

Approved by
the Select Board on:

8/24/2020

Minutes

Town of Belmont

Select Board

Virtual Meeting on Zoom

Monday, July 27, 2020

7:00pm

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: September 3, 2020
TIME: 9:53 AM

CALL TO ORDER:

A meeting of the Select Board was called to order at 7:00pm by Chair Roy Epstein. Vice Chair Tom Caputo and Select Board member Adam Dash were present. Town Administrator Patrice Garvin was present.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program
 - Belmont renters who have lost income and are having trouble paying rent as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic can apply. The Belmont Housing Trust set up the program using Community Preservation Act funds.
 - Applications are being accepted now. Email Merkeisha@MetroWestCD.org (preferred) or call 617-504-8868. Free translation assistance is available.
- Coffee and Conversation event with Belmont Firefighter Ross Vona will be hosted via Zoom by the Beech Street Center on August 4, 2020 from 10:00am-11:00am. Contact Dana Leavitt at (617) 993-2977 for more information.
- Another episode of "Cooks Corner", hosted by Beech Street Center Director Nava Niv-Vogel will be held on July 30, 2020 at 10:00am. Contact Dana Leavitt at (617) 993-2977 for more information.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

- *June 1, 2020 regular session:* Add bonding appendix and revise two errors about the McLean project.

Motion: To approve the proposed changes and add a bonding appendix to the June 1, 2020 regular session minutes. (Vote passed 3-0)

- *June 22, 2020 regular session:*

Motion: To approve the June 22, 2020 regular session minutes. (Vote passed 3-0)

- *July 13, 3030 regular session:* Edit spelling errors and change "compost" to "material for compost".

Motion: To approve the July 13, 2020 regular session minutes with the proposed changes. (Vote passed 3-0)

ACTION BY CONSENT:

Public Hearing for an Amendment of a Fuel Storage License located at 40-42 Brighton Street

Epstein invited Michael Mahoney to introduce the topic. Mahoney joined the call and explained that Mahoney Oil was seeking an amendment allowing an increase to the fuel storage capacity that was allowed by their license because the fuel storage needs have grown. Mahoney explained that the change would allow Mahoney Oil to add ability to park more delivery tanker vehicles at their site.

Fire Chief David Frizzell joined the call and agreed that all of the storage requests made were reasonable. Mahoney said the Fire Department has had no issues with the site and that he was in full support of the amendment to the license.

Caputo asked Frizzell if there would be a limit to the increase or an eventual concern with Mahoney storing larger amounts of fuel. Frizzell answered that there was no concern because of how well Mahoney's fleet has been kept up.

[Open public comment]

- *Norma Massarotti*: Asked how much of Mahoney's business was community based and if alternatives to storage solutions had been assessed. Mahoney answered that there is community business being conducted. Epstein said that he doubted that the location of Mahoney's customers should play a role into the licensing amendment.

[Close public comment]

Motion: To approve the amendment of a fuel storage license located at 40-42 Brighton Street to increase the diesel fuel and heating oil capacity from 22,000 gallons to 40,000 gallons. (Vote passed 3-0)

Public Hearing for New Liquor License Application (Section 12 – On Premises) submitted by Craft Beer Initiative, LLC, DBA Trinktisch, 91-95 Leonard St, Belmont

Suzanna Schalow and Kate Baker joined the call. Schalow explained that the application was for an on-premises liquor license of about 12,000 square feet, most of which will be open seating at her new "Trinktisch" restaurant. Schalow shared that food will be served at the location, but there will be a focus on drinks. The environment will be welcoming to families and to all. The license was a full liquor license, as they hope to have full liquor service eventually.

Epstein asked Schalow to explain the business concept. Schalow explained that "Trinktisch" translated to "drinking table", and she hopes to offer a community space in Belmont Center focused on drinking and eating good things to all who are interested.

Epstein encouraged Schalow and Baker.

Caputo asked Garvin if the liquor license was non-transferrable, which Garvin confirmed.

[Open for public comment]

- *Yong Hong (Resident and owner of 11-13 Craft St)*: Shared that she is in support, as are her tenants.
- *Matt Schonewald*: Said he is in full support and very excited about the venture.

