



MODERATOR'S MESSAGE ON TOWN MEETING PROCEDURES

Belmont's Town Meetings are conducted in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws, our Representative Town Meeting statute, the General Bylaws, and traditional customs and practices that we have followed for many years, with guidance provided by the principles and rules of conduct in *Town Meeting Time, a Handbook of Parliamentary law*. Several matters of procedure are summarized below.

- An **article** in the Warrant provides notice to the Town Meeting of a matter to be considered. The article itself is not a specific proposal for action. A **motion** is a proposal for action by the Town Meeting and must be within the scope of the notice provided by an article in the Warrant. An article may not be amended but a motion may be amended by vote of the Town Meeting.
- Formal seconding will not be required on **main motions** under articles in the warrant. Seconding will be required on all other motions.
- All **main motions and proposed amendments** involving the expenditure of money must be in writing. All other motions and proposed amendments must also be in writing unless they are brief and simple as to be easily understood when stated orally.
- All substantive amendments and motions to be offered under an article in the Warrant must be submitted to the Town Clerk in writing not later than the close of business on the third (3rd) business day before the commencement of the session at which the Article is considered, in order to provide sufficient time for review by Town Counsel and the Moderator and to be made available for distribution to the Town Meeting Members before the commencement of such session. The Moderator may allow exceptions to the advance filing requirement in case of motions that are easy to understand, but such exceptions are within the exclusive discretion of the Moderator.
- Except for motions involving the expenditure of money or Bylaw amendments, the Moderator will first recognize the maker of the motion, if he or she wishes to speak.
- Before commencing discussion on motions involving the expenditure of money or Bylaw amendments, the Moderator will first call for committee reports as follows:
 - **Expenditure of Money** – Warrant Committee,
 - **Capital Improvements** – Warrant Committee, then Capital Budget Committee,
 - **General Bylaw amendments** – Bylaw Review Committee,
 - **Zoning Bylaw amendments** – Planning Board.
- Town Meeting Members wishing to speak should come to a microphone. When recognized by the Moderator, the Member should state his or her name and precinct number before commencing.
- Registered voters of the Town who are not Town Meeting Members may speak at the Town Meeting, but first must either arrange in advance with the Moderator for recognition or arrange to be introduced by a Town Meeting Member.

- Persons who are not Town Meeting Members may be admitted to the floor by invitation **but may not vote.**
- All discussion must be relevant to a motion before the town meeting. All speakers must address the Moderator; questions may be asked only through the Moderator. Speakers are limited to an initial question and one follow-up question. A Town Meeting Member who wishes to make a motion that is debatable must first make the motion and, after it is seconded, if required, the Moderator will recognize the maker of the motion to speak to it. The Moderator will not recognize a motion made at the conclusion of a speech. This, by definition, includes a motion that would terminate debate, such as a motion for the previous question.
- The Moderator will try to recognize Town Meeting Members in the order in which they come to the microphones. While our General Bylaws do not set a time limit for Town Meeting Members when speaking for the first time, the Moderator has established a limit of five minutes. Unless the Town Meeting consents no person may speak more than twice upon any question, except to correct an error or to make an explanation of a previous statement. No person should seek recognition to speak for a second time until others who have not yet spoken have had an opportunity to be recognized. The five-minute limit also applies to those speaking for a second time.
- Section 30-115(F) of our General Bylaws allows the Moderator to utilize electronic voting at his/her discretion. When not using electronic voting, the Section 30-115 further states that all votes shall be taken in the first instance by a “yes” or “no” voice vote. If the Moderator is in doubt as to the vote, or if any Town Meeting Member doubts the vote, the Moderator will call for an electronic vote. Any Town Meeting Member may also request a roll call vote; the request must be concurred in by 34 or more additional Town Meeting Members; and the request must be made in connection with final action under an article in the Warrant.
- Our Bylaws require that a Town Meeting Member who wishes to speak on an issue in which he or she or a member of his or her family has a direct financial interest, or in which he or she is engaged as an attorney or consultant, must first disclose this interest to the Town Meeting.
- A motion to reconsider a vote adopted at one session of a Town Meeting may not be made at an adjourned session of the same Town Meeting unless the mover has given notice of his or her intention either at the session at which the vote was passed or by written notice delivered to the Town Clerk by 12 o'clock noon on the first business day following the commencement of the session at which the vote sought to be reconsidered was passed. A two-thirds vote is required for reconsideration; no vote may be reconsidered more than once.
- Action on our general budget article will not be considered final so as to require a two-thirds vote for reconsideration, or any other procedures relating to reconsideration, until all action under that Article has been completed.

Any citizen who has questions about Town Meeting procedures is encouraged to email me at mike.j.widmer@gmail.com.

Michael J. Widmer

Moderator

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA
November 13, 2019



2019 OCT 22 AM 9:12

**TOWN OF BELMONT
WARRANT FOR 2019 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
NOVEMBER 13, 2019
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Middlesex, ss.

To any of the Constables of the Town of Belmont in said County:

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are required to notify and warn the Inhabitants of the Town of Belmont, qualified as the law requires to vote in elections and Town Affairs, to meet at the Chenery Middle School Auditorium on **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2019, at 7:00 P.M.**, and to notify and warn the Town Meeting Members to meet and act at said time and place on the following Articles:

ARTICLE 1:

Reports

To hear the report of the Members of the Select Board and other Town Officers, and Committees heretofore appointed and to act thereon.

This article allows the Select Board and other Town officers, boards and committees to report orally to the Town Meeting on appropriate matters not otherwise appearing on the Warrant. This article stays "on the table" throughout the Town Meeting to allow Town officials and committees to report at the call of the Moderator.

Submitted by the Select Board

Majority vote required for passage.

ARTICLE 2: Capital Appropriation: Second Half of Funding for Fire Engine Pumper Truck

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$347,700 to purchase a Fire Engine Pumper Truck, said sum to be transferred from Free Cash, or in any way act thereon.

The Town appropriated \$347,100 at the 2019 Annual Town Meeting; we are now requesting the second half of the appropriation from Free Cash in order to purchase the engine by the end of the 2019 calendar year. Generally fire engine pumper trucks take up to a year to build.

Submitted by the Select Board

Page 1 of 5

The Select Board, Warrant Committee, and Capital Budget Committee will report on this Article.

Majority vote required for passage

ARTICLE 3:

Transfer to General Stabilization Fund

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate a sum of money to the General Stabilization Fund, said sum to be transferred from Free Cash, or in any way act thereon.

The Town's 2019 Free Cash has been certified at \$8.1 Million. The Town is looking to transfer some of its Free Cash to the General Stabilization Fund. The current balance of the Town's General Stabilization Fund is \$331,926.60 .

Submitted by the Select Board

The Select Board and the Warrant Committee will report on this Article.

Majority vote required for passage

ARTICLE 4: Rescind Membership Withdrawal in Minuteman Regional Vocational High School

To see if the Town will vote to rescind its decision to withdraw from the Minuteman Regional Vocational School District (the "District") as voted at the Special Town Meeting on October 19, 2016, as provided in Section IX.A. of the Regional School District Agreement, as amended in March 2016, and to authorize the Select Board and other appropriate Town officials to take such actions as are necessary and appropriate to secure the District's agreement to Belmont's rescission of its withdrawal from the District, or in any way act thereon.

On October 16, 2016 Town Meeting voted to withdraw its membership from the Minuteman Regional Vocational School District; and Belmont's membership would expire on June 30, 2020. Subject to the unanimous consent of the members of the Regional School District Committee, an affirmative vote of this article would cancel the Town's previously announced withdrawal from the regional district, and continue the Town's membership therein.

Submitted by the Select Board

The Select Board, Warrant Committee, Capital Budget Committee and School Committee will report on this Article.

Majority vote required for passage

ARTICLE 5:

Amend General Bylaw: Town Meeting, Chapter 30, Procedural Rules

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Chapter 30 §§ 30-115F and 30-115H as set forth below, or to take any other action relative thereto:

(1) By deleting said § 30-115F and replacing it in its entirety with the following:

F. Counting and Recording of Votes:

- (1) As used in this Section, the words "electronic" and "electronically," when used in reference to voting or the counting of votes at Town Meeting, shall refer to the use of computer software to record votes transmitted from wireless handheld mobile devices distributed and assigned to each Town Meeting Member in attendance. The Moderator shall review proper use of the mobile devices and direct a test of the electronic system at the beginning of each Town Meeting session.
- (2) Except as otherwise provided in this Section or by any other applicable law, all votes shall be taken in the first instance by a "YES" and "NO" voice vote. If the Moderator is in doubt as to the vote, or if any Town Meeting Member immediately doubts the vote, the Moderator shall count the vote electronically.
- (3) Electronic Roll Call Votes Required.

Any main motion that requires at least a two-thirds vote to be adopted by the Meeting shall be taken in the first instance by electronic roll call vote.

Any electronic vote on a main motion or amendment to a main motion that passes or fails by 10 votes or fewer shall be retaken by electronic roll call vote.

In all other cases, an electronic roll call vote shall be taken only on a motion supported by at least 50 Town Meeting members.

