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**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
Town Hall Conference Room 4
Thursday, February 4, 2016
5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Capital Budget Committee (CBC) was called to order at 5:13 p.m. by Chair Anne Marie Mahoney.

Members Present: Chair Mahoney, M. Patricia Brusch, Mark Paolillo (BOS), Jennifer Fallon (WC), Raffi Manjikian (PB), Susan Burgess-Cox (SC), and Rebecca Vose

Also Present: David Kale, Town Administrator, *ex officio*
Robert McLaughlin and Jack Weis (both there for Article 2: Minuteman)

Chair Mahoney began by reviewing the evening's agenda. She then turned to the first item on the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of November 12, 2015 were approved with one abstention.
The minutes of January 6, 2016 were approved.

Setting of Future Meeting Dates

Chair Mahoney requested that the Department Head/CBC meetings be scheduled. The following dates/times were scheduled:

Thursday, March 10, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. (first look at CBC budget)
Thursday, March 24, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. (department heads)
Thursday, March 31, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. (department heads)
Thursday, April 14, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. (straw poll)
Thursday, April 28, 2016 at 8:00 a.m.

Vote: STM Article 3: High School Building Committee and the Amendment

Chair Mahoney began with the Amendment to Article 3 – which involves evaluating the site, as it was once a dump. Both Ms. Fallon and Mrs. Brusch said that this amendment is redundant. The evaluation of the site will be done anyway, as mandated by state law. Mr. Kale stated that the impetus of the amendment is to bring this issue to light. Selectman Paolillo said that there is little information on what was done in the sixties and seventies. Mrs. Brusch suggested looking at the Town Meeting minutes.

Selectman Paolillo noted that, if something is found on the site, it would significantly alter this project. He questioned the use of the word "evaluation" in the amendment. Mr. Kale said that evaluation means testing. Mr. Weis added that the official term for testing of a site is "environmental site assessment."

The CBC agreed that this testing will happen as a matter of course anyway. There is no need to call the evaluation out.

Chair Mahoney moved: Unfavorable action on the Amendment to Article 3.
The motion passed with five on favor, 1 abstained, 1 opposed.

Ms. Fallon moved: Favorable action on Article 3.
The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Vose moved: Favorable action on Article 3, as amended.
The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation, Discussion, and Vote – STM Article 2: Minuteman

Chair Mahoney began with the postcard sent from Minuteman.

Selectman Paolillo offered his thoughts on the revised agreement and began by saying that this vote amounts to "a close call". He continued: the revised agreement is an outgrowth of the work of a "Selectmen's task force", independent of the Minuteman administration. He explained the process that led to this revised agreement and noted that there are benefits for Belmont, including weighted voting, the appointment of the School Committee member to Minuteman as coming from the Selectmen (as opposed to the town Moderator), better governance of the district, and the possibility that non-member towns will contribute to capital expenses. It has always been a huge frustration that non-member towns send their kids and don't pay toward capital. It also creates a path for non-member towns to join the district. Belmont can still vote against the debt in May. It will be better to face the question of the new building debt under the new, revised agreement. He concluded his remarks by stating that this is not a perfect agreement, but a *negotiated* agreement.

The CBC discussed issues relating to Minuteman, including: the various scenarios effecting the revised agreement, the proposed new facility, the towns that would likely leave the district, the timing of DESE's approval, the impending debt, operating costs, programs, the benefits of weighted voting, etc.

Mr. Weis provided more information on the capital assessment (an average capital cost of the member towns) for non-member towns. Ms. Fallon stated that this agreement is better than the present agreement, which will lead to negotiating a better school and better relationship.

Mrs. Brusch noted that, under the revised agreement, there are significant operating costs incurred by non-member towns that will still need to be subsidized by the member towns. It will

not cost \$100M to fix the current school, as Minuteman reports. It will cost less. The building project needs to be defeated and there is a better chance of that happening if the revised agreement is defeated. Sudbury, she added, intends to leave the district and they send as many kids as Belmont sends. Belmont, under the new potential district membership of 9 towns, is in the middle of the group as far as the number of students it sends.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that there are many unknowns, but that many of these unknowns are irrelevant when considering the revised agreement. He said facing the debt under the new agreement is a better option. The worst scenario is facing the debt under the existing agreement. He explained several unsavory scenarios under the old agreement and several better scenarios under the revised agreement. This agreement, ultimately, is more fair and better for Belmont.

Mr. Weis said that, while he agrees with the points raised by Mrs. Brusch, the operating costs may not be as high as anticipated. However, the number of proposed programs (horticulture, for example) is an indicator of how overbuilt the proposed school is. The revised agreement, with weighted voting, may help to impose fiscal discipline. He added that he is skeptical that non-member towns will ever actually join the district.

The CBC continued to discuss issues relating to this article.

Selectman Paolillo moved: Favorable action on Article 2.
The motion passed with six in favor and 1 opposed.

The CBC moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Vose
Secretary