

**Warrant Committee Education Subcommittee**  
**October 27, 2020 7:00 PM**  
**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**RECEIVED**  
**TOWN CLERK**  
**BELMONT, MA**

**DATE: December 7, 2020**  
**TIME: 10:24 AM**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Members in Attendance**

Anne Helgen, Geoff Lubien, Paul Rickter, Jack Weis

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM.

### **Approval of Minutes**

No minutes were distributed in advance.

### **Discussion of Budget Reporting Formats Used by Other MA Towns**

The group began the discussion by collectively acknowledging the tremendous amount of work that Anne put in in researching the budget reporting formats used by various other nearby towns.

The group discussed our respective observations and conclusions from reviewing Anne's report. Key take-aways included:

- Anne noted that she was astounded by the amount of information included in other towns' budgets, in many cases information that the Education Subcommittee has previously asked for. She also observed that this might not be the year to push the School Department to make large-scale changes to their budget format, but that there might be a role that our subcommittee can play in obtaining and presenting the information to help better tell the budgetary story.
- Geoff observed that it will take a tremendous amount of work to set up a new budgetary format. He also wondered, and thought that it would be useful to know, what technology that other towns are using to manipulate the information.
- Paul wondered why the School Department has elected to provide the information it does in its budget. He also noted the amount of documentation that Wellesley provides regarding steps and lanes of its staff.
- Jack noted that he thought there were really only two primary areas where the other towns seemed to approach the creation of the budget differently than Belmont – specifically in A) explicitly projecting and budgeting staff turnover savings and B) in certain towns basing out-of-district special education costs on projected out-of-district enrollments. Otherwise, most of the information contained in the other towns' budgets is more a matter of how information is presented, not how it is developed.

The group generally agreed that the two most noteworthy areas where the other towns' budgets are more informative than Belmont's budget are around staffing/compensation and special education/out-of-district tuitions. The group decided that rather than trying to develop a new budget format, we would focus our efforts on potential incremental changes in those two particular areas. Each of us will take a closer look at the examples of the specific information and tables included in Anne's memo regarding these two topics and will come to our next

meeting with specific examples of the information provided by other towns that we might want to propose that Belmont consider incorporating into its budget book going forward.

**Discussion of Withdrawn Town Meeting Amendment Regarding Budgeting for Vocational Education**

Was tabled for discussion at a future meeting.

**Next Meeting:** November 17, 2020 at 7:00 PM.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.