

**Town of Belmont  
Capital Budget Committee  
Beech Street Center, Conference Room, Second Floor  
Thursday Evening, February 10, 2011, 6:45 p.m.**

Mrs. Brusch called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m. Members of the Committee present at the time the meeting was called to order were: M. Patricia Brusch, Mark F. Clark, John Conte, Jennifer Fallon, Anne Marie Mahoney and Rebecca Vose. Also present was Thomas Younger, Town Administrator. Mark Padillo joined the meeting during the Library discussion.

The Committee had the following material before it:

1. Agenda prepared by Mark Clark, Secretary, to which was attached draft of minutes of meeting 4/28/2010.
2. Prior to the meeting, Mrs. Brusch distributed a three-page spreadsheet dated 2/18/2011 captioned "FY11 Capital Expenses by Department."
3. At the beginning of the Department of Public Works discussion, Mr. Castanino distributed the Department's FY2012 requests cast in the Committee's template format. He explained that these were the same requests the Department had previously made in another format. In response to Mr. Castanino's question, Mrs. Brusch explained that the Committee prefers the template format.

**Public Library**  
*(Item 2 on Agenda)*

The Public Library was represented by Maureen Connors, Library Director, and by Mary Keenan, a Library Trustee. Ms. Connors pointed out that even though microfilm is not current technology, some primary sources, particularly the local newspapers, are not available in digital form. The Library currently has two microfilm readers. The other reader will be retired and will not be replaced when it wears out. The microfilm reader that the Library hopes to acquire will be compatible with lenses that the Library already owns. Ms. Connors says that she had looked into leasing but concluded that it would not be favorable. In response to a question, Ms. Connors said that she was unsure how long the microfilm reader that is to be replaced had lasted. She said, however, it had lasted a long time and that's why she had requested it as a capital item. She said she would ascertain what, if anything, is offered through the state bid list. She emphasized that the machine is needed now.

Ms. Fallon asked whether the computer hub now at the Memorial Library building would be part of a project involving a new facility. Ms. Connors pointed out that the computer hub is not part of the Library operation and would not be part of the project to which the state would contribute.

Ms. Connors pointed out that the estimated costs in the Library's five-year projection of capital requests would be revised by an architect who is reviewing the current library building. The architect would supply current numbers based on the idea that the current library building must be maintained because a new facility will not be funded immediately. Mrs. Brusch encouraged consideration of what would be needed in order to maintain operations in the current building indefinitely.

**Council on Aging**  
*(Item 3 on Agenda)*

The Council on Aging was represented by Nava Niv-Vogel. Ms. Niv-Vogel emphasized that the amount that she is requesting (\$13,000) is the local co-pay only, assuming that the grant for which the Council on Aging has applied is awarded. She also said that she expects to learn the fate of the grant application by July 1, 2011.

In response to a question, Ms. Vogel said that if the grant is not received by Belmont, the Council on Aging will "teeter along" with the current vehicle until FY2013 at which time it will request funds to purchase its own van. However, because there will be no state subsidy, the amount to be requested will be significantly higher and the money appropriated for FY2012 will not be adequate.

Mr. Paolillo inquired whether consideration had been given to regionalization of the services for which this so-called "BelderBus" is used. Ms. Niv-Vogel replied that she and Mr. Younger had recently met with representatives of three towns concerning regionalization of services (Lexington, Watertown and Arlington). Mr. Younger joined Ms. Niv-Vogel in responding to the question. Together they indicated that Watertown has a mild interest but feels it needs a larger vehicle than the one maintained by Belmont. Lexington may borrow the Belmont vehicle for compensation but is still developing its program and is not ready to commit to regionalization. Arlington showed less interest in regionalization or sharing vehicles.

Mrs. Brusch inquired about average ridership. In response, Ms. Niv-Vogel made two points. First, average ridership is very misleading. Some of programs for which the BelderBus is used result in a full vehicle and some programs result in very few riders. The average is not representative of either extreme. She also pointed out that she expected that the need for the services provided by the BelderBus will increase. Mr. Younger inquired whether multiple trips with a smaller vehicle would serve. In response, Ms. Niv-Vogel pointed out that there is often not time for multiple trips. She gave as an example the Belmont Food Pantry. It is only open for restricted hours each week and there would not be time for multiple trips to the Food Pantry.