Roll call votes shall not be taken on privileged, incidental or subsidiary motions except for:

- (a) motions to postpone indefinitely that result in final action on the main motion; and
 - (b) motions to amend (or substitute) that, in the sole judgment of the Moderator, would substantially alter the purpose of the main motion.
- (4) If an electronic roll call vote is taken as provided in this Subsection, the Town Clerk shall cause the operator of the electronic voting system to preserve the electronic file recording the "YES," "NO," and "ABSTAIN" votes of each individual Town Meeting Member who shall have voted, and such record shall be made available to the public at the office of the Town Clerk and on the Town's web page within two business days of the vote, and shall be printed in the Town Annual Report. The individual roll call votes of Town Meeting Members shall not be displayed contemporaneously to the Meeting. The Town Clerk shall cause the operator of the electronic voting system not to generate or preserve an electronic file recording the individual vote results unless the Moderator has duly called for an electronic roll call vote.
- (5) In the event that an electronic voting system is not available, then:
 - (a) in all cases where an electronic vote would otherwise be required under these Bylaws, the Moderator shall direct the "YES" and "NO" voters to stand and be counted by the tellers; and
 - (b) in all cases where an electronic roll call vote is required under these Bylaws, the Town Clerk shall call the roll, record the vote, "YES", "NO" or "ABSTAIN" of each Town Meeting Member

and make such record available as provided in Subsection F(4).

AND

(2) By inserting the following new sentence into § 30-115H between the first and second sentences of that Section:

If the vote to be reconsidered was taken by roll call vote, a motion to reconsider will not be in order unless it is made by a Town Meeting Member who had voted with the prevailing side.

The Town is proposing to amend its General Bylaw that provides procedures for Roll Call Voting and Reconsideration of articles at Town Meeting. This article is sponsored by the Moderator, Town Clerk and the Select Board in response to Town Meeting Member comments.

Submitted by the Select Board

The Select Board, the Bylaw Review Committee and Town Counsel will report on this Article.

Majority vote required for passage

Article 6: Non-Binding Citizens' Petition: To Protect the Health Benefits of Belmont Town Employees

To see if the Town Meeting will express its disapproval of the August 26, 2019 vote by the Select Board to elect to engage in the process to change health insurance benefits under M.G.L. c. 32B Sections 21 through 23.

Submitted by Daniel Barry, Town Meeting Member, Prec. 1
For the Petitioners


The Select Board and the Warrant Committee will report on this Article.


Non-Binding Vote

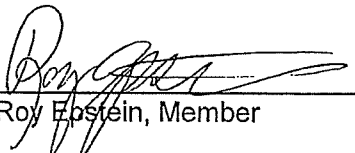
Majority vote required for passage

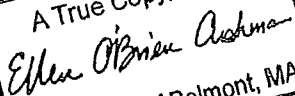
Given under our hands this **21st** day of **October**, 2019.

BELMONT - SELECT BOARD


Thomas Caputo, Chair


Adam Dash, Vice Chair


Roy Epstein, Member

A True Copy, Attest

Town Clerk of Belmont, MA



MOTIONS
2019 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
November 13, 2019
As of November 7, 2019

PRELIMINARY MOTION

ORDER OF THE ARTICLES

MOVED: That the Town Meeting hear the motions in the following order: (*Majority*)
1, 2, 4, 3, 5, 6

ARTICLE 1:

REPORTS

MOVED: That Article 1 be taken from the table. (*Majority*)

MOVED: That Article 1 be laid on the table. (*Majority*)

ARTICLE 2:

CAPITAL APPROPRIATION: SECOND HALF OF THE FIRE ENGINE PUMPER

MOVED: That the Town transfer \$347,700 from Free Cash to purchase a Fire Engine Pumper Truck, said sum to be expended under the direction of the Select Board. (*Majority*)

Reporting: The Select Board, Warrant Committee, and Capital Budget Committee will report on this Article.

ARTICLE 3

TRANSFER TO GENERAL STABILIZATION FUND

MOVED: That the Town transfer **two million, five hundred thousand dollars (\$2.5M)** from Free Cash to the General Stabilization Fund. (*Majority*)

Reporting: The Select Board and the Warrant Committee will report on this Article.

****Note: Due to the uncertainty of the dollar amount in this motion, the Town Moderator will accept a lower dollar amount from the floor of Town Meeting.***

ARTICLE 4:

**RESCIND MEMBERSHIP WITHDRAWAL IN MINUTEMAN REGIONAL
VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**

MOVED: That the Town rescind its withdrawal from the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District (the "District"), as voted at the Special Town Meeting on October 19, 2016,

and that the Town authorize its representative to the District Committee and the Select Board to take such actions as may be necessary and appropriate to secure the District's agreement to the rescission of the Town's withdrawal, as provided in Section IX.A. of the Regional Agreement. **(Majority)**

Reporting: The Select Board, Warrant Committee, Capital Budget Committee and the School Committee will report on this Article.

**ARTICLE 5: AMEND GENERAL BYLAWS:, TOWN MEETING,
PROCEDURAL RULES, CHAPTER 30**

MOVED: That the Town vote to amend Chapter 30, Sections 115 (F)and (H) of the General Bylaws as set forth in the document, "Article 5: Amend General Bylaw: Town Meeting, Chapter 30, Procedural Rules: Text After Substitute Motion By the Bylaw Review Committee", that has been distributed to all Town Meeting Members. **(Majority)**

Reporting: The Select Board, Bylaw Review Committee and the Town Counsel will report on this Article.

**ARTICLE 6: NON-BINDING CITIZENS' PETITION TO PROTECT THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF
BELMONT TOWN EMPLOYEES**

MOVED: That the Town vote to adopt the Non-Binding expression of disapproval, as set forth under Article 6 in the Warrant for this Town Meeting. **(Majority, Non-Binding vote)**

Reporting: The Select Board, the Warrant Committee and the Petitioner will report on this Article.

October 22, 2019

Dear Town Meeting Member,

At the November Special Town Meeting you will vote on an article about whether or not the Town should continue as a member in the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District.

Some of you may be thinking “haven’t we decided this already?”, and that’s a fair question to ask. Indeed, our vote at the October 2016 Special Town Meeting directed our Town officials to send a “notice of withdrawal” to the Minuteman District, effective July 1, 2020. In technical terms, the upcoming vote is to decide whether or not Belmont will “rescind” its previously sent notice of withdrawal. If we vote to rescind the notice of withdrawal, it must be unanimously accepted by the Minuteman School Committee. If the rescission is voted and accepted, then Belmont will remain a member of the Minuteman district; otherwise, Belmont’s exit from the District will happen next July.

From a practical point of view, this is the last chance for Belmont to reconsider its membership option. After that, both the Town and Minuteman need to prepare their budgets, and eighth grade students and their families must make their high school education plans. The specific choices everyone faces next spring will be affected by whether or not Belmont remains a member in Minuteman.

The Select Board voted to place this article on the warrant because circumstances have changed since the October 2016 vote to withdraw. Four changes of note are:

- (1) the new Minuteman High School is now open, one year ahead of the original schedule
- (2) the current 9th grade class is fully subscribed, with a waiting list
- (3) the financial gap between member and non-member status has narrowed
- (4) the Belmont Superintendent’s working group found no viable long-term alternative to Minuteman for students seeking career and vocational technical education (“CVTE”) programs.

I have served as the Town’s representative to the Minuteman School Committee since December 2016. Accompanying this cover letter is my report to you, for your consideration as you prepare for the November Special Town Meeting. I have included a lot of background material for those who may not be familiar with this issue. For those who just want to read my thoughts on framing the issues for debate at Town Meeting, Section 6 starting on page 14 does just that. And accompanying this letter is a sheet listing those eight topics of interest.

While I have benefited from many meetings over the past months with members of the Warrant Committee and school and town officials, they are not responsible for the contents of this report.

I look forward to answering questions at the Warrant Briefing, to be held 7:30 pm Tuesday November 5th at the Beech Street Center. And please feel free to contact me at gammill.jim@gmail.com with any comments or questions.

Sincerely,

Jim Gammill
Belmont Representative to the Minuteman School Committee
Town Meeting Member, precinct 2

**TOPICS OF INTEREST
MINUTEMAN MEMBERSHIP ARTICLE**

(1) Educational Value of the Minuteman Program	
(2) Projected Demand for Seats at Minuteman	
(3) Financial Considerations of Membership v. Alternatives	
(4) Feasibility of Alternatives to Minuteman	
(5) DESE Considerations	
(6) District Membership Considerations	
(7) Strategic Responses by Minuteman	
(8) Overall Risk Assessments	

REPORT TO TOWN MEETING: THE MINUTEMAN MEMBERSHIP ARTICLE

Jim Gammill, Belmont Representative to the Minuteman School Committee
October 22, 2019

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This article asks the Special Town Meeting to reconsider its decision, voted three years ago, to withdraw from the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District, effective July 1, 2020.

The Select Board voted to place this article on the warrant because circumstances have changed since the October 2016 vote to withdraw. Four changes of note are:

- (1) the new Minuteman High School is now open, one year ahead of the original schedule
- (2) the current 9th grade class is fully subscribed, with a waiting list
- (3) the financial gap between member and non-member status has narrowed
- (4) the Belmont Superintendent's working group found no viable long-term alternative to Minuteman for students seeking career and vocational technical education ("CVTE") programs.

The article specifically asks whether Belmont will "rescind" its previously sent notice of withdrawal. Per the Minuteman Regional Agreement, a request to rescind a notice of withdrawal must be unanimously accepted by the Minuteman School Committee.

Thus, in order for Belmont to remain in the Minuteman District after June 2020, two things must happen: the Special Town Meeting must vote (by simple majority) to rescind its notice of withdrawal, and the Minuteman School Committee must unanimously accept the rescission. If either step fails, Belmont will exit the Minuteman District next July.

This report begins with four sections that provide background information. Section 2 describes the Minuteman District and High School. Section 3 offers data about enrollment at Minuteman High School. Section 4 describes key financial aspects of the Minuteman District. Section 5 discusses report of the Belmont Superintendent's Work Group on Vocational Education Options, issued in June 2018.

Section 6 organizes the topics that the Special Town Meeting may want to debate. Remaining or not as a member in the Minuteman District is an important long-term decision for the Town, and the Town Meeting Members must vote on the basis of the information they have at hand — and how they assess, based on this current information, the uncertain future outcomes key to this question. It is a judgment for which the Town Meeting, as Belmont's legislative body, is responsible.

