

**BELMONT WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
FINAL**

2014 JUN 13 AM 9:07

**MAY 14, 2014, 7:30 P.M.
CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM**

RECEIVED

Present: Chair Libenson; Members Allison, Brusch, Epstein, Fallon, Gammill, Helgen, Manjikian, McLaughlin, Mennis, Sarno; Selectman Paolillo; School Committee Chair Slap

Town Administrator Kale

Members Absent: Dash and Grob

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

Chair Libenson began by turning to the first item on the agenda.

Capital Budget Committee (CBC) Discussion

Chair Libenson distributed the CBC report for Town Meeting.

Ms. Anne Marie Mahoney, Chair of the CBC, stated that there were \$6M in capital requests but only about \$1M to spend. This year, additional revenue for capital requests became available from the trash contract renegotiation and capital budget turn-backs. Gerry Boyle, the new Facilities Manager, has greatly assisted with identifying appropriate funding amounts for building improvements.

In answer to WC questions, CBC Chair Mahoney reviewed the process by which capital requests are evaluated and ranked. Member Epstein asked about the building envelope project. Member Helgen asked about the Grove Street master plan. CBC Chair Mahoney explained the rationale for funding the Grove Street playground study. Member Brusch added that the sports groups are not always in agreement (among themselves) with what is placed at Grove Street. Furthermore, the neighbors would like to have more input into the decision process. Selectman Paolillo expressed concern about the cost of the study: \$30K. CBC Chair Mahoney said that this amount may not be necessary, but that studies are expensive. Selectman Paolillo explained some of the background issues concerning Grove Street. The WC discussed this topic in some detail.

CBC Chair Mahoney said that public safety has been a primary concern for the CBC. After that, the focus tends to be on upgrading or replacing existing equipment. She said that the Capital Budget criteria will be reviewed by the CBC, particularly with respect to technology that may not have a long economic life. The CBC is striving to operate within a larger plan of the town's needs.

Member Helgen asked the Higginbottom Pool request. CBC Chair Mahoney noted that

this request came from Mr. Boyle, who has been overseeing the maintenance of the pool since last summer.

CBC Chair Mahoney, in answer to Chair Libenson's question, explained the process for how the items are funded, or not funded, given that the requests outspend the available budget. Member Fallon noted that the Capital Budget is and has been woefully underfunded, given that some ticket items far exceed the available budget, e.g., White Field House, certain technology expenditures.

Selectman Paolillo raised the topic of establishing a Capital Budget stabilization fund. The possibility of such a fund will be further discussed when free cash guidelines are explored.

The WC returned to the Grove Street study discussion.

Chair Libenson summarized that the BOS and WC support a Grove Street study but are concerned with the \$30,000 fee associated. Selectman Paolillo said he would not support this amount, until he understands where the number came from.

The WC deferred its vote until more information is gathered concerning the amount of the Grove Street study.

Article 20: Budget – Discussion and Vote

Chair Libenson discussed the WC report, noting that the report is close to being finalized but edits are still possible, if sent to him ASAP. Chair Libenson distributed a summary of the budget. He noted that the SC has approved the school portion and that the BOS approved the overall budget.

Member Brusch raised the topic of the Minuteman budget, given that the administration increases are up by \$400K. Selectman Paolillo agreed that costs are not being controlled, as the operating costs are up 5.9%. Member Brusch added that a "nay" vote won't matter, because Minuteman has received the necessary 2/3 majority vote. Member McLaughlin agreed with both points: that costs are rising and that Belmont's vote won't matter.

Member Allison moved: To approve the budget articles listed under Article 20, except item 6, which pertains to Minuteman.
The motion passed unanimously.

Member McLaughlin moved: Favorable action on the Minuteman appropriation, under Article 20.
The motion passed with 12 in favor and 1 opposed.

Selectman Paolillo stated that TM should be informed that the WC and the BOS are concerned about Minuteman's spending.

Discussion of Financial Articles – June Town Meeting

Chair Libenson noted that Article 18 (Elected Official Salaries) will be discussed by the WC in the near future. He then reviewed the following articles.

Article 19: Enterprise Funds (Water, Sewer, Stormwater)

Member Epstein moved: Favorable action on Article 19.
The motion passed unanimously.

Article 21: Transfer of Balances to Fund the FY15 Budget

Mr. Kale explained this article.

Member Allison moved: Favorable action on Article 21.
The motion passed unanimously.

Article 22: Chapter 90 – Highway Funding

This article was briefly discussed. Selectman Paolillo said that more money could be made available (from the state).

Member Sarno moved: Favorable action on Article 22.
The motion passed unanimously.

Article 23: Capital Expenditures

The discussion of this article was deferred to another time.

Article 24: OPEB Stabilization Fund

Chair Libenson explained this article and acknowledged the work of Member Mennis.

Member Epstein moved: Favorable action on Article 24.
The motion passed unanimously.

Article 25: Revolving Funds

Member Fallon moved: Favorable action on Article 25.
The motion passed unanimously.

Article 26: Insurance Proceeds (BHS Boiler Room Pipe)

Mr. Kale explained the burst pipe insurance claim process.

Member McLaughlin moved: Favorable action on Article 26.
The motion passed unanimously.

Article 27: Borrowing for HVAC De-Authorization

Chair Libenson explained why the borrowing is now de-authorized (and unissued).

Member McLaughlin moved: Favorable action on Article 27.
The motion passed unanimously.

Article 3: Minuteman Update: Regional Agreement Amendment/New Facility

Member McLaughlin informed the WC that 9 towns have voted in favor of the amended agreement, Wayland has voted against, four have passed over, and Belmont and Weston have yet to vote. Member Gammill provided some information on the impact of the three smallest towns withdrawing from the agreement. Member McLaughlin said that towns who withdraw are still responsible to pay their portion of any debt incurred prior to their withdrawal.

Various scenarios concerning Minuteman were discussed, including a withdrawing town's OPEB and pension responsibility, asset holding, the debt for the new facility, and the impact to Belmont if 8 or 9 towns withdraw. Chair Libenson created a draft of a "decision tree" to get a handle on some of the possible scenarios. He will distribute this to the group.

Chair Libenson said the WC will meet next week, May 21st. Minuteman will be discussed then. Also, the WC will meet with the BOS on Wednesday May 28 and Mr. Jack Weis will be present. (This meeting will be held in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Hall.)

Member Allison will distribute a "worst case scenario" handout to inform next week's Minuteman conversation.

Member Brusch raised the topic of the deferral vote or "pass over" vote. Town Counsel will provide a legal opinion on this.

Article 14: Citizen's Petition

Member McLaughlin said that this article may go too far (beyond zoning). Member Fallon raised the issue of affordability. Member Allison implied that the scope of Article 14 may not be a question that the WC can opine on. Chair Libenson requested that WC members send questions to him so that this article can be discussed next week, if need be.

Reserve Fund Transfer Requests (RFT)

Chair Libenson noted that the two RFT requests will be voted on at another meeting. He informed the WC that there is a state law allowing towns to move money around through July 15, under emergency situations.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 4/30/14 will be reviewed next week.

Updates: Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Planning Board

Board of Selectmen: Selectman Paolillo reported that the Board has been dealing with the TM articles.

School Committee: SC Chair Slap reported that the SC is deeply involved in contract negotiations.

Planning Board: Member Allison reported that the PB is focused on Town Meeting.

Public Contributions

There were none.

Adjournment

Member McLaughlin moved to adjourn at 9:25 p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Gibalerio
WC Recording Secretary