

Town of Belmont
Capital Budget Committee
Belmont Town Hall, Room 4
Thursday Evening, March 29, 2007, 6:30 p.m.

According to an understanding established informally with the members of the Committee, Mrs. Brusch called the meeting to order shortly after 7:00 p.m. (7:06). All the members of the Committee (John Bowe, M. Patricia Brusch, Mark F. Clark, John Conte, Jennifer M. Fallon, Angelo Firenze and Anne Marie Mahoney) were present at the meeting. Also present were Barbara Hagg, Town Accountant and staff liaison to the Capital Budget Committee, and Thomas Younger, Town Administrator.

The Committee had the following material before it:

1. Agenda for the meeting prepared by Mark Clark, Secretary.
2. A one-page sheet provided by Ms. Hagg, captioned "FY08 priority votes by each CBC member" which listed each Capital Budget request for Fiscal Year 2008 and had columns for recording the position of each Committee member.

General Discussion for Requests for FY08 Capital Budget (Item 2 on Committee Agenda)

The only item on the agenda for the Committee was a preliminary discussion of the requests for the Capital Budget for FY08. The discussion began with Mrs. Brusch informing the Committee that a further request from the Council on Aging might develop. Last year, this Committee did not recommend a request from the Council on Aging to fund a replacement of the so-called "medi-car". It appeared at that time that a grant might be available to fund the purchase of such a vehicle. That grant did not materialize. Even if it does, the arrangement will require a supplement (about \$7,000) from the Town. In other words, such a grant would only fund only part of the purchase price. Meanwhile, the Warrant Committee is investigating whether all of the uses to which this vehicle is put are appropriate. Mrs. Brusch also reported that the Board of Library Trustees is planning to place on the Warrant for the Annual Town Meeting an article to appoint a building committee for a new library building, which will include funding (appropriated from Kendall insurance proceeds) for the development of schematic drawings.

The Committee also discussed briefly the situation that has arisen regarding the Veterans of Foreign Wars' building on Trapelo Road.

During the next phase of the general discussion, each member of the Committee in turn expressed issues that he or she thought the Town should address when devising the Capital Budget. Among the issues that were put forward were: is chapter 90 money in addition to the amount allocated from the Town for the Capital Budget; should 2½ percent increase be allocated between roads and all other capital budgets; can the air-conditioning equipment request from the School Department be funded from free cash; is there some way in which the radio requests can be consolidated and coordinated; what is the timing for the sale of Woodfall Road property; why does this Committee ask departments to declare the priorities of their requests if this Committee is free to ignore those priorities; what is the amount of requests that this Committee believes are not within the applicable by-law definition of "capital" but that this Committee feels should be funded in some way; what is the status of members of this Committee who have participated in all meetings thus far this year but are going to become chairman of their respective forwarding committees; what is the status of the Town's consideration of a security program; can vehicles that are being replaced be reused by some other Town department; is there a coordinated approach to the request for a generator or generators and what would be the consequence of a power failure that they are designed to protect against; can the Municipal Light Department address the need for back-up power; how can this Committee understand that requests for capital expenditures by the Building Services Department in view of the fact that they are not put in a priority list.

After the general discussion, the Committee turned to the sheet that Mrs. Hagg had provided. As Mrs. Bruschi called out each capital request, members of the Committee indicated their attitudes toward that request. Some members took the approach that their affirmative responses should add up to the value available to the Committee's FY08 budget. Others proceeded on the basis that they should indicate their attitudes toward an item regardless of the final tally. No decisions were made but during the discussion it became clear that a majority felt that neither the request for generators nor the request for security devices was completely enough formulated to warrant a recommendation from this Committee that money be appropriated for those projects at this time. Moreover, a consensus developed that at least one additional column should be added to Mrs. Hagg's sheet. Ms. Fallon pointed out that this Committee might recommend an appropriation in an amount different from the original departmental request, particularly in the case of bundled items. A column should be provided in which that circumstance can be recorded. Mr. Firenze asked that careful record be made of those requests that the Committee deems not "capital" within the applicable definition but that should be funded under some heading (e.g., information technology or maintenance).

Adjournment
(Item 3 on Committee Agenda)

The meeting adjourned at about 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Clark