

BELMONT WARRANT COMMITTEE FY08 MEETING MINUTES  
APRIL 2, 2008, 7:30 P.M.  
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM

Present: Chair Curtis; Members Allison, Brusch, Callanan, Epstein, Heigham, Jones, Lynch, McLaughlin, Oates, Paolillo, White, and Widmer; BOS Chair Firenze; School Committee Chair Bowe

Town Administrator Younger, Assistant Town Administrator Conti, Town Accountant Hagg, Town Treasurer Carman

Absent Members: Hofmann

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chair Curtis.

Chair Curtis began the meeting by reviewing the evening's agenda, after which Member Jones began the Stormwater Presentation.

#### Stormwater Presentation

Member Jones: An advisory committee was formed 3 years ago with the goal of long-term planning to stabilize the rates. There is a 5% rate increase this year, which will allow for the funding of Capital projects in the years to come. \$1M of spending will come out of the operating budget. It is expected that the MWRA will operate at a loss next year in order to help stabilize the rate. The WC will vote next week on its recommendations for Warrant Articles 17 ("DEP Sewer/Stormwater Loan Program") and 16 ("MWRA Sewer/Stormwater Infiltration/Inflow Loan Program", which covers 3 projects: replacing 2 pump stations on the Hill, re-aligning for leaks, and addressing Winn Brook flooding issues) next week.

Member Jones will get budget estimates to Mr. Castinino, Mr. Clancy, Town Accountant Hagg and Town Administrator Younger.

#### FY09 Budget As Proposed By BOS

BOS Chair Firenze said that the BOS had reviewed the budget and was comfortable with it - with the exception of the omission of the funding for the Comprehensive Planning Program. The BOS recommended the balanced budget as presented, and voted to place the roads override on the ballot for June 9, 2008. This date will allow time for an education plan. The BOS was unanimous in finding \$50K for the Comprehensive Plan. The only place to locate that funding is by reducing the OPEB account from \$150K to \$100K. The BOS voted unanimously to recommend this \$50K OPEB reduction to the WC and to use the \$50K for the Comprehensive Plan. This plan allows for the review of all zoning bylaws of the town and contracted under the supervision of the Planning Board. Town Administrator Younger added that there are presently bits and pieces of zoning changes - this approach provides an overall plan for Belmont, which could increase revenues for the town (e.g., the Cushing Square project).

Chair Curtis noted that the Planning Board is scheduled to appear before the WC next week - and they could speak to this at that time. Member Heigham offered that given the fees associated with consultants, \$50K to review all of the town's zoning may be a low figure. Member Brusch: Comprehensive zoning is a good idea, the problem is from where to take the money. Could the FY08 budget be more closely examined? Might there be money from insurance savings on the town side? Town Administrator Younger: I have looked at the accounts, focusing on the

Professional Service account. The most there is there is \$13-\$20K, not \$50K. Assistant Town Administrator Conti added that the town side budget is still significantly under-funded.

Chair Curtis asked if a bid could be obtained and not accepted until the fall TM. BOS Chair Firenze asked about the free cash estimates and Town Accountant Hagg stated that free cash revenues will be lower next year.

Chair Curtis stated that the WC committee is fixed in its commitment of the \$150K OPEB contribution and that the Zoning Board can speak to this issue next week.

#### Budget Cuts/Addds

The WC discussed the options available to donate to the Tree Planting program. The funding (\$13K) for this has been cut. Treasurer Carman clarified that it was not possible to donate to this fund on one's tax bill. Such donation classifications need Department of Revenue approval. Town Accountant Hagg added that donations have to be directed toward a department head; it can't be done on a tax bill.

Regarding the 50% street-lighting reductions, Town Administrator Younger said that one possible approach is to light every other streetlight. This approach may need to be altered based on traffic, though.