[Close public hearing]

Motion: To approve the new on-premises liquor license application submitted by Craft Beer Initiative, LLC, DBA Trinktisch at 91-94 Leonard Street in Belmont. (Vote passed 3-0)

Public Hearing for New Liquor License Application (Section 15 – Off Premises) submitted by Craft Beer Initiative, LLC, DBA Craft Beer Cellar, 87 Leonard St, Belmont

Schalow explained that businesses are no longer allowed to transfer liquor licenses. The Craft Beer Cellar will move from 51 Leonard Street to about 4,000 square feet at 87 Leonard Street. There will be more room for cold storage and customer experience throughout the store.

Epstein asked Schalow if both Trinktisch and the new Craft Beer Cellar would be connected. Schalow said in some sense, the two will be connected, with a door to the Cellar to follow regulations.

[Open public comment]

- *Andrea Prestwich*: Exclaimed, "Go beer ladies. We love you!"
- *Matt Schonewald*: Expressed his excitement and support.

- Yong Hong: Expressed her support.

[Close public comment]

Motion: To approve the new off-premises liquor license application submitted by Craft Beer Initiative, LLC, DBA Craft Beer Cellar at 87 Leonard Street in Belmont.

Epstein announced the public that the Town had begun forming the new Fire Chief Screening Committee and that the Town was still accepting applications until July 31st. The Committee will meet from mid-August to early October. Many other committees were in need of applicants where terms have run out, Epstein noted, so many applications were available under the “Volunteer Opportunities” tab on the Town website. The Select Board encouraged the public to look for committees of interest and to apply.

Discussion on filing Proof of Claim in the Purdue Pharma bankruptcy proceedings

Epstein explained that Purdue Pharma became infamous as a producer of opiate prescription drugs and was the subject of many lawsuits due to improper dispensing. Purdue Pharma filed for bankruptcy and there was a bankruptcy claim that Belmont could join. Epstein believed that if relief was granted, it would be in the form of a small amount of money or a program to help those with substance use disorders.

Garvin said that Christine Marshall had come to her with a request for Belmont to join the lawsuit.

Christine Marshall explained that Purdue Pharma filed for bankruptcy in Fall 2019 to avoid paying out in the many lawsuits filed against them, so they would instead agree to a settlement. Creditors would likely be given money that would go to the states and be dispersed to municipalities for support services. Marshall explained that there was a hard deadline of July 30, 2020 to join the lawsuit, which would be low commitment process for Belmont.

Epstein asked Marshall if there would be a filing fee to join and she answered that there was not, and that it should only take a few hours of work.

Caputo asked Marshall what the magnitude of a claim for Belmont in damages might be. Marshall answered that she would need data from the Town, but that Towns have averaged between \$10 million and \$25 million in damages. Epstein asked for clarification on what the claims of harm related to Belmont could be. Marshall said that costs in emergency services, extra medical care, and many other components might be included. Marshall explained that past and projected future costs would be claimed.

Epstein asked how specific the Belmont claim would need to be, and Marshall said that each town’s claim does not have to be detailed, but the claims would need to be backed up in case there were questions, or a judge decided that Purdue Pharma would pay out individual municipalities. Dash agreed that the claim in damages would need to be defensible.

Dash asked what the process was for other municipalities. Marshall said that her team would send a 13-question questionnaire to their clients. That information and publicly available information would be compiled. Epstein asked if the Town would need to provide data. Marshall answered that any data that was readily available would be great to calculate an amount in damages, but if that was not easily accessible, her group could investigate independently and come up with an estimate in damages.

Epstein said that if the process could be limited in hours and work, he was on board. Caputo said that he was supportive of moving forward, as long as the administrative cost was low. Garvin said that she could work with emergency services the following day and asked for direction or a motion to move forward.

Motion: That the Town of Belmont file a proof of claim in Purdue Pharma bankruptcy proceedings and that the Town Administrator move forward with efforts to join the proceedings. (Vote passed 3-0)

Discussion on Health insurance/Group Insurance Commission (GIC)

Garvin explained that the last direction of the Select Board was to speak with the schools, Library, and unions. Porter had done so and would address the meeting she held.

Porter said that she had an all-union Zoom call where she explained that the Select Board was looking for feedback on joining the GIC. Porter noted that union membership was very involved in paying attention to conversations in town and asked great questions. Sue Shillue was also present for the all-union Zoom call.

