

Town of Belmont
Capital Budget Committee
Belmont Town Hall, Room 1
Thursday Evening, April 12, 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. (7:05). 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; Thomas Younger, Town Administrator; and Jeffrey Conti, Assistant Town Administrator. Hal Shubin, Chairman of the Board of Library Trustees was present and participated in the discussion of Article 19 on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting that begins April 23, 2007.

The Committee had the following material before it:

1. Agenda for the meeting prepared by Mark Clark, Secretary, to which were attached drafts for proposed minutes for the meetings of 3/1/07, 3/19/07 and 3/21/07.
2. Copies of the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting that begins April 23, 2007.

Mrs. Brush reviewed the agenda for the evening, stating that the principal item would be review of the articles on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting. She also indicated that she hoped to return to the preparation of recommendations for the capital budget to be presented in June. She indicated that water and sewer matters (particularly Article 11) would be taken up in June. She also indicated that she had additional information concerning some proposed budget items that had been questioned during the Committee's most recent meeting.

Action on Pending Minutes
(Item 2 on Committee Agenda)
Meetings of 3/1/07, 3/19/07, 3/21/07

Mrs. Brusch called the attention of the Committee to the fact that proposed drafts of the minutes of the meetings of 3/1/07, 3/19/07 and 3/21/07 were attached to the agenda previously made available to members of the Committee. Ms. Fallon moved, and Mr. Bowe seconded that all minutes be approved as presented. That motion was unanimously adopted.

Review and Action Concerning Articles on Warrant for Annual Town Meeting
(Item 3 on Committee Agenda)

In its review of the articles on the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting, the Committee considered in depth only those articles that required recommendations from this Committee at the April session of the Annual Town Meeting. Following those criteria, the first article for consideration was article 8, concerning the "up-front" money for chapter 90 road funds. Mr. Younger pointed out that the chapter 90 funds available to Belmont for FY08 are 25% greater than the funds available in FY07. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Committee voted to recommend favorable action on the motion under Article 8.

Diane Stafford joined the meeting. Mr. Bowe explained that she would be the School Committee member of this Committee when he becomes Chairman of the School Committee. The arrangement is that Mr. Bowe will act upon a capital budget for FY08 since he has attended all the Committees deliberations in that regard. Dr. Stafford will begin acting with regard to all other matters that come before the Committee. Mr. Firenze stated that Daniel Leclerc will be the Board of Selectmen representative on this Committee when Mr. Firenze becomes Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, but Mr. Leclerc will not be present at this meeting of the Committee.

No recommendation from this Committee is required for Article 15 (adjudicatory hearings). Nevertheless, the Committee paused to consider it briefly. Mr. Clark inquired whether it would apply to adjudicatory hearings that are entirely completed in one session such that a

board member could act on a matter without ever attending any hearing. No one knew the answer for sure but Mr. Conti indicated that he would find out. Ms. Fallon inquired whether each Town board or committee would have to adopt this provision separately. Mr. Conti responded that only the adoption by Town Meeting is required but that only three town bodies will be affected (the Historic District Commission, the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals).

The next article upon which this Committee is asked to opine is Article 18 (the proposal to redefine permitted uses for certain former public buildings). Mr. Clark inquired whether "public" should be understood to mean buildings open to the public or buildings owned by the public. Mr. Conti explained that the proposal related to buildings formerly owned by the public. In particular, this proposal had been put on the warrant pursuant to a petition filed on behalf of a person interested in the former Fairview Firehouse. During the discussion, it became apparent that the Planning Board had not yet considered this proposal but would do so. Ms. Fallon indicated that the Planning Board would consider the matter at its meeting on April 19. Mr. Firenze proposed that this Committee recommend favorable action contingent upon the Planning Board having decided to recommend favorable action. Upon motion duly made and seconded, this Committee unanimously agreed to recommend favorable action on the motion under Article 18 contingent upon favorable action by the Planning Board.

