

**BELMONT WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
FINAL**

**MAY 15, 2013, 7:30 P.M.**

**CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM**

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TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA.

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Present: Chair Lynch; Members Allison, Baghdady, Bruschi, Epstein, Gammill, Helgen, Libenson, Manjikian, McLaughlin, Millane, Sarno; BOS Chair Paolillo; School Committee Representative Slap

Members Absent: Dash and Grob

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

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

***Approval of Minutes***

The minutes of 3/13/13 were approved, with 1 abstention.

The minutes of 3/27/13 were approved, with 1 abstention.

The minutes of 4/10/13 were approved, with 1 abstention.

The minutes of 4/24/13 will be addressed at next week's meeting.

***Notice of Reserve Fund Transfer Requests***

Chair Lynch said that the appropriate subcommittees are working with the department heads and will report out next week to the WC. However, subcommittee chairs will give a brief update concerning the two requests tonight.

***FY13 Q3 Update***

***School Department***

Chair Lynch informed the WC that SC Rep. Slap had forwarded him information concerning the School Department's Q3 report. Ms. Slap noted that there is an \$8,500 positive balance and that the salary projections are balanced out. There is a chance that spending could be restricted at some point in the near future. She then discussed circuit breaker and transportation funds as well as grants, revolving accounts, and participation numbers. In answer to a question about full-day Kindergarten, she noted that waivers are covered by fees.

The WC briefly discussed the School Department's Q3 report.

***Town Departments***

Mr. Kale said that revenues and expenditures are generally on budget. He indicated that motor vehicle excise tax may be higher than budgeted. He also noted that there are two reserve fund transfer requests: Department of Public Works (snow budget) and Fire Department (medical leave and equipment maintenance). Otherwise, Mr. Kale said that the budget should remain on track.

The WC briefly discussed the Town's Q3 report. Some questions were raised and answered.

### ***Notice of Reserve Fund Transfer Requests (continued)***

At this time, Chair Lynch asked the subcommittee chairs to outline the reserve fund transfer requests.

#### ***Fire Department: Vehicle Maintenance and Medical Bills***

Member Libenson noted that he became aware recently of the two issues, but that Chief Frizzell has been in communication with Mr. Kale. He said Chief Frizzell will be present at the meeting next week to provide detailed information.

#### ***DPW: Snow Removal***

Member Epstein noted that, as a result of the heavy snowfall, a request for \$227K has been made. He said it is not unusual in a heavy snowfall year for the budget to be exceeded. The subcommittee, he said, will meet this week and discuss the matter in more detail.

Mr. Kale said that no additional reserve fund transfer requests are anticipated.

Chair Lynch noted that the WC will vote on these requests next week.

### ***FY14 Revenue Update***

Mr. Kale distributed handouts regarding the FY14 Revenue update report. He noted that the FY14 budget is still in draft form, but will be voted on by the Board of Selectmen at their meeting next Tuesday. He said that the additional state funding of \$140K would be allocated to the school budget.

Mr. Kale noted that the Veteran's Services budget needed to be increased, as there are now four individuals receiving benefits. The CBC budget received additional funding (\$65K). He noted that some funding (\$635K) from the Recreation Department will be moved to the DPW budget to reflect the change in the structure of DPW to include Recreation.

Chair Lynch noted that the Ms. Anne Marie Mahoney, Chair of the Capital Budget

Committee, will present the CBC budget to the WC at an upcoming meeting.

### ***Subcommittee Reports***

Chair Lynch said that the WC Report is in draft form. He said he is presently drafting an overview of the report that he will send to the subcommittee chairs for comment. He said the goal is to send the report to Town Meeting members electronically on Monday, May 20th.

#### ***Education***

Subcommittee Chair Sarno distributed a handout pertaining to the Education Subcommittee report. He said that, this year, the School Department submitted more detailed line item budget information, which was useful. He then reviewed the budget numbers, noting where increases occur with regard to FTEs and various programs. He noted that salaries remain a major cost driver to the budget, and that the substitute teaching budget is also up.

Member Sarno reviewed the compensation/benefits numbers. He noted that the new math curriculum cannot be funded in full this year. He said that the budget is lean, but that funding could be freed up with new hires that begin at a lower salary.

The subcommittee analyzed long-term enrollment and staffing. Member Sarno reviewed growth in regular student instruction and SPED student instruction. He then detailed the student-teacher ratio trends. He provided specific detail on elementary enrollment and class sizes. He noted that redistricting is a topic that may need to be explored.