Porter said that the overwhelming feedback from the Town-side unions was disinterest in joining the GIC. Porter said top concerns were: loss of local control, rate increases, access to various physician members, joining without knowing rates or plans in advance, concerns about timing because the Town recently underwent plan design changes and the pressures of the override proposal, the status of the Trust and paying out employees and retirees, the option of an insurance opt-out, and low potential savings (Shillue estimated \$200,000 to \$300,000 in first-year savings. There was worry about the Town's ability to do a proper rollout with education and work that would have to be done to teach the membership, especially the retiree group that would be involved, as it would be difficult to have in-person sessions due to COVID.

Porter noted that there was discussion of the 75/25 split. For Town employees, current employees paid an 80/20 split, while new employees paid a 75/25 split, starting over the last several years in different departments. Porter had floated the idea of all Town employees moving to a 75/25 split for Town savings. The feedback for Porter was that if the school union employees also moved to a 75/25 split, the Town unions would consider the split as well. Porter explained that all school union employees paid an 80/20 split.

Epstein thanked Porter for her review thus far and asked her for a reminder of the deadlines for joining the GIC. Porter explained that December 1st, 2020 was the deadline for coverage beginning July 1st, 2021, July 1st, 2021 was the deadline for coverage beginning January 1st, 2022, and so on. Porter suggested that the Select Board consider meeting a December 1st deadline, so that the Town's coverage would match up with the fiscal year and the GIC plan year.

Epstein asked for clarification of potential savings in joining the GIC. Porter said that because that the plan design process meant that the Town's insurance was almost identical to the GIC, big savings typically associated with joining the GIC had already been realized. Garvin noted that joining the GIC would lead to more stability in the Town budget.

Caputo asked if Porter had asked about the unions' opinion on keeping the Town plan close to the GIC going forward. Porter said that she expected there to always be negotiation on the matter, but perhaps more openness going forward. Porter said that the school unions did not want benefits to change either, although the school unions thought there could be some savings going to the GIC. Porter acknowledged that keeping pace with the GIC in future plan design could be more work to switching to the GIC instead. Garvin said that she thought misinformation around plan design did not help the process and she wanted to prevent that going forward. Caputo said that he worried that without a move to the GIC, the negotiations around health coverage would always be a battle. Caputo then asked Porter about the process of union voting if the Town moved to join the GIC. Porter said that they would approach the unions for a vote, and that the school side holds the majority of the vote.

Dash asked Porter if the change in the split was proposed as an alternative to joining the GIC. Porter said potentially, but even with a move to the GIC, the Town would still set insurance splits. Dash asked if joining the GIC or moving all union employees to a 75/25 split would result in greater savings. Porter answered that 75/25 would result in greater savings, but that asking for the change in current negotiations would be especially tough. Garvin emphasized that the Town unions agreed to move to 75/25 for new employees, which was implemented over the previous six years. Garvin said that the savings would be realized over time, as they would on the school side.

Dash said that he would like to know if the unions would all go to a 75/25 split before a vote on the GIC and that he thought the Teacher's Union said they wanted to move to the GIC during the plan design discussions. Garvin said that was her understanding that the union had favored joining the GIC. Epstein and Garvin both expressed concern that joining the GIC appeared to be too much of a logistical challenge at the moment. Epstein suggested that the Town continue to take the appropriate steps to explore joining the GIC and to set the goal to meet the July 1st, 2021 deadline. Porter agreed, saying that the Select Board could choose to move forward toward the December 1st deadline so the Town definitely would be ready by the July 1st deadline.

Shillue joined the call and Caputo asked her what changes she had heard might come to the GIC. Shillue said that the next year was a procurement year, so there was lots of opportunity to change. She said it would be difficult to predict the changes, but the next two years are the mostly likely time for changes to be made.

Epstein said that Garvin, Porter, and Shillue should take the steps to join GIC and meet July 1st, 2021 deadline.

[Open public comment]

- *Norma Massarotti*: Stated that many plans have additional premiums for spouses/significant other have insurance through their employers, but choose their spouses coverage, and asked if this would be the case if the Town joined the GIC
 - Garvin: Asked to move the question offline for more clarity.
- *Michael Pelrine*: Said the school unions were not previously in favor of joining the GIC. It's not that unions are opposed to any premium increases, but that there are already so many financial impacts in 2020. Pelrine encouraged the Town to stick with the self-insured for the time being. Pelrine shared concern about too much choice and confusion that would come with the GIC
 - Garvin: Belmont is making the effort to show town employees that the Town cares about them.
 - Epstein: Said the comments give the Select Board lots to think about and that he was glad to have more time to consider the options.

