

**Town of Belmont
Capital Budget Committee
Belmont Town Hall, Room 4
Thursday evening, September 29, 2005**

With the unanimous consent of all members present, Mark Clark, as chairman *pro tem*, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. He announced that Michael Speidel, the chairman and secretary of this Committee last year, had resigned to attend to other responsibilities. He asked each person present to introduce him or herself and he distributed a sign-in sheet to be circulated among the members. He also distributed a proposed agenda.

At the time, or shortly after the meeting was called to order, the following members were present: John Bowe, representing the School Committee; M. Patricia Brusch, representing the Warrant Committee; Mark F. Clark, member at large; John Conte, member at large; Angelo Firenze, representing the Board of Selectmen; and Anne Marie Mahoney, member at large. Also present were Barbara Hagg, staff liaison and Town Accountant; Thomas Younger, Town Administrator; and Jeffrey Conti, Assistant Town Administrator.

Organization of Committee and Election of Officers

(item 2 on Proposed Agenda)

Mr. Clark called for nominations for a permanent chairman.

Mr. Conte nominated Mrs. Brusch. There being no other nominations, Mrs. Brusch was unanimously elected as chairman and presided over the remainder of the meeting. She called for nominations for the position of Secretary. Mr. Clark was nominated. There being no further nominations, Mr. Clark was unanimously elected as Secretary.

Action on Minutes

(item 3 on Proposed Agenda)

The next item of business was action on the draft minutes, prepared by Mr. Speidel, for the meetings of this Committee on May 19, June 2 and 13, 2005. Of the current members present, only Mr. Firenze and Mrs. Brusch had been present at the meetings early last summer. They agreed that the draft minutes as presented were accurate and the draft was unanimously approved as the minutes of those meetings.

Security Systems

(item 4 on Proposed Agenda)

Mrs. Brusch announced that the principal purpose of the meeting was to prepare for the Special Town Meeting called for the evening of Monday, October 24, 2005, (STM). One issue that might be presented to the STM is funding for a security system. To discuss that issue, Mrs. Brusch introduced Wm. Kevin Looney, manager of the Town's Building Services Department. Mr. Looney began by distributing to the members of the Committee a memo dated September 29, 2005 and captioned Security System. At 7:27 p.m., a motion was made and seconded to go into executive session to discuss the Town's plans for a security system. Mrs. Brusch consulted her guide to the public meeting law and determined that discussion of security system plans was a reason

for an executive session. She, therefore, asked each member of the Committee present for his or her vote on the pending motion. Messrs. Bowe, Clark, Conte, and Firenze and Mrs. Mahoney all voted “yes,” and the Committee thereupon went into executive session. At 8:10 p.m., the Committee, upon motion made and seconded, voted to return to regular session and Mrs. Bruschi summarized the discussion by observing that it is very unlikely that an article concerning security systems will be presented to this Special Town Meeting. Mr. Looney left the meeting.

Discussion of Warrant Articles for Special Meeting

(item 7 on Proposed Agenda)

Woodfall Road Property

The next item on the agenda was the proposed sale by the Town of property owned by the Town near Woodfall Road. Mr. Firenze distributed drafts of articles for the Special Town Meeting intended to put the Board of Selectmen in a position to complete the sale. Mr. Firenze explained that the transaction was being planned in two steps. The first step would be a land swap with the Belmont Country Club intended to give the Town the property needed to lay out street access to the property to be sold. The second step would be the sale of property itself subject to a request for proposals, or “RFP”. With the help of Mr. Younger, Mr. Firenze illustrated what the two steps would involve on a map of the area in question.

Mr. Firenze also explained that the Belmont Country Club had asked for an agreement from the Town containing four points before making the land swap. Those points are a traffic light, a fence to protect homes from the club’s driving range, the elimination of so-called “paper streets” in the area and an arrangement for indemnification of the club if anyone is hurt by flying golf balls. The Board of Selectmen is currently in negotiation with the club concerning its requests and, at the same time, Mr. Younger is developing the substance of a RFP for sale of the lots that will result from the land swap and other actions by the Board of Selectmen.