#### A Review of the Warrant Articles

##### ARTICLE 5 - Salaries of Elected Officials

Member Heigham: The salaries of the Clerk and Treasurer fall within the averages of comparable towns. The ensuing discussion dealt with the recommended raises allocated to these two positions. The Treasurer raise seems appropriate (following standard practice of granting up to 4% increase until the midpoint, and a 4% cost of living increase), however the Clerk position appears to reflect an 8.6% increase (her salary is above the midpoint and should therefore be receiving at most, a 4% raise). Member Heigham will discuss with the Town Clerk and report back to the WC next week.

##### ARTICLE 6 - Non-Contributory Pensions

The WC moved to accept Article 6. The motion was unanimous.

##### ARTICLE 7 - Contributory Pensions

Member Allison reiterated her request to the WC to examine the performance of this investment compared to the state alternative. This is the time to look at locally managed vs. state managed yields. Member Widmer: The WC could recommend that the Belmont fund be rolled in to the state's portfolio. Chair Curtis will appoint a group of WC members to explore this option over the summer and report back to the WC in September.

The WC moved to accept Article 7. The motion was unanimous.

##### ARTICLE 8 - Appropriations of "Up Front" Funds for Highway Improvements

Member Bruschi: Chapter 90 funding can only be spent for specific appropriations. We should recommend approval subject to a recalculation.

The WC moved to accept Article 8. The motion was unanimous.

ARTICLE 9 - Position Classification and Compensation Plan

HR Director Crimmins is scheduled to speak at next week's WC meeting 4/9.

ARTICLE 10 - Appropriation of Capital Expenditures and  
ARTICLE 11 - Appropriation for Water and Sewer and Stormwater Services

The WC is not ready to opine on Articles 10 and 11.

ARTICLE 12 - Authorization of Expenditure from Revolving Funds

The WC moved to accept Article 12. The motion was unanimous.

Member Widmer: Article 12 will require an explanation, as there is often confusion on this article.  
Chair Curtis will make a clarifying statement at TM.

ARTICLE 13 - Cemetery Balance Transfer

This transfer refers to \$530,000 from the sale of lots for perpetual care.

The WC moved to accept Article 13. The motion was unanimous.

ARTICLE 14 - Harvard Lawn Fire Station Proceeds

The WC moved to accept Article 14. The motion was unanimous.

ARTICLE 15 - Street Excavation By-law

The WC will wait to hear from the Planning Board.

ARTICLES 16 and 17 will wait until next week.

ARTICLE 18 - Amendments to OPEB Trust Fund Enabling Legislation

Assistant Town Administrator Conti: The dedicated revenue stream portion was taken out and what remains designates the Retirement Board as custodian of the fund (not the Treasurer).  
Treasurer Carman added that the Retirement Board has more investment options. Town Accountant Hagg said that Article 18 is "clarification language" regarding the Retirement Board's active investing. Conti will email a redline version showing the changes for next week.

ARTICLE 19 - Shared Nursing Services

The WC moved to accept Article 19. The motion was unanimous.

ARTICLE 20 - Cushing Square Road Discontinuance and Property Conveyance

The WC will wait to hear from the Planning Board next week.

ARTICLE 21 - Amendments to Quarterly Tax Billing Legislation

Treasurer Carman: This Article represents the "cleaned up language" from past TM.

ARTICLES 22, 23 and 24 (related to Zoning By-Laws) will wait until a later WC meeting.

ARTICLE 25 - Roads Stabilization Fund

Assistant Town Administrator Conti offered that the language of Article 25 is identical to the 2006 wording (except the amount). BOS Chair Firenze added that the raising of the \$2.5M for the stabilization fund will be voted on by the BOS on an annual basis.

ARTICLE 26 - Home Rule Petition - Authorization for the Town of Belmont to Hold a Referendum on a License for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages at a Private Club

The WC does not take a position on this Article.

ARTICLE 27 - Water Pipeline Easement

Mr. Clancy will present to the WC on 4/16.

Executive Session

Chair Curtis moved that the WC enter into Executive Session at 9:01 PM for the purpose of a litigation and security discussion. The WC will not return to open session. A roll call vote taken and all WC members responded "yes".

Submitted by Lisa Gibalerio  
WC Recording Secretary