[Close public comment]

Vote on MWRA Water Bond

Epstein introduced the topic, saying that Belmont had participated the program for the last several years. The Town borrowed from MWRA at an interest of 0% for water improvements, and the time had come for a new installment of the loan. Epstein explained that the older debt rolls of to be replaced by new debt overtime and that the goal for the Town was to wrap up waterline work by 2027. Director of Public Works Jay Marcotte joined the call and agreed with Epstein's summary of the program.

Motion: Move that the sale of the \$50,000 water bond is approved by Town treasurer and other appropriate Town officials through 2030 for \$50,000. (Vote passed 3-0)

Discussion on Easement at Belmont Hill School

Epstein explained that the Easement has been previously discussed, but final agreement on language had not been made between the Belmont Hill School and the Town. Garvin added the original request had been approved at a Special Town Meeting in June 2019 and that the final language is the language George Hall approved to go back to Belmont Hill. Dash added that the original request was to move the sewer line to build a new building, which the Select Board and Town Meeting approved, but the language that had come back to the Town was a much more substantive change to the agreement between the Town and Belmont Hill School than what had been voted. The proposed new language had returned the document to the simple easement change requested, Dash said.

Caputo asked if any more subjects had been brought up for further negotiations. Dash replied that the focus had turned back just to the easement change.

Glenn Clancy joined the meeting and said that the length of the sewer easement as it existed was 900 feet. The change requested at Town Meeting was of about 90 feet to accommodate their construction project. The Town needs access to maintain the pipe, so the language should have remained simple, but the request became much larger. On the Town's part, the request was reigned back to a straightforward easement document.

[Open public comment]

- *Paul Roberts:* Said any easement or grant be agreed to with discussion of possible PILOT payment from this and other wealthy nonprofits in town.
- *Margaret Callanan:* Agree that this is the perfect time to seek payment in lieu of taxes. Hope that Belmont will take the opportunity at this time and in going forward. Significant for structural reform.

[Close public comment]

There was agreement from the Select Board that the discussion of the easement was not the time to discuss PILOTs. Dash said that since Town Meeting had already approved the easement and a discussion had occurred with Belmont Hill School, it would not be appropriate to add payments in lieu of taxes to the agreement now. Dash said the Board would have to look into the legality of adding a PILOT to such an agreement and agreed that it should be looked into for the future. Caputo and Epstein agreed that Belmont needs to be proactive about PILOT payments going forward.

Motion: To authorize Patrice Garvin and/or George Hall to present Belmont Hill Schools with the updated easement language. (Vote passed 3-0)

Discussion and vote on request to conduct the annual Town of Belmont National Purple Heart Day Observation and Ceremony on Friday, August 7, 2020 at 10:00 AM at the Belmont Veteran's Memorial

Dash said that the event was usually held at library but would now be held at the new Veteran's Memorial.

Caputo said it would be important to clarify that the event would be conducted in a socially distanced way, but that it seemed that the event had already been approved by the Department of Health.

Bob Upton joined the call and said the event would be socially distanced, cognizant of attendance, and they would collect contact information for those who attended. Upton clarified that if the event could be held at the library in the future, he planned to honor the tradition due to the supportive relationship between veterans and library.

Motion: Move to approve the request to conduct the annual Town of Belmont National Purple Heart Day Observation and Ceremony on Friday, August 7, 2020 at 10:00 AM at the Belmont Veteran's Memorial.

Open Special Town Meeting Warrant

Garvin explained that a Special Town Meeting would be held September 21st at 6pm on Zoom and asked the Select Board to open the warrant so planning could begin. The Select Board talked through leaving the warrant open for 48 hours at first, but citizen petitions would need 100 "wet" signatures, as there was no state provision for virtual signatures, Town Clerk Ellen Cushman noted. The Select Board, Garvin, and Cushman agreed that opening the warrant until the following Monday, August 3rd at 6pm, would be enough time. Garvin said she expected to bring a draft to the Select Board at the August 10th meeting.

Motion: To open Special Town Meeting warrant from Tuesday, July 28th at 9:00am to Monday, August 3rd at 6pm.

Discussion and vote on request from India Association of Greater Boston to hoist India's Flag on Saturday, August 15, 2020 to celebrate Indian Independence Day

Tanu Basu, one of the directors of the India Association of Greater Boston, joined the call. Basu described the Association as a non-profit socio-cultural organization that had existed for almost 65 years. August 15th is "India Day", a celebration of freedom and cultural traditions. Considering today's restrictions, the Association agreed to keep events virtual and spread out, so they decided to work with various towns and cities in New England to hoist August 14th or 15th. The localized events would include the reading of a proclamation from the municipality announcing the day as India Day, the singing of the American and Indian national anthems and raising both flags. The Association would record live feeds of each municipalities' event, which would be at maximum 20 minutes. Basu said 20 other towns had agreed to hold the event.

Epstein asked if the India Association of Greater Boston would need to submit a COVID-19 plan to the Department of Health. Garvin said that her understanding was that the group would be small enough to make a written plan unnecessary. Dash said he thought a COVID-19 plan should be filed.

Dash asked if raising another country's flag at Town Hall would be appropriate legally, and in terms of etiquette. Garvin replied that she could get an answer. Garvin's goal was to see if the event would be logistically possible and needed an answer from Town Council as well. Dash suggested the Association submit their COVID-19 plan to the Department of Health, that the Board get an answer from Town Counsel, and that the Select Board could vote on August 10th. Epstein said the Board should ask for a speedy opinion from Town Counsel. The Select Board agreed that there may be no problem if Town Counsel and the Department of Health both approved the event.

Basu said the proclamation would also have to be approved and someone from Town would be picked to read it. Basu also noted that the Association would be happy to provide a pole if there was an issue with current pole and would bring the Indian flag. Epstein asked Basu to send the proclamation to the Town and that the Town would sort out the different components as soon as possible.

Discussion and Vote on Question of Operating Override on November 3, 2020 Presidential Ballot

Epstein invited Caputo and Dash to summarize their views and suggested the Select Board hear from the public.

Caputo gave an update to the memo. In the most recent FTF2 meeting, the group made two changes to the memo:

- To correct a typo from Town's Clerk to Town's Treasurer, as the memo gave the wrong source in Appendix B
- Having reviewed feedback around model assumptions and in collaborating with school committee and administration, lowered assumption to salary and wages increases to the schools. to 4.9% with addition of \$400,00 allocation each year for headcount. Overall, this would bring the FY22 deficit to just under \$12M

Caputo and Dash suggested that public comment be opened before they summarized their own views. Epstein noted that he would open public comment but that he might have to close public comment based on time.

[Open public comment]

- *Phil Thayer:* Asked if the within the zoom format allowed participants to see the list of other participants.

- Epstein replied that he did not know about the Zoom format, but that there had been problems with the chat option on other formats with Zoom.
- *Peg Callanan (Town Meeting Precinct 7)*: Disappointed at late start to discussion. Strongly opposed to November override. In pandemic, residents are facing financial and otherwise hardships. FTF2 executive summary report has been out less than two weeks and substantial change was just made. November is not the appropriate timeframe. More work and structural changes must be considered. Plan must be presented to the taxpayers before asking them to approve \$12.5M override.
- *Deran Muckjian*: Emphasized importance of small businesses. His own revenue down is 60%, he took a pay cut, no sign of getting better until vaccine. We don't have the revenue to sustain our current model. Override jeopardizes the residents at this time. Should wait until at least next spring with how difficult things are right now.
- *Norma Massarotti*: Agree with Peg and Deran. Reiterate that Belmont residents are not ready with this in November. Prerequisite to the vote is a thorough effort conducted before asking Belmont to vote.
- *Maryann Scali (Town Meeting member for Precinct 2)*: Asking to put override on April vote. Little or no time to educate the public on why money is needed for the town. Please slow down and inform the public.
- *Nancy Saris*: Agree with Maryann Scali. Postpone the vote. This has been a turbulent time for us all. Review and share fair assessment first. Thank you to all.
- *Bob Sarno (Town Meeting Member Precinct 3)*: The Select Board should not place a \$12M override on the November ballot. In April local ballot will be voted on by those paying attention. Not enough time has been given with model or information. Attempt to assess if residents could afford does not seem to be made. Belmont residents already pay a high tax burden.
- *Howard Fine (Town Meeting Member Precinct 5)*: Not time for a tax override. With capital projects, uncertainty in the world, it does not make sense to put this to a vote now. Opposed, please vote no.
- *Kathy Keohane (Town Meeting Member Precinct 2)*: Suggests proper due diligence, which means examine all the potential cost savings, projected revenues, more clarity about state-aid situation. Put fully informed vote in front of community. This is an incomplete package. Complete the work and bring it back.
- *Judith Ananian Sarno (Town Meeting Member Precinct 3)*: Speaking against November vote. The task force is advisory-only. You consider, but you're our elected officials. Consider the time and impact. April is the better option. You'll have state aid figures, local revenues, a negotiated teachers' contract. 2015 override campaign promised reform. Wait for more transparency, more public input.
- *Tomi Olson*: Urge to not put on this November.
- *Geoff Lubien (Town Meeting Member Precinct 7, Warrant Committee, FTF2)*: Also worried about November, but if this fails in April, there will be huge consequences. We've been using one-time funds to meet budget needs. Prop 2 ½ does not mean overrides are wrong, and we've only asked for \$12M in revenue in 30 years. Understand concerns, but there will be declines in services across all departments if this is not passed in April.
- *Mike Crowley (Town Meeting Precinct 8, Warrant Committee, Belmont School Committee)*: Reinforce Lubien comments. We have a structural deficit and need the override. There has been much work and the FTF2 has been in public. Concerned if we wait until April, we will deprive ourselves of the time that we need to put FY22 budget together in a meaningful way, we need a decision on the override, and we need the override, or we will have to cut town and school services. Will result in losses to school jobs. We have to think about what job losses would do to our school system and town. Please put on November ballot.