Section 7 has my recommendations. I have been following this topic since 2012, and for the past three years I have served as Belmont's representative to the Minuteman School Committee. I have valued the contributions to the debates over the past seven years from all, here in Belmont and throughout the Minuteman District, and each has had an impact on my thinking and approach.

2. THE MINUTEMAN VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School District (the “District”) is a separate government body. Its Regional Agreement is its governing document, and the Regional Agreement establishes a Regional School Committee as its governing authority and names its member towns. As stated in Section II of the Regional Agreement, the purpose of the District is to establish a technical and vocational high school, on a site that is in both Lexington and Lincoln.

Membership, Current and Past

In addition to Belmont, the nine other members of the District are Acton, Arlington, Bolton, Concord, Dover, Lancaster, Lexington, Needham and Stow.

As part of the 2016 amendments to the Regional Agreement, six towns left the District, effective July 2017: Boxborough, Carlisle, Lincoln, Sudbury, Wayland and Weston.

The District was formed in 1971 with 12 of the above mentioned towns as the original members. Bolton, Lancaster and Needham joined in 1980, and Dover joined in 1981.

(While Watertown has consistently sent a significant number of students each year, it has never sought membership.)

The Minuteman High School Curriculum

The Minuteman curriculum offers 17 state approved “chapter 74” programs for career and vocational technical education (“CVTE”). They are offered through two different academies, each with its own teaching faculty for both CVTE classes as well as the usual academic classes.

In the first semester of 9th grade, students go through an exploratory course that exposes them to the various chapter 74 programs. At the end of the exploratory course, each student lists top program preferences, and is matched to the program that will organize the rest of the high school experience.

The Engineering, Construction & Trades Academy

The north wing of the high school building houses the Engineering, Construction & Trades Academy. The nine programs are grouped into three learning pathways, and there is considerable collaboration among the programs in each pathway, and within the academy itself. The programs by pathway are:

Digital Arts & Design Pathway

- Design and Visual Communications
- Multi-Media Engineering
- Programming and Web Development

Trades & Transportation Pathway

- Automotive Technology
- Carpentry
- Electrical
- Plumbing & HVAC

Engineering & Production Pathway

- Advanced Manufacturing & Metal Fabrication
- Engineering & Robotics Automation

The Life Sciences & Services Academy

In the south wing are the eight programs of the Life Sciences & Services Academy, grouped into two pathways:

Agriculture, Environmental & Life Sciences Pathway

- Animal Science (Veterinary Assistant)
- Biotechnology
- Environmental Science
- Horticulture and Landscaping Tech

Health, Hospitality & Human Services Pathway

- Cosmetology
- Culinary Arts & Hospitality
- Early Education and Teaching
- Health Occupations

Academics

The academic curriculum is aligned with the state's Academic Frameworks. The academic departments are:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Education
- World Languages (Spanish, Latin, French)
- Music
- Art

The academic program features core and elective courses at four levels: Advanced Placement, Honors, College Prep 2, and College Prep 3. In partnership with Middlesex Community College, students who qualify on the basis of attendance, grades, and a standardized test score can enroll in up to eight Dual Enrollment courses, earning college credit while in high school.

Students are placed in levels based on a variety of data. Students are not locked into a level of courses, but are encouraged to enroll in an appropriate, challenging level of coursework. Minuteman offers a full inclusion model, and most College Prep 3 courses are co-taught with a subject matter specialist and a Special Education professional.

Achievement and Recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School

George Clement, currently the Minuteman principal, explains the Minuteman approach to learning on the school's website:

Minuteman is the leader of academic-vocational curriculum and instruction integration. We have begun a transition to organize into Academy and Pathways

to enhance our interdisciplinary prowess.

Through integrated learning experiences, memory, critical thinking skills, and creativity are enhanced. Students connect academics and career interests, helping them develop greater comprehension, technical skills, and expertise.

Our graduates *are* college ready as typically 67% of them attend two or four-year schools. Minuteman students know now to cope and compete in the complex global community. We are proud of our students and all that they accomplish.

In October 2018, the US Department of Education recognized Minuteman as a National Blue Ribbon School, one of three in Massachusetts, cited for closing the achievement gap within its student body as many students moved from proficient to advanced on their MCAS scores.

The New High School Building

In September 2016 the Minuteman District received voter approval to proceed with the construction of its \$145 million building, with a design capacity for 628 students and organized around its dual academy curriculum model described above.

The initial target completion date was September 2020, but after a round of value engineering which identified ways to accelerate the construction, the new building opened this fall, one year ahead of schedule, and with a waiting list for the ninth grade class.

A three-and-a-half minute video of the new school is posted at <https://vimeo.com/362382267> .

