slap informed the WC that the SC unanimously voted to accept the school budget. She noted that there is a \$21K positive balance through March 31st. She explained some of the budget variances. SC Chair Graham added that the school's budget book is being printed and that the Quarter 3 report will be sent electronically.

Public Contributions

