

**Minutes
Town of Belmont
Financial Task Force II
Virtual Meeting on Zoom
Monday, May 24, 2021
8:00am**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: October 4, 2021
TIME: 6:03 PM

Financial Task Force II (FTFII) Members Present: Chair Tom Caputo, Anthony DiCologero, Patrice Garvin, John Phelan, Geoff Lubien, Floyd Carman, Mark Paolillo

Financial Task Force II (FTFII) Members Absent: Dan Dargon, Rebecca Vose, Catherine Bowen

Others present: Jon Marshall

1. Review Budget Assumptions

2. Review of Financial Task Force draft recommendations

Two documents were sent along to FTF2 members which included the proposed set of financial policies and recommendations. The draft is 55 pages in length. This draft will be finalized at the next FTF2 meeting. All changes made to the draft have been tracked. The Select Board has to approve this set of policy recommendations by the end of August. Chairman Caputo will present these policies to the affected Committees in town.

3. Review of Financial Model (not discussed)

4. Approval of Minutes (If Any) (none)

5. Other Items Unanticipated by the Chair

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

Chairman Caputo gave a brief presentation regarding the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. The Act provides Belmont with \$7.6 million in Coronavirus Local Stability funds and \$1 million in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) III funds for Belmont Schools. A document providing guidance was released by the Treasury Department outlining how these funds can be used. 80% of the ESSER III funds can be used for general school support and 20% for general learning loss. There are five areas identified that the town can utilize funds for. Belmont is likely to use these funds primarily to support public health services and to replace public sector revenue. The funding from the Act will come to the town in two waves, twelve months apart. Funding can be used over a three year period. This federal funding is one time in nature so it should be used wisely.

The Town Administrator has been working to calculate potential revenue loss due to COVID. The town will be having a meeting with their Department of Revenue representative to gain clarity regarding what revenue can be included in the formula provided by the American Rescue

Plan. There have been three scenarios that have been contemplated regarding what Belmont's revenue loss could be.

The Interim rule gives a clear process for looking back at the most recent three fiscal years prior to the pandemic, calculating a growth revenue and analyzing the divergence and gap between what was projected prior to the pandemic and where the town is now. The goal is to maximize the use of these federal funds.

For FY21, expenses after 3/3/21 are eligible for these federal funds. The FY22 budgets are prepared and ready to be voted. There are expenses within the FY22 budget which are eligible for these federal funds. The town also expects that unforeseen expenses will arise, related to COVID, that are above and beyond the FY22 budget.

The schools will need to provide academic services to medically fragile children. Belmont held a meeting with the remote only students recently. DESE has informed Belmont that they will provide concrete guidance by June. The school is tracking \$450,000 in expenses in their COVID "parking lot". The School Dept. will be holding their own vaccine clinic. The ESSER funds need to be spent down first. They have earmarked two social workers for next year. They will be reviewing a list of needs and prioritizing where federal aid should be spent.

The town will likely hold a Special Town Meeting in the fall. The town is waiting for clarity regarding pushing a virtual Town Meeting past June 15, 2021 as it relates to the lifting of the state emergency.

The School Dept. can focus more on the services until September, allowing them to use ESSER funds to hire personnel during the summer. They may be able to use ESSER funds to hire social workers at a limited level for one year and have the September meeting to address other matters. The social worker positions could be funded for a second year using ARP funds. This is the second fiscal year where the School Department's requested funds have not been met with enough aid.

Public Comment

Mr. Bill Anderson suggested holding public forums similar to those for an override regarding the federal aid coming in.

- The School Committee has not discussed the federal aid yet but Mr. Phelan will discuss the possibility of holding a public forum regarding federal aid.

The next Financial Task Force meeting will take place on June 4th.

On a motion by Mr. Paolillo and seconded by Mr. Lubien, the Task Force voted to adjourn the meeting. *The meeting adjourned at 9:29am.*

Documents Used:

1. American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Presentation (Caputo)