As the punch list of items at the new school is being completed, the current estimate is that there will be about \$3 million remaining in the project funding for the athletic fields and other items. In addition, the District is exploring public-private partnerships for new development on the site of the old building. Additional information about the school and building project is at minuteman.org.

3. ENROLLMENT — PAST and PRESENT

Background and Terminology

The old high school building, placed in service in 1975, could serve about 1000 students. As the high school age population throughout the region declined from the 1970s to the 1990s, demand for seats at Minuteman declined as well, and the Minuteman administration used several different programs to attract students from non-member towns, often at regulated or negotiated tuition levels that were below the average per student assessments paid by member towns.

Since it matters from a financial perspective whether a student resides in a member town or not, the following historical data is grouped into the following four categories:

9 Remaining Members: these are the nine towns, other than Belmont, that are currently members

Belmont: based on the STM vote, Belmont will either be a member or a Type A non-member

Type A Non-Members: Type A is a designation used by DESE to identify towns and cities that do not directly support CVTE programs. Type A municipalities include the six towns that left

the District in 2017 (Boxborough, Carlisle, Lincoln, Sudbury, Wayland, Weston). Watertown is also a Type A municipality, with 75 students currently enrolled at Minuteman in grades 9-12.

Type B Non-Members: Also a DESE term, applied to municipalities that support five or more chapter 74 programs, either in an in-district school or by membership in a regional school district (other than Minuteman). Newton (7 students), Wilmington (7), Waltham (5) and Woburn (5) are the Type B municipalities with the largest current 9-12 enrollment at Minuteman.

Historical Graduation Data By Category of Residence

The best available historical data that identifies the home towns of students are the graduation records, which are readily available from 1999. By looking at single classes, instead of 9-12 annual populations, it is easier to see trends, reversals and year-to-year variability in enrollment.

Table 1a shows annual graduation numbers for the four categories of towns from 1999 to 2019.

TABLE 1a: NUMBER OF GRADUATES BY CATEGORY OF RESIDENCE

Year of Graduation	9 Remaining Members	Belmont	Type A	Type B	TOTAL*
1999	50	2	10	99	166
2000	48	6	17	83	155
2001	65	8	14	87	175
2002	68	12	18	80	179
2003	57	6	19	68	152
2004	63	2	25	47	138
2005	77	4	25	56	164
2006	77	6	43	29	156
2007	83	4	19	33	139
2008	82	8	27	26	147
2009	80	3	19	36	142
2010	63	3	36	26	128
2011	69	8	22	32	135
2012	60	10	23	45	141
2013	38	6	12	36	93
2014	67	5	25	44	144
2015	73	8	24	57	163
2016	53	8	39	50	151
2017	87	7	20	48	164
2018	59	4	25	38	129
2019	63	3	24	28	118

(* totals includes a few graduates with missing home town information)

Current Enrollment By Category of Residence

Table 1b shows the current enrollment (as of September 16th) at the new Minuteman high school building by class and category of residence.

TABLE 1b: NUMBER OF CURRENT STUDENTS BY CATEGORY OF RESIDENCE

Grade	9 Remaining Members	Belmont	Type A	Type B	TOTAL
12	75	10	27	15	127
11	98	5	32	14	149
10	93	12	13	18	136
9	134	17	35	9	195

Discussion

There are three distinct periods to consider:

(A) 1999-2002: during this period, Minuteman and Cambridge had a contractual agreement which directed Cambridge students to Minuteman. The last graduating class under this contract was 2002.

(B) 2003-2019: during this period, 8th grade students from Type B municipalities such as Medford, Boston and Cambridge could apply without restriction for admission into Minuteman's 9th grade exploratory program. In February 2015 DESE issued new regulations that prohibited Type B students from directly accessing Minuteman's exploratory program. The 2019 graduation class was the last class under the old regulations.

(C) Current enrollment (grades 9-12): this year is the first year where all four grades were admitted under the new DESE regulations. The upper classes were students during the construction process, and the 9th graders applied knowing the new building would be ready for them.

Table 1c and 1d show the simple averages by category for these three periods, in absolute numbers and by percent of total for each period

TABLE 1c: AVERAGES BY PERIOD AND CATEGORY OF RESIDENCE

Period	9 Remaining Members	Belmont	Type A	Type B	TOTAL
(A) 99-02	58	7	15	87	169
(B) 03-19	68	6	25	41	141
(C) current	100	11	27	14	152

TABLE 1d: AVERAGES, PERCENT OF TOTAL

Period	9 Remaining Members	Belmont	Type A	Type B	TOTAL
(A) 99-02	34 %	4 %	9 %	52 %	100 %
(B) 03-19	48 %	4 %	18 %	29 %	100 %
(C) current	66 %	7 %	18 %	9 %	100 %

Tables 1c and 1d show the fundamental change in the composition of Minuteman's enrollment, from a school that served primarily out-of-district Type B students twenty years ago to a school that serves primarily students from its member districts.

It also shows that current interest in Minuteman by Belmont residents, both in absolute and percent of Minuteman enrollment, is significantly higher today than in the past.