Member Sarno noted that the School Department did not move forward with past recommendations, e.g., Human Resource consolidation and putting their legal services contract out to bid.

This year's recommendations include: changing the steps and lanes salary configuration, creating out-of-district SPED accounts, using additional classroom aides and technology as cost-saving measures, and establishing stabilization fund policies and procedures.

The WC briefly discussed.

#### ***Culture and Recreation***

**Library:** Member Gammill provided a brief overview of the budget numbers.

**Recreation:** Member Helgen reported that this department has merged with the Department of Public Works, allowing for net savings and sharing of resources. The subcommittee suggested that the Recreation Department evaluate operating as an enterprise fund, outsourcing more programs as a way to be more efficient and profitable, and to use the Beech Street Center for some after school programs.

**Health:** Member Allison noted that the Health Department budget is just under \$500K. She noted the growth drivers, which include the increase in the number of veterans that are receiving benefits and the fact that two members are receiving step increases as they are not yet at the median salary range. She noted that the inspection fees have been raised, but that they still don't cover the actual inspections. She said that the Health Department's costs are about 25% higher than in surrounding communities.

Recommendations include that the role and assignment of the Animal Control Officer be studied, and that the position be limited to animal-related incidents. Another recommendation pertains to the way social services are administered across town. Presently this function is fractured among Veteran Services, the COA, and Health.

**Council on Aging:** Member McLaughlin noted that the budget is down \$11K and that transportation fees are down, but health costs are up. He said the data collection has improved somewhat. He said that the transportation services are very generous. He said that the Health Department and the COA need to come together, as the services are related.

#### *Department of Public Services*

**Department of Public Works:** Subcommittee Chair Epstein reported that the DPW is working within their budget and that the division is well run. He said they are working on the incinerator site issues, as well as exploring cost benefits of increased recycling.

**Community Development:** Once hired, the new town planner will report to the Director of Community Development.

**Building Facilities:** The consolidation with the School Department is continuing.

#### *General Government*

Subcommittee Chair Millane reported that the increases are 4.5% across the departments as a result of software and increased elections. The Light Department will no longer be giving \$69K to the IT department for billing services. She said the new Town Administrator is providing fiscal and managerial structure to the departments.

#### *Public Safety*

**Fire Department:** Subcommittee Chair Libenson reported that the Fire Department is rising by 4.5% as a result of the change in ambulance services (ALS). He explained the services of the Fire Department, e.g., fire suppression, fire education, rescue services. He said the staffing remains constant regardless of the number of fire suppression calls. He explained the ALS expenditure and the possibility of increased revenue. In addition, Chair Libenson noted that retaining a medical service consultant Meditrol has reduced medical claim expenses. Finally, the Fire Department is planning for a significant

number of possible retirements (“succession planning”).

**Police Department:** Member Manjikian noted that the Police Department budget rose 3.8%. He reviewed the services provided by the department. He said he looked at the FTE cost analysis numbers, with the support of the new Town Administrator. He reviewed the staffing numbers. He echoed that the Meditrol assistance was beneficial for net savings. He then reviewed the services and the number of calls that the department addresses.

The WC discussed the Meditrol net savings.

### *Minuteman*

Member McLaughlin noted that the Minuteman budget is down 9.3% for Belmont as a result of enrollment decreases (by three or four students). He said the Minuteman budget overall is up. The issues surrounding the new facility remain unresolved. He explained some of the potential changes that are being discussed for Minuteman going forward.

### *Updates: Board of Selectman, School Committee, Planning Board*

**Board of Selectmen:** BOS Chair Paolillo noted that he and Mr. Kale are meeting soon with Arlington regarding Minuteman. The Board will meet with the CBC next week as well as with the Light Board.

**School Committee:** SC Rep Slap noted that the SC voted not to transfer the land to the Library because there was no replacement field. The Professional Learning Team conference will be held next Wednesday.

**Planning Board:** Member Baghdady noted that the PB has been holding public meetings regarding two new upscale restaurants. There is a rewrite on the Inclusionary Housing By-law article. The PB held a public hearing on the demolition moratorium, which it unanimously supported.

### *Announcements/Dates*

The WC will meet next Wednesday and the agenda is a full one. Member Bruschi suggested that the meeting begin at 7:00 p.m.

Other meetings of note:

Wed., May 29 – Special Town Meeting

Thursday, May 30 – LWV Warrant Briefing

Mon./Wed. June 3 and 5 – Annual Town Meeting financial articles

*Adjournment*

Member McLaughlin moved to adjourn at 10:07 pm.

Submitted by Lisa Gibalerio  
WC Recording Secretary