During the discussion, a consensus emerged that the Committee should delay a formal vote on these articles until the Board of Selectmen is satisfied with its agreement with the Belmont Country Club and until the Board of Selectmen can indicate what the substantial elements (or “bullet points”) will be in the RFP by which it proposes to sell these properties.

Sale of Central Fire Station

The Committee next turned to the proposed sale of the current main fire station in Belmont Center. The draft articles that Mr. Firenze had previously distributed also contained a draft article addressing the sale of the Central Fire Station. Mr. Firenze outlined the current thinking of the Board of Selectmen concerning the circumstances under which the fire station would be offered for sale. Various members of the Committee offered their views concerning appropriate uses of this property that would enhance Belmont Center. During the discussion, a consensus developed that the Committee would not vote on this article until a RFP had been drafted embodying the Board of Selectmen’s intentions regarding the sale of this property.

Allocation of Proceeds

Mrs. Mahoney pointed out that, according to her understanding, she, while serving as a Selectmen, had reached an agreement with the other two Selectmen that

proceeds of the sale of property near Woodfall Road would be available for the Town's regular capital budget, thus freeing up funds for the Town's annual operating budget. A proposal to devote the proceeds of the sale of property on Woodfall Road to the funding of the proposed Senior Center is inconsistent with that understanding. During the ensuing discussion, it was established that a majority of the Committee is opposed to allocating the proceeds of the sale of the Woodfall property to the proposed Senior Center.

Mr. Firenze informed the Committee that no proposal would be presented at this Special Town Meeting to allocate the proceeds of the sale of the Woodfall Road property to any particular use. Indeed, it became apparent later in the meeting that, at the request of the Senior Center Building Committee, a town-wide debt exclusion vote is scheduled for November 14, 2005, for the purpose of funding the Town's contribution to the proposed Senior Center.

Historical Accessory Buildings

Next, the Committee took up the historical accessory buildings preservation by-law article. The Committee had before it a draft of an article as of September 29, 2005. Ms. Hagg distributed to the Committee copies of a memo she had received from Richard D. Simmons, the Town's Assessing Administrator, entitled "Accessory Buildings Historic Preservation By-law". Attached to this memo was a 35-page list of accessory buildings in Town to which the proposed by-law might apply which Mr. Simmons had derived from the Assessors' records. During the ensuing discussion, the Committee reached a consensus that, though the proposed by-law is of great interest and potentially of great consequence, it does not involve a capital asset of the Town and, therefore, the Committee would not take a position on the proposal.

Review of Previously Approved and Pending Capital Projects

(items 5 & 6 on Proposed Agenda)

Mrs. Bruschi explained that she wished to conclude the current meeting at a reasonable hour. Therefore, she proposed that a review of existing capital projects and a review of future, but known, large capital projects be deferred to the Committee's next meeting. Mr. Younger informed the Committee that he hoped to obtain some capital planning software for the Town.

Committee Schedule

(item 8 on Proposed Agenda)

Mrs. Bruschi then explained that the Committee had customarily met on Thursday evenings in order to avoid conflicts with the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evening meetings of the Committees and Boards from which some of this Committee's members are drawn. She said that she hoped to improve this Committee's procedure next spring by requesting that Town department heads develop proposed capital budgets at the same time as they are developing their proposed operating budgets. She also plans to schedule three meetings at which department heads will be invited to present their proposed capital budgets to the Committee. These changes will allow the Committee to avoid a situation like last year's, in which department heads had to present their capital budget requests to this Committee in two very long evening meetings after the operating budget was largely established.

As far as this fall's Special Town Meeting is concerned, this Committee already has posted a meeting for 6 o'clock on the evening of the Special Town Meeting.

However, Mrs. Brusch indicated that she hoped that the Committee could meet on a separate, earlier evening to complete work on articles for Special Town Meeting and to address the agenda items deferred from this meeting. During the ensuing discussion, it became apparent that October 20 would be suitable next meeting date for this Committee.

Mrs. Brusch called for a motion to adjourn and, upon motion duly made and seconded, at 9:56 p.m. the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Clark, Secretary