Discussion of Article 19 (library building committee) was extensive and wide-ranging. Mr. Shubin participated in the discussion, during which the following points were raised. When, at a previous Town Meeting, the Town had been asked to show its support for a new library building, the Town had been assured that further action was some years away. Efforts were made to understand or predict what the timing of events might now be. The importance of avoiding a seemingly substantive "no" vote were explored. Efforts to find a modus vivendi regarding Article 19 were made but none appeared. The motion under the article does not specify the location of a new library but the Library Trustees expect that the current site would be reused. Kendall Insurance proceeds have been used in the past to "seed" the development process for new town buildings but the remaining balance of the Kendall Insurance proceeds are part of reserves upon which the Town depends for its AAA bond rating. The Town is facing many capital needs, including replacement of the Wellington School and renovation of the High School.

Although the Overview Committee promised by the Selectmen has been appointed, it cannot be expected to report anything germane to the library prior to the resumption of the Annual Town Meeting in June. Therefore, delaying action on article 19 until the second session of the Annual Town Meeting cannot be expected to achieve anything useful. On the other hand, the Overview Committee has been given a tight schedule and is expected to report by October 1. The Library Trustees feel it is important to demonstrate to the Commonwealth that the Town is serious about a new library and is moving toward that goal, but the Commonwealth has not made any specific requirement with regard to that demonstration and the Commonwealth has not actually awarded any grant to Belmont. A building committee is an implementation committee and works within a designated site. There are other possible sites in Town (several of which were mentioned) that should be considered beside the existing library site but a building committee is not the way to do that. Plans cannot be drawn up and then be put away for later use. Plans inevitably become stale and the money spent on plans too early is wasted.

Ms. Fallon moved and Mrs. Bruschi seconded that this Committee recommend that Article 19 be considered at a later town meeting. Mr. Firenze objected that this Committee should make a definite recommendation regarding the substantive motion under article 19, and he moved (and Mrs. Mahoney seconded) that this Committee recommend unfavorable action on the motion under article 19. Mr. Clark moved that Ms. Fallon's motion be substituted for Mr. Firenze's motion but Mr. Clark's motion was not seconded.

After further discussion, all members of this Committee (except Mr. Clark) voted in favor of Mr. Firenze's motion. Mr. Clark voted against it. Thus, this Committee voted, six to one, to recommend unfavorable action on the motion under Article 19. Thereupon, Ms. Fallon proposed

that this issue be taken up again at a fall town meeting. After some discussion, Ms. Fallon's proposal was cast in the form of a motion, made by Ms. Fallon and seconded by Mrs. Mahoney, that this Committee recommend that the appointment of a building committee for a new library be revisited at a fall town meeting when additional information is available. That motion was unanimously adopted by the Committee.

Continued Discussion of FY08 Capital Budget Requests (Item 4 on Committee Agenda)

The Committee next considered new information concerning issues that had developed during its previous consideration of requests for FY08. Because of the hour, the Committee did not begin discussing the requests themselves. Mrs. Brusch noted, however, that the meeting of this Committee previously scheduled for April 19 would be canceled and the next meeting of the Committee would be held on May 3, at which time the specific requests for FY08 will be considered.

The first item to be discussed was the request for funds concerning the stairway in the Homer Building. Since this matter involves currently pending litigation, the Committee proposed to go into executive session. Mrs. Brusch polled each of the members of the Committee individually and each indicated his or her agreement to go into executive session with the understanding that the regular session would be resumed after this discussion of the Homer stairs. Mr. Shubin had departed following discussion of article 19. The Committee invited town employees (Ms. Hagg and Messrs. Younger and Conti) to remain with the Committee. At 9:00 p.m. the Committee went into executive session and at 9:09, upon motion duly made and seconded, and unanimously adopted, the Committee emerged from executive session and continued in regular session.

The Historic District Commission has approved the plan for making the windows in the School Administration Building less drafty. One window will be treated first and the result inspected.

Ms. Fallon is very concerned that the Town develop an adequate and comprehensive security system before spending money. Mr. Conti addressed the status of the security planning. The current proposal is that the plan be implemented in three two-year phases. The plan has not been voted upon by the Board of Selectmen nor has it been presented to the School Committee. The non-school departments are already trying to implement what can be implemented with existing funds. The greatest expense for phase one will be School Department implementation; non-school department implementation during phase one involves mostly security policies and procedures. Mr. Bowe requested a written report for the School Committee but Messrs. Conti and Firenze indicated that a live presentation should be made to all members of the School Committee at the same time.