Ms. Fallon inquired whether consideration could be given to a use pooling arrangement in which a van or bus such as the one operated by the Council of Aging could also be used by others in Town. She mentioned, particularly, the SPORT program. Mr. Younger announced that he had taken steps to organize a town-wide meeting on capital items within the next two weeks. He and Mr. Paolillo also cautioned that the

conditions of the state grant should be consulted. They pointed out that sometimes state grants are targeted in such a way that items purchased through those grants cannot be diverted for another use.

**Department of Public Works**  
*(Item 4 on Agenda)*

The Department of Public Works was represented by Peter J. Castinino, Director of Public Works. With him were Michael A. Sanatoro, Assistant Director of Public Works and Highway Division Manager, and Michael R. Bishop, Water Division Manager. After Mr. Castinino had distributed the Department's requests in the template format, Mrs. Bruschi began by reviewing previous capital projects to determine whether any would yield reversions that could be reappropriated. She and Mr. Castinino reviewed the spreadsheet of capital projects that she had distributed before the meeting had been called to order. Of the several previous appropriations to the Department only two were found ready for reversion and reappropriation. They yielded little more than \$10.00 in the aggregate.

With regard to the Department's first priority request (snow fighter conversion), Mr. Castinino explained how the program works and he pointed out that this would be the third conversion. The previous two have worked well. In response to a question by Ms. Fallon, Mr. Castinino explained that the dump truck to be converted will not be replaced. The Department has determined that it can operate without this truck. In fact, this will be the second truck that the Department has eliminated.

With regard to the Department's second priority request (material spreader rehabilitation), Mr. Castinino explained what is done to each truck to rehabilitate it and make it last. This is third of the material spreaders to be rehabilitated.

With regard to the Department's third request (riding lawn mower), Mr. Castinino reported that the mower to be replaced is 13 or 14 years old.

In connection with the Department's fourth priority request (power angle snowplow) Mr. Castinino explained what various types of snowplows are useful for. When asked how long these plows might be expected to last, Mr. Castinino pointed out that the plows to be replaced had lasted more than 30 years. He is not sure how old the existing plows are but recalls playing on them as a child. (Mr. Castinino succeeded his father as Highway Superintendent.)

The Department's fifth priority (resurfacing tennis court at Pequossette) is listed under "parks." Mr. Castinino pointed out that the Cemetery Division and the Parks Division have been combined but for budgeting purposes they are still carried separately. Much of the discussion concerned last year's appropriation for the Grove Street tennis court removal. That matter remains unresolved but Mr. Castinino reported that the

Department would be making this request no matter what resolution might be at Grove Street.

The Department's sixth priority request (for a sidewalk snow blower) resulted in a great deal of discussion concerning the Town's sidewalk snow removal program. Mr. Castinino reported that the Town now plows about 26 miles of sidewalk. This mileage is made up of high traffic areas on Belmont Street and Trapelo Road, routes to schools and sidewalks adjacent to Town property. Currently, the Town operates so-called Bombardiers. These are equipped with V-shaped plows that attempt to push the snow off the sidewalk onto either side. The problem is that the plows are slightly wider than the sidewalk. On one side of sidewalk is a street with only a narrow strip of ground separating the street from the sidewalk. On the other side is frequently a very close obstacle, such as a fence or a hedge or a wall. The result is that snow frequently tumbles back onto the sidewalk behind the Bombardier and the sidewalk is not clean. The Town would use this snow blower to clean up after the Bombardier, resulting in a cleaner sidewalk. The Bombardier travel quite speedily. The snow blower would not travel as rapidly. Thus, final clean-up by the snow blower would not be as prompt as the Bombardier.

The estimated cost (\$750,000) of the Department's seventh request (replacement of turf at Harris Field) prompted some dismayed remarks from members of the Committee. Mr. Castinino explained that the estimate is somewhat preliminary and more funds may be needed. The current field is about 8 years old. Mr. Castinino explained that the problem is not the turf itself but the pad that underlies it. That pad wrinkles in a big rain event. The result is deformations on the surface that render the field unusable until the pad is flattened out. It appears that if such an event happens just before the School Department needs the field for use, the School Department would incur significant transportation and rental costs for use of another field. Mr. Castinino observed that the Town could take a chance for one or two more years but would always face the possibility that a significant rain event would render the field unusable just when it is needed. Mr. Castinino pointed out that the pad that had been originally installed was not the one that had originally been specified. The Town had been assured that the pad as installed was the equivalent of the one specified but that has not turned out to be the case. A new turf with a new pad would meet proper specifications and avoid risk that the field might fail in an extreme rain storm.