Minuteman's Efforts to Increase In-District Enrollment

The Minuteman administration and school committee maintain that the past year's experience of a 9th grade class with more than 150 students from in-district towns (including Belmont) and a wait list is not a fluke, but the result of several years of focused effort.

Undoubtedly, the new high school building by itself has created new interest in Minuteman. Anyone who remembers the old building and compares it to the new will agree that the new building offers a much better learning environment.

Hand-in-hand with the new building is the new dual academy program structure. The school — both the curriculum and the physical plant — offer students a distinctly different learning experience than what they find in their local academic high schools, and for some students, this variety and flexibility is essential. In its presentation to eighth graders, Minuteman representatives stress that the school offers space and programs that free them from a single way to teach, fully respecting the wide variability in learning found among high school students.

In July 2018, the Minuteman school committee created an enrollment task force to identify what new efforts should be made by the administration and supporters of the school to increase enrollment. This task force met once a month throughout the year.

Supported by the enrollment task force and also on its own initiative, the Minuteman administration has strengthened its outreach program over the past three years. They are better at talking to parents, to the middle school administrations, and to students. A new assistant director of

admissions was hired before the start of last year's application season. Student ambassadors received more in-depth training and better marketing materials were developed. Finally, five current parents were engaged to be liaisons in their own communities, to promote the school and respond to queries at the local level.

All of these factors — the building, the learning model, and the enhanced outreach program — are showing success and will be a fixture in the years ahead.

4. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Rules for Allocating Costs

Minuteman's Regional Agreement specifics how the annual budget is approved, how the District issues debt, and how the member assessments to pay for operating and capital costs are calculated.

Minuteman's members are the owners of the District. Their assessments balance the budget after all other sources of revenue are used.

Non-member towns are the customers of the District. They pay tuitions and fees (which are set or approved by DESE) proportional to the number of students that they send.

The Regional Agreement's assessment formulae allow the member towns to know exactly what the upcoming year's assessments will be before their springtime annual town meetings. The calculations are based on the recent years' enrollment data, as of October 1 of each year. More than half the dollar value of the assessments use a four year rolling average of member town enrollment, and this averaging smooths the year to year variation in the assessment due to differences in the number of students attending Minuteman.

In contrast, non-member towns pay based on the total enrollment as of October 1 of the current year. Thus, the actual amount to be billed is not known until the school year begins (and after the town budget is set).

Illustration Using This Year's Enrollment and Assessment

This fall there are 44 students from Belmont attending Minuteman. If Belmont were already a non-member of Minuteman, its total bill from Minuteman this year would be \$1,221,632, and with an estimated bus cost of \$70,000 and a legacy capital lease obligation (unrelated to the new building) of \$34,328, the tuition plus transportation cost plus lease fee would be \$1,291,632:

base DESE tuition \$17,965 * 44 students :	\$ 790,460
DESE SPED fee \$6,201 * 20 (est.) students:	124,000
DESE capital increment \$6,200 * 44 students:	272,844
continuing MM capital obligation (ESCO lease):	34,328
estimated transportation costs	70,000

FY20 COSTS if Belmont were a non-member:	\$ 1,291,632

In fact, Belmont is still a member of Minuteman, and the total FY20 assessment, appropriated at last spring's Annual Town Meeting, is \$984,887. Since Belmont submitted a notice of withdrawal in October 2016, the assessment approved last spring did not include a capital assessment for the

new building debt; that amount would have been \$255,861. Thus, if Belmont had been a continuing member subject to the capital assessment, its total assessment for FY20 would have been \$1,240,748 — about \$50,000 less than what this year's bill would have been as a non-member.

This example illustrates the financial impact of the new non-member capital fee, as well as the advantage of the four-year rolling average feature in the Regional Agreement in smoothing the year-to-year assessment variability due to year-to-year changes in the enrollment numbers, and deferring the full impact of rising enrollment to later years.

Operating Costs

Minuteman's per student operating costs are among the highest in the state. While a full analysis of the school's cost structure is beyond the scope of the report, some observations are offered here.

The FY20 operating budget is \$18,948,997. The FY17 operating budget, adjusted downwards to remove the transportation costs for the six towns that left the District at the end of FY17, was \$18,016,253. Thus, the annual compounded growth rate in the operating budget for the last three years has been 1.7%, reflecting recent rounds of cost cutting.

The operating budget is partially funded through state and federal grants and through tuitions and fees from non-member towns. The FY20 total member assessments due to operations is \$12,037,071, or \$27,111 per student, based on the 444 member town students currently enrolled.

There are several factors that explain the high per student operating costs:

- * smaller class sizes — the student-teacher ratios in vocational schools are lower than in other high schools, in general. In Minuteman's case, the below capacity enrollment in recent years has exacerbated this effect. At full enrollment of 720 students, the student-teacher ratio would be about 10.