When Ms. Fallon indicated that it did not seem to her that the Town had yet achieved a comprehensive security plan, Mr. Firenze indicated that the Board of Selectmen would not endorse even the non-school implementation until the School Committee has indicated how it feels about the security proposal. Messrs. Conti and Firenze emphasized that each phase will stand alone; that phase one is very basic ("lock the doors"); and that phase one involves different levels of security in different areas (for example, in highly sensitive IT areas the security provided will be very high but will be more lax in phase one in other areas).

The Committee, during the discussion of security measures, made several requests intended to learn the implications of the program for current capital budget requests. The Committee wishes to know whether phase one can be further divided into subphases and what the cost of those subphases might be. The Committee is also interested in more precise costs of phase one, broken down into costs for the School Department elements of phase one and the

non-School Department costs for phase one. In particular, the Committee would like to know what the funding requirements might be for the first year of the first phase.

New doors for the lower level main entrance of the Town Hall will cost between \$15,000 and \$17,000. Mr. Firenze estimates that the total cost will be about \$20,000 when all hardware is included. Mrs. Bruschi indicated that the Town Hall Complex Building Committee had offered to pay \$10,000 toward to cost of the new doors. The remaining cost to be funded from the Town's general revenues is thus under \$10,000 and could raise an issue whether this request meets the applicable definition of capital item.

The potential medi-car grant is in fact for a specific vehicle, this year a Dodge van, toward which the Town must contribute \$7,000. Last year, a Dodge Caravan with a lift and six seats was made available. Transportation dispatchers are given rides to the senior center in the medi-car so they can perform their duties as transportation dispatchers. The cost of each trip is over \$10.00. The medi-car is used for appointments other than medical ones such as trips to the hairdresser or shopping. Mr. Firenze indicated that in his view the Town should reject the offer of a new van and employ a taxi voucher system instead. Mr. Younger pointed out that the Town is now considering more regionalization and outsourcing and that by rejecting this offer, the Town would be forced to undertake more outsourcing. Mrs. Bruschi inquired whether there are better and different ways of providing this service to townspeople.

Mrs. Bruschi reported that Dr. McCanne had indicated that each building contains a 'phone that will work in a power outage so that 911 can be dialed. Members of the Committee observed, however, that nothing is done within a building to identify which phone will continue to work during a power outage. Dr. McCanne will return to the Committee with a further update on telephones and IT questions. A power loss at the library is very unusual. The last occasion was last year, when the power failed for an hour and one-half. The Municipal Light Department will be making a change in switching gear that will allow it to feed the library area in a much more expeditious manner. Ninety-five percent of potential problems would be solved by this alternative switching gear. Mr. Firenze and Mr. Richardson are considering alternate sources of power. Mr. Richardson has suggested two ways be explored that might provide back-up power to the Homer building and still not interfere with the historic character of the Town Hall Complex. The first would be to make use of an old Light Department generator by connecting under Concord Avenue. The second would be to approach the Belmont Savings Bank to inquire whether the same generator could be relocated onto its property in return for some sort of shared usage.

Peter Castanino has stated that if the DPW is awarded the two trucks that he had requested he will have one old truck to be given to the Building Services Department. If, however, the DPW is awarded only one new truck in the FY08 Capital Budget, he will have to use the only old truck for the parks department.

Mr. Firenze reported on the status of current efforts to assemble a recommended operating budget for FY08, including proposed uses of free cash. Funds for a network administrator seem to be a key item. Mr. Firenze is considering cutting the capital budget allotment in order to fund items that have been requested from the Capital Budget Committee but do not seem to meet the applicable definition of a capital item. In the past, the Town Meeting has been presented with a single budget proposal which has been prepared by the Selectmen and is recommended by the Warrant Committee and the Capital Budget Committee. This year, however, it might be that the Selectmen will propose a budget that differs from the one recommended by one or the other or both of the Committee.

Adjournment
(Item 3 on Committee Agenda)

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

Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Clark