

Warrant Committee Meeting Minutes June 1, 2005

Handout(s) distributed tonight are:

1. Draft of the Expanded Town Warrant (previously distributed by email)
2. Articles 2 and 3 of the Warrant
3. Financial info regarding Articles 2 and 3

Member(s) absent: Brusch, Hofmann, Tillotson

Also present: Acting Assistant Town Administrator Becky Vose, Town Accountant Hagg, DPW Director Peter Castanino, Capital Budget Committee Chair Mike Speidel, and Town Treasurer Floyd Carmen

Chairman Widmer called the meeting to order at 7:37 PM.

Acceptance of Minutes

The Committee discussed the minutes of the April 13, 2005 meeting.

- *Member Heigham made a motion, Member Curtis seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously voted to accept the minutes as amended of the April 13, 2005 meeting.*

The Committee discussed the minutes of the April 19, 2005 meeting.

- *Member Heigham made a motion, Member Curtis seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously voted to accept the minutes as amended of the April 19, 2005 meeting.*

Town Meeting Articles

Cultural Council

For the Cultural Council, \$10K will be in the Revolving Fund motion. The Board of Selectmen approved the memorandum of understanding with the Cultural Council last week.

The Committee members discussed this article. Selectman Solomon added that Town Administrator Younger modified the MOU to allow training to occur for two consecutive days if necessary.

- *Member Curtis made a motion, Member Hobbs seconded said motion, and the Committee voted to 8-3-1 to recommend approval of Article 9 (Belmont Cultural Council) to Town Meeting.*

Articles 2 and 3

Town Accountant Hagg reviewed the spreadsheet (Handout 3) regarding the transfer of balances. She also reported a change in characterization of two balances.

- *Member Heigham made a motion, Member Oates seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously to recommend approval of Article 2 to Town Meeting.*
- *Member Heigham made a motion, Member Oates seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously to recommend approval of Article 3 to Town Meeting.*

Article 4

Member Fitzgerald spoke on the salaries of the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer positions. He gave the subcommittee's recommendation for the Town Treasurer position. The Town Clerk has a 3% increase which is consistent with the other department heads.

Chairman Widmer reviewed with the Committee some background on the differences in salary between those positions.

- *Member Heigham made a motion, Member Oates seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously to recommend approval of Article 4 to Town Meeting.*

Article 5

Town Accountant Hagg mentioned that in the draft of the articles we have, the number should be corrected to \$324,429 for roads.

- *Member Curtis made a motion, Member Hobbs seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously to recommend approval of Article 5 to Town Meeting.*

Article 7

These were the priority 1 list we have been carrying for some time.

- *Member Oates made a motion, Member Hobbs seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously to recommend approval of Article 7 to Town Meeting.*

Articles 8 and 10

Town Accountant Hagg discussed the water and sewer numbers in Handout 2. For GIS hardware/engineering is for \$96K (capital portion of the water). That includes \$31K for the equipment portion, with the difference as an estimate for the engineering. Sewer will pick up the other \$31K for hardware.

Vice Chair Jones and Town Accountant Hagg spoke on Article 10 regarding the construction/reconstruction of surface drains and sewers.

- *Vice Chair Jones made a motion, Member Curtis seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously to recommend approval of Article 8 to Town Meeting.*

This will fix the deficiencies regarding contaminating water because of the leakage of sewer into stormwater. If these projects are done in bits, there are huge overhead costs. If we merge these little projects into one, we can realize some savings.

- *Vice Chair Jones made a motion, Member Gibson seconded said motion, and the Committee unanimously to recommend approval of Article 10 to Town Meeting.*

Article 11: Skating Rink

Mr. Castanino recapped the rink situation regarding pricing. The rink's ice making equipment is in poor condition. The chiller and condensers were replaced about five years ago. There are poor compressors. The piping is under the floor, and it is the most costly of all the issues. We should focus on trying to find a way to get the equipment workable for five to 10 years. Do we want to invest some money to continue to make ice for the near future?