- * high population of students with Individual Education Plans — at Minuteman, about 46% of the students have had IEPs historically, and are additional costs associated with those services. Statewide the historical rate has been about 18%, and in the member towns, the rate is even lower.

- * costs of vocational program classrooms — vocational program classrooms have specific program costs that show up in the operating budget as well as the capital budget.

- * higher staffing costs — the Minuteman administration identifies the local cost of living and the increased competition among schools and industry for vocational teachers as factors driving its salary structure.

The finance subcommittee of the Minuteman School Committee will be taking a special look this year at the operating budget to understand the impact of the new building and higher levels of enrollment on the school budget, and reporting back to the school committee and member towns.

Debt Service for the New Building

The \$145 million building project is partially funded by a \$44 million grant from DESE, leaving up to \$101 million to be financed by long-term debt issued by the District. To date, about \$82 million of long-term debt has been issued, and the current plan is to issue another \$12 million in early 2020. The debt will be paid off completely in 30 years, and the annual debt service payments include both interest and principal, similar to a residential mortgage. The annual debt service payments will range between \$4.5 million and \$6.7 million per year over the life of the debt.

During the construction phase, all of the debt service was funded through assessments on the nine member towns other than Belmont. Non-member towns did not pay any capital charges during the construction phase.

Capital Increment Fees for Non-Member Municipalities

The DESE regulations adopted in February 2015 included a new provision for non-member municipalities to pay a capital increment fee, in addition to the base tuition and special education fee, in certain circumstances as approved by the DESE Commissioner.

The DESE Commissioner ruled in September 2016 that Minuteman would be able to charge non-members a per-student capital increment once the new building was placed in service. The approved formula for the capital increment set the capital increment for Type A towns equal to the average debt service per student paid by the member towns, while setting the Type B fee at 75% of that paid by Type A towns.

Since the building is now in service, Minuteman is able to charge the Type A municipalities, such as Watertown, a \$6,201 per student capital increment fee this year. Minuteman expects to receive about \$900,000 in non-member capital fees this year.

The non-member capital increment fees will be reset each year, based on the formula and an annual submission by Minuteman detailing the total debt service for the year and the enrollment numbers for members, Type A municipalities, and Type B municipalities.

The Make-Up Capital Charge

Belmont, because it voted its “notice of withdrawal” at the October 2016 Special Town Meeting, has been exempt from debt service assessments while finishing its final three years as a member. The exempted debt service payments, by year, have been:

FY18	\$ 46,783
FY19	170,022
FY20	<u>255,861</u>

TOTAL: \$ 472,667

If the November Special Town Meeting votes to rescind its notice of withdrawal, then the basis for the exemption from the debt service payments for FY18, FY19, and FY20 is no longer valid, per the Regional Agreement that governs this exemption.

The Minuteman School Committee has indicated that if Belmont rescinds its notice of withdrawal and remains in the District, it will be assessed a capital make-up payment of \$472,667, and the proceeds of that will be credited to the nine other member towns in accordance to the additional

assessments they paid during those three years. (For example, Arlington, as the town that sends the most students, would receive a credit of \$188,198.)

The Fixed Costs of Membership

For the most part, member assessments and non-member tuitions and fees are calculated proportional to the number of students attending from each town. For proportionally-charged costs, zero students from a town means zero proportionally-assigned costs.

The fixed cost of membership — that is, the annual debt service that Belmont will have to pay if it remains in the District, regardless of the number of students it sends — will be between \$45,000 and \$67,000 per year — that is, 1% of the annual debt service described above.

Pension and OPEB Costs

The District Contributory Retirement System provides pension benefits for District employees who are not teachers. (Teachers receive benefits through the Massachusetts Retirement System.) As of January 2017 there were 138 members. As of June 2018, the total pension liability was valued at \$15.5 million, which was 92% funded; the unfunded portion was \$1.2 million. (For comparison, as of the same date, Belmont's Retirement System was 55% funded, with an unfunded liability of \$76 million.)

The District also provided post-employment health care benefits. (OPEB is other post-employment benefits). In the most recent annual financial report, the OPEB liability was valued at \$22.9 million, while the OPEB trust fund assets are now about \$200,000; the District's practice has been to "pay-as-you-go" through the annual budget with respect to OPEB.

This past spring the Minuteman School Committee authorized an OPEB Trust Agreement and an OPEB Fund Investment Policy Statement, so that assets in its OPEB trust fund could be invested in a long-term manner consistent with the OPEB obligations. The level of funding of the OPEB Trust, above and beyond the current year obligations, will continue to be a topic for discussion at the Minuteman School Committee.

5. THE SUPERINTENDENT'S WORKING GROUP ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OPTIONS

In November 2017 the Town Clerk sent all Town Meeting Members the following message on behalf of John Phelan, Superintendent of Schools:

As you may know, in 2016, Town Meeting voted to withdraw as a member district from Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical School. Belmont's membership withdrawal goes into effect on July 1, 2020. Belmont Public Schools Superintendent, John Phