



Belmont
MASSACHUSETTS
Town of Homes

Transition from Elected to Appointed Treasurer

Public Forum
Thursday, October 27, 2022





Collins Center Report

- The Town received a grant for the Collins Center from UMass Boston to conduct a review of the financial structure of the Town.
- The final report provided 19 inter-related recommendations; a presentation on the overall report was given to the Select Board in June and will be given to Town Meeting at the end of November.
- The basic summary is that Belmont is one of the most decentralized communities in MA, and perhaps the most decentralized. (Measured by the number of independently elected boards and positions.)
- This has had negative effects on our ability to manage the financial needs of the community.
- One of the strongest recommendations was to transition from an elected to an appointed Treasurer, as originally recommended by a report from the Division of Local Services in 2011.



Treasurer Role

State laws and regulations dictate Treasury operations for consistency across communities. Manages a LOT of financial transactions – detail oriented. State law requires treasurers to be bonded within one week of taking office and annually thereafter.

- Issues bills – Real estate tax (~36,000/year) and motor vehicle excise (~20,000/year); values set by Assessors.
- Manages Taxpayer Accounts – Issues Demand notices, applies interest for past-due accounts, and files Tax liens for unpaid tax and utility bills. Works with taxpayers to establish payment plans.
- Cash Management – Ensures sufficient funds in bank accounts to pay payroll and invoices entered by town/school departments. Reconciles bank accounts.
- Debt Management – Issues debt for projects authorized by Town Meeting and makes principal and interest payments.
- Investment Management – Invests available funds in legally authorized investments.
- Fund Management – Manages standalone trust funds (scholarships, Library, Stabilization)
- Department Head – Supervises staff and ensures following union contracts and supporting functions above.



Process Set Out in Mass. General Laws (MGL)

[MGL Chapter 41, section 1B](#) provides a process for communities to transition from an elected to appointed Treasurer.

1. Vote by Town Meeting at least 60 days before Annual Election
2. Townwide vote at Annual Election

Incumbent serves remainder of term unless voted into office at same Annual Election; serves until permanent appointment made in that case.

MGL Ch. 41:1B says that Select Board appoints non-elected Treasurer; however, Belmont's Town Administrator Act supersedes and has TA making appointment.



Options for Timing

1. Town Meeting vote on Ch. 41:1B Treasurer conversion in November 2022
 - April 4, 2023 Annual Election includes questions for voter approval
 - Any candidate running for Treasurer in April 2023 would either
 - a) Serve a full 3-year term if Ch. 41:1B not approved, or
 - b) Serve until a permanent Treasurer appointed if Ch. 41:1B approved.
2. January Town Meeting vote on Ch. 41:1B Treasurer conversion (Feb. 3, 2023 deadline)
 - Same timing and impact as above
3. Town Meeting vote on Ch. 41:1B Treasurer conversion in May 2023
 - April 2024 Annual Election includes questions for voter approval
 - Any candidate running for Treasurer in April 2023 would serve the full 3-year term until April 2026, unless they decided to step down earlier.