The equipment within the mechanical room needs to be addressed. There are suggestions totaling \$89K to \$200K. It makes sense to Mr. Castanino to do the \$89K fix. It gets more complicated in dealing with the floor. Testing the floor could cost about \$32K, but he is not recommending we do the testing. To cover the piping with sand would cost about \$85K. However, it could not be used for any other function. The other option is to replace the concrete floor. Mr. Castanino has a price of \$225K to replace the floor over the existing floor; that's not to remove the original floor. To remove and replace would cost \$300K. The other issue with replacing the concrete floor is time. We have to do the specs, bid it, and award it. The floor also has to cure 30 days before ice is made on the floor.

The concrete around the rink heaves. We think that's because of the high groundwater table. With new rink construction, they take the excess heat from the Freon under the floor that insulate the floor and put the slab on top.

1st option: mechanical room and pipe testing - \$121,250

2nd option: same plus adding the piping and sand - \$200,750

3rd option: three phases of mechanical testing, piping and floor - \$344,750

4th option: mechanical room and floor - \$174K

5th option: mechanical room with piping and concrete - \$314K

A consultant for engineering and spec writing would cost around \$40K, plus a project contingency of 10% to 15%, totals about \$250K or \$400K. This price includes raising the boards. The heating plan would be about \$30K (part of the ESCo project?). The sand floor will give us the 10-year stretch we need, but it could not be used for other purposes like roller hockey or summer camp needs.

Member Oates asked if there are other local rinks with sand. Also, what is done to protect the sand floor during the off-season. Mr. Castanino will look into those questions.

The Capital Budget Committee has made available \$290K to serve the Concord Ave. property interest, financial software package, and the skating rink. Mr. Speidel expects about \$190K to be available for this project. He added that personally, we should go with the concrete floor, but he can see how the sand choice could be made. The Capital Budget Committee will be discussing this tomorrow night.

Town Accountant Hagg mentioned the \$290K is located in the debt service in Article 3. That Article would need to be changed to reflect any changes.

Member White thinks we first need to decide if we are looking for a short-term or long-term solution.

The Board of Selectmen will consider this on Monday. The Capital Budget Committee will discuss this but is not expected to vote tomorrow night.

Chairman Widmer and Mr. Speidel pointed out the project could either be \$290K or \$430K as discussed. To paint the lines with a sand floor would cost an additional \$2K - \$3K/year. The question is whether the \$140K difference is worth the extension in time from a sand rink. Member White pointed out you could do the sand twice, and still be under the cost of the concrete now.

Member Oates asked if we should be thinking about a debt exclusion on the rink. Selectman Solomon and others do not think it can be prepared in the next month.

The debt service on the \$430K option is \$106K for FY06, while there is a \$70K debt service for the \$290K option.

- *Member Heigham made a motion, Member Oates seconded said motion, and the Committee voted unanimously to recommend whatever is necessary to get the rink ready for this year.*

Other

Chairman Widmer asked the Committee for their suggestions regarding his report to Town Meeting. The Committee recommended some ideas mentioned below.

The Health Insurance Committee has been meeting regularly. Member Curtis said we will be having recommendations in later June. In his opinion, the Town needs to go in the direction of a more market based full service insurance program (for both active and retirees). If there was a Town Meeting in the fall, we may be ready to make those suggestions publicly. The growth in health insurance by itself will soon consume every penny the town can raise under the Prop 2 1/2 levy limit.

Member Heigham thinks Chairman Widmer might want to mention the override discussions of the Warrant Committee and the possible capital override to help get us through year one of the override.

Member White pointed out that Chairman Widmer should mention cost sharing opportunities as a near future endeavor.

Member Paolillo thinks it would be helpful to tell Town Meeting how we are working to manage costs and the different subcommittees regarding Town issues. Also, we are not alone in this – surrounding communities are dealing with similar issues.

Member Hobbs added that Chairman Widmer might want to look at policy concerns in looking ahead and anticipating what is coming down the pipeline.



Member Heigham made a motion and it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristina Frizzell, Recording
Clerk