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**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
Town Hall Conference Room 4
Thursday, October 13, 2016
8:00 AM**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Capital Budget Committee (CBC) was called to order at 8:05 a.m. by Chair Anne Marie Mahoney.

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

Also present: David Kale, Town Administrator

Members Absent: Mark Paolillo (BOS)

Chair Mahoney began by reviewing the morning's agenda.

Election: Chair and Clerk

Chair Mahoney noted that officers will need to be newly elected.

Mrs. Fallon moved: To nominate Mrs. Mahoney as Chair and to nominate Ms. Vose as Clerk. (The nominations were seconded and accepted.)
The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of June 8, 2016 were approved with one abstention.

Discussion and Vote: Minuteman Article Special Town Meeting (STM)

Chair Mahoney began by noting that the town voted 72% in favor of not supporting the Minuteman debt. If Belmont is on the hook for the debt, and debt exclusion fails, one could assume that the funding would come out of the operating budget, specifically, the capital budget.

Chair Mahoney invited WC Member Jim Gammill to address the Committee. He stated that he believes there are sources to fund the debt other than capital. Mr. Gammill acknowledged that the town would pay more in the first three years. He said, however, that he values the access to and membership in Minuteman.

Ms. Burgess-Cox stated that the SC will vote just before Town Meeting (on Wednesday of next

week), after hearing more information at Monday's League of Women Voters briefing night. Ms. Vose added that she is concerned about access to Minuteman. It is challenging for students to get into out-of-district vocational schools. If Belmont does not belong to Minuteman, our students who apply there may not get their first choice of programming. Ms. Fallon agreed that it is difficult to predict what will happen going forward, if we are non-members. Students of member school districts will likely get preferential treatment. Ms. Burgess-Cox stated that Watertown has been sending 68 students, and this year Belmont is sending 28 students. There will likely be room for Belmont and there are other educational options out there for Belmont students, as well.

Mr. Kale spoke to the enrollment figures, noting that there are spaces for out-of-district students. He referenced the new regulation that requires students do their "exploratory" in their home district, then they may apply to Minuteman (or other vocational high school) as an out-of-district student. He noted that over-all Minuteman's enrollment has dropped. Minuteman's 8% enrollment-increase assumption may not be a sustainable estimate. There are a lot of assumptions that will impact this. Furthermore, there are districts that would like to have Belmont students. The operating (and capital) costs of Minuteman will be a drain on Belmont's budget.

Mrs. Brusch noted that Belmont's general enrollment has gone up significantly, but the number of students that Belmont is sending to Minuteman has not really increased. This is similar to Arlington. She noted that Minuteman's 8% increase in enrollment per year figure was calculated a few years ago and is not reflective of Belmont (this year). She noted that people moving into Belmont are not doing that so their children can attend Minuteman; they are moving to town for the school system in general.

Mr. Kale stated that Belmont pays Minuteman about \$30K per student before the debt. The out-of-district kids have the same access to the programs that member-town kids have. He noted that there is a lot of interest in Belmont students from other school systems with vocational education programs, but that the superintendents of these districts are currently lying low so as not to appear to be undermining Minuteman. Mr. Kale expressed confidence that should Belmont officially withdraw, viable vocational educational alternatives will be available.

Mr. Gammill added some clarification to the per student costs.

Chair Mahoney noted that Minuteman does have a lot of empty seats. She added that some basic programs (HVAC) are no longer offered there. Withdrawing from Minuteman will give Belmont kids more choices (more program options). The demographics of the 16 member communities have significantly changed over the past 45 years since the creation of the district. Families in many member towns are not sending the same number of students to Minuteman.

CBC members continued discussing issues relating to Minuteman, e.g., enrollment, costs (operating and capital), non-member status versus member status, and alternative educational options.

Chair Mahoney moved: To support the STM article for Belmont to withdraw from

Minuteman.

The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Mahoney will offer (at the STM) a three-sentence explanation on the vote. The CBC underscored the point that there will be a plan (and a task force) with viable alternatives for our students.

Update: Capital Projects

Chair Mahoney asked committee members involved in capital projects for a status report.

Belmont High School

Mrs. Bruschi reported that the MSBA deadlines have been met. The enrollment number put forth by the MSBA for a 9-12 high school is 1470. Other configurations besides 9-12 will be explored, viz., 7-12 or 8-12. She noted that the MSBA will not pay for a pre-school or library on the high school site. The Authority might consider some type of day care on site if it is part of the high school education. The next step will be for the MSBA to invite Belmont to proceed with the feasibility study phase. At that time, an architect and OPM would be engaged to further explore the three configurations.

Library

Ms. Fallon told committee members that one public forum was held with over 100 people in attendance. An architect is working with various boards in town to discuss synergy with other projects. A new library on its present site is currently being explored. The options include: renovate only (a less desirable option), a renovation with additions, and a new building. The next public forum is scheduled on November 17. It will be frustrating (for those involved) if the library does not move forward at this time because all the work that has been done will be for naught.

Remaining major capital projects: DPW, Police, Incinerator Site, Rink and White Fieldhouse

Mr. Kale noted that the BHS process will impact the rink (which is now on pause while the high school project is in process). Documents have been submitted to the state on the Incinerator site. This site is also affected by the high school plan (concerning field space, etc.). Decisions about the Police Station site hinge on the disposition of the Incinerator site. The situation is fluid and interconnected. One thing is clear: a new DPW building will remain on its current site.

Chair Mahoney added that the CBC will go into more depth on these remaining capital projects. Also, the CBC will need to discuss a capital budget policy as well, in light of what happened with the community path funding and the BOS.

Review Process for FY18 Capital Budget

This topic was deferred.

Setting of Future Meeting Dates

Chair Mahoney asked members to email her their scheduling constraints. She said she'd like the CBC to meet this fall to discuss the remaining capital projects.

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 10, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. (potentially)

The CBC moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Vose
Secretary