Ms. Fallon inquired whether a real grass field would be better. Mr. Paolillo pointed out that the maintenance cost of a real grass field quickly would add up to the amortized cost of an artificial field. Mr. Castinino pointed out that a real grass field gives out much more quickly and more intense use may be made of an artificial field. In fact, Mr. Castinino observed that the Town could use a second such field, perhaps at the new Wellington.

The Committee discussed the fact that the bonds which financed the original field would be paid off in FY2013. Perhaps, it would be best to wait until then to propose major work on the field.

Mr. Castinino emphasized that the estimated cost of the project is greater than for the field alone and that the Department proposes work at the field other than turf replacement. The turf replacement alone is \$612,000. The design for the entire project is about \$68,000. The drain system around the field would be replaced in plastic, not metal, and would cost about \$10,000. Repair of the fence would cost about \$40,000. Repair of the gate in the fence would cost about \$5,000. Instead of fencing, the area in front of the stands would be covered with panels, and they would cost about \$15,000.

Mrs. Mahoney reported that the field get good usage, but seems to be used by organized adult sports, some of which seem to be from out of town. Mr. Castinino said that permits are needed to use the field except by the School Department but the Recreation Department does not have the personnel at night and on Saturdays to enforce the requirement.

The Committee next reviewed the requests which the Department had made for expenditure from Enterprise Funds. This is the last year for payment under the lease/purchase of the Vactor, shared between the Water Division, and the sanitary sewer maintenance program in the Highway Division. \$300,000 would go to the water main replacement, a 30-year program that Mr. Castinino explained. Mr. Castinino also explained the Local Pipeline Assistance Program sponsored by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority and the no-interest loans available under that program.

With regard to the dump truck requested under the sanitary sewer maintenance program of the Highway Division, Mr. Castinino emphasized that diesel trucks are now available that incorporate many pollution mitigation features and that this truck would be available to be borrowed for many other uses.

Ms. Fallon inquired whether the expertise of the Department of Public Works is used when other departments dispose of used vehicles. Mr. Castinino replied that the Department is always ready to consult but that Belmont works on a departmental basis when it comes to vehicles and the Department of Public Works is not always consulted when vehicles are procured or disposed of. Mr. Paolillo indicated that that could be changed.

Ms. Vose asked whether the DPW is involved in the Council on Aging request to obtain a new BelderBus. Mr. Castinino replied in the negative and pointed out that he would be leaving early the next morning for a vacation but Mr. Santoro would be available to consult in the matter, including the best way to trade in the existing vehicle. Mr. Santoro pointed out that the existing vehicle is not the vehicle that the DPW recommended be purchased the last time.

In response to a question from Mr. Clark, Mr. Castinino assured the Committee that the Department of Public Works works closely with Glenn R. Clancy, Director of the Office of Community Development, to create the budget and program submitted by Mr. Clancy with respect to sanitary sewer issues. Mr.

Clancy, however, arranges for that work to be done and supervises the contractors who do the work that is arranged under his budget.

Mr. Castinino pointed out that from time to time the Department prepares a survey of vehicles but does not have the clerical assistance needed to maintain a continuous database of all the vehicles in Town.

During the discussion with the representative of the DPW, Mr. Clark asked a question concerning the provision of water pressure in Town. Despite the fact that it had very little to do with any request for capital funds made by the DPW, Messrs. Castinino and Bishop answered the question.

**Action and Minutes of April 28, 2010**  
*(Item 5 on Agenda)*

Mrs. Brusch announced that the next item of business would be consideration of pending minutes. She called attention to the fact that a proposed draft of the minutes of April 28, 2010 is attached to the agenda. She called for a motion. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the draft minutes of April 28, 2010 were accepted as presented. Mr. Paolillo, who was not then a member of this Committee, abstained.

**General Matters and Schedule**  
*(Item 6 on Agenda)*

There was a brief discussion of the meetings that Committee has scheduled. During that discussion, Mr. Clark pointed out that in reviewing his and Ms. Hagg's notes, he found that there are several items still pending from last week's discussion. Mrs. Brusch pointed out that the meeting next week (February 10, 2011) would be called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at about 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Clark