- *Ellen Schreiber*: Agree with Lubien and Crowley. Add that pandemic isn't going away any time soon, possible second wave will hit, waiting until April for better environment, we don't know either way if that's a good decision. Recognize that the pandemic and everything going on is difficult for every resident, but that doesn't make April better. If we make this vote now, we will know before we put the budget together, if April we will have to plan for budget with and without the override. Will have huge impact on town budgets. Roughly 120 employees, whole departments could be eliminated. The process of that would be divisive and not having to do that budget exercise. Strongly urge November vote
- *Sara Masucci*: Agrees with Geoff, Mike, and Ellen. Simply voicing support to put override on November ballot.

[Close public comment]

Dash said he appreciated all of the comments. He noted that the override was a standing item on the Select Board's agenda for a long time. Stated that there was a need to have an override and that he wanted all who would vote in November with its larger voter due to the presidential election to weigh in. Dash said many structural reform actions have been taken since 2015 override, which he had listed and shared on the screen:

- Re-designed the Town health insurance plans
- Extended the pension full funding due date
- Internally re-structured Belmont Light
- Combined Assistant Town Administrator and Recreation Director Positions
- Explored joining the GIC
- Withdrew from the Minuteman Regional School District
- Increased tax relief for seniors (decreased interest rate on tax deferrals, increased cap on tax work-off credits)
- Moving recreation department to an enterprise fund
- Replaced the Traffic Advisory Committee with the Transportation Advisory Committee to include pedestrians and cyclists
- Restricted liquor license transfers
- Created a sidewalk policy
- Switch trash pick-up to single stream recycling
- Conducted a Town-wide traffic study
- Adopted a housing production plan for affordable housing
- Adopted a purchase power policy for Belmont Light
- Adopted zoning overlays for South Pleasant Street to spur development
- Got McLean development moving
- Adopted stricter rules for CPA projects
- Started strategic planning processes for the Town and for Belmont Light
- Required enterprise funds to pay their share of pension and OPEB
- Adopted a Complete Streets policy
- Joined Community Compact which brought in funds for the Collins Center financial modeling
- Created the Financial Task Force II

Dash said the override vote would reflect the people's decision. The Town knew the last override would run out and has done a lot of work and studying. Dash said the FTF2's recommendation was the fair, democratic, and open way to go. Dash suggested that a new committee could be appointed to address structural reforms going forward.

Caputo thanked the FTF2 for their hard work, noting their commitment and the work that remained. Caputo said he respected the concerns that had been expressed by the public. Caputo acknowledge that the need for an override came at particularly challenging but had been discussed in depth at many public meetings.

Caputo said more changes needed to be made, but the override was necessary. Caputo acknowledged the vote as one of the most significant votes in Belmont history. Caputo agreed with Dash on maximizing the number of voters in November rather than April and said that the November vote would give sufficient time to handle the fallout if the override was voted down, while there would not be enough time if the override was struck down in April. Caputo acknowledged that an override is a big ask during a challenging time, but the current deficit would require the community to understand the dramatic consequences and potential instability without one.

Epstein agreed that an override was necessary and that responsible residents would know that. The last override only lasted because the Town was able to stretch out the money over years with Garvin's leadership. Epstein reminded the public that, even without COVID-19, the override still would've been \$8-9M. Epstein said he believed Belmont would support an override that has the proof action that would be taken, but that voters will only approve the override in April. Epstein said the Town would be able to create a dual budget leading up to the April vote, and that the Town needs that time to understand the needs and to approve the override. Epstein was concerned about divisiveness in the Town and that the override would not last three years. Epstein said he was surprised that another change had been made to the recommendation and that the public had not had an opportunity to look into the amount allotted to school salary and wages. Epstein expressed appreciation for the list that Dash put together but was concerned about appointing even more committees.

Epstein said that the potential effects on the Town without an override would be difficult and assured his colleagues and the public that sensible people would acknowledge that the override is needed, with more time to understand the situation at hand. Epstein said the FTF2 model was terrific, but there were many assumptions and not enough data yet due to time constraints. Epstein listed items that need to be worked on for the Town: contract negotiations, expenses for new school and DPW, PILOTs, regionalization of police and fire, issues involving retirement board. Epstein stated that these ideas could be worked on as soon as possible, with a vote taken on the override in April.

Dash said Epstein's ideas were great, but that the Town still needed \$12.5M. Dash warned of a painful dual budget process.

Motion: To place an operating override on the November 2020 presidential ballot: (Vote passed 2-1, with Caputo and Dash in favor and Epstein opposed)

Vote on the question as it would appear on the November 3, 2020 Presidential Ballot for the Proposition 2 ½ Override

[Open public comment]

- *Geoff Lubien:* Had hoped to make comment before previous vote but said that \$12M is the floor for the override. Everyone's points are valid, but the \$12M is just to get Belmont through. Understand a vote has been taken and it was a tough call.

[Close public comment]

Garvin showed the proposed language, and Epstein read it aloud: "Question 1: Shall the Town of Belmont be allowed to assess an additional \$12,500,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of supplementing the capital budget and the town and school operating budgets for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2021? Yes/No"

Cushman said the language was the same as 2015 and would work well, and the Select Board agreed.

Motion: to have the question of the 2020 override be as "Question 1: Shall the Town of Belmont be allowed to asses an additional \$2,500,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purposes of supplementing the capital budget and the town and school operating budgets for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2021? Yes/No" (Vote passed 2-1, with Caputo and Dash in favor and Epstein opposed)

Epstein then referenced a request from Town Clerk, saying that, "in debate in weeks and months ahead, remember civility and respect for those you are talking to and refrain from personal attacks. We're all neighbors and please behave appropriately as we move forward."

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Complete Streets: Garvin said the Town submitted following projects under the Complete Streets Program:

- Install sidewalk and curb at Wilson Ave \$155,927
- Crosswalk/curb extensions at Gale Road and Watson Road \$34,788
- Reduce corner radii at Cross Street and Dean Street \$42,778
- Install sidewalk and curb at Dante Ave \$135,326
- Crosswalk/curb extensions at Gale Road at Richardson Street \$13,977
- Install sidewalk and curb at Horace Road \$18,194

Garvin said they hoped to receive the full possible \$400,000 in funding and thanked the Office of Community Development.

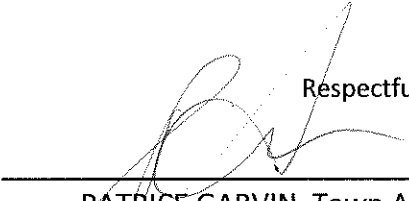
SELECT BOARD COMMITTEE LIAISON REPORTS

- Epstein reported that the Community Path Project Committee met on July 16th. There was a community engagement update and 25% of the project design was expected for submittal in the fall. The purpose of the meeting was to get public feedback on the plans, which was positive. The MassDOT Coordinator was also positive about the state of the plans.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To adjourn at 10:29pm. (Vote passed 3-0)

Respectfully Submitted,



PATRICE GARVIN, Town Administrator