

Approved by the
Select Board

August 7, 2023

Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
PUBLIC FORUM SESSION
of the
SELECT BOARD
January 19, 2023



**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: August 18, 2023
TIME: 9:57 AM

To view the recording of the meeting, please click [HERE](#).

Call to Order: Mr. Paolillo called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Select Board Members	Present	Staff Members	
Mark Paolillo, Chair	Yes	Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator	Yes
Adam Dash, Vice-Chair	Yes	Jennifer Hewitt, Assistant Town Administrator & Finance Manager	Remote
Roy Epstein, Member	Yes		
Others Present			
Paul Chromier, Town Counsel	Remote		
George Hall, Town Counsel	Remote		

Discussion of January 30, 2023 Special Town Meeting (STM) Warrant Article – Transition From Elected to Appointed (Hired) Treasurer/Collector.

Mr. Paolillo explained the purpose and format of the public forum. He announced that there would be a Special Town Meeting on Monday, January 30, 2023 at 6:30 to vote on this topic.

Mr. Paolillo reviewed the recommendations from the Collins Center Report about the financial management structure of the Town.

He then reviewed the role of the Treasurer and the process set out by Massachusetts General Law to transition from an elected to an appointed Treasurer.

Mr. Dash explained why he supports the change to an appointed Treasurer.

Mr. Epstein clarified the wording of the Warrant Article, and why there is no room to make amendments for the Special Town Meeting. Mr. Chromier confirmed this.

Matt Sullivan expressed his lack of support for the Treasurer being appointed rather than elected and explained the reasons for this position.

Judith Feinleib, Town Meeting Member, asked if the appointing authority could be changed to the Select Board. Mr. Paolillo explained how the appointing authority is determined. There was a discussion of this question and issue.

Peg Callanan, Town Meeting Member, said she felt that the information given to the public was only in support of an appointed Treasurer and expressed her concern about the independence of the Treasurer if he/she is appointed. She then asked why the Board is opposed to an elected Treasurer and also, is it possible to have an appointed Treasurer be a Town resident. Board members shared their positions on the transition and hiring a Belmont resident.

Lisa Pargoli, Town Meeting Member, expressed her support for maintaining an elected Treasurer. She asked how much the Special Town Meetings cost. Ms. Garvin said remote meetings are about \$9000, although Mr. Paolillo explained that there is typically a fall Town Meeting and gave several reasons to do this.

Tommasina Olson, Town Meeting Member, expressed her opposition to an appointed Treasurer and spoke about the quality of previous Treasurers and pool of residents who could fill the role.

Jack Weis, Town Meeting and Warrant Committee Member, expressed his support for an appointed Treasurer and explained his reasons for this position.

Anne Helgen, Town Meeting and Warrant Committee Member also expressed support for an appointed Treasurer and addressed some of the comments/concerns made by previous speakers.

William Anderson, Town Meeting and School Committee Member, asked what the process would be to change the appointing authority from the Town Administrator's Office to the Select Board. Mr. Hall explained that the State law would need to be amended which would require Town Meeting to approve a Home Rule Petition requesting the change. There was a discussion of the 5–12-month timeline for this process.

Brian Iler asked what the process would be to replace an appointed Treasurer. Mr. Paolillo explained how the process would work, which was discussed. Mr. Iler also asked if the job description would change with a trained professional in the role. Mr. Paolillo said there would be no changes, and explained some of the required skills of the Treasurer and explained how accountability in appointed positions works.

Allison Lenk, Town Meeting Member, asked if Ms. Garvin's role as Interim HR Director complicates the situation. It was explained that there is currently a different Interim HR Director, and explained how this person would be involved in the hiring process.

Gail Mann, Town Meeting Member, expressed her support for an appointed Treasurer and asked what would happen at the upcoming election if this change is approved at Town Meeting. Mr. Hall explained the process which was discussed.

Roger Fussa, Town Meeting Member, expressed his support for an appointed Treasurer and explained the reasons for his support.

Mr. Epstein explained why he supports the change to an appointed Treasurer.

Mr. Paolillo explained next steps in the process.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting of the Belmont Select Board Committee, and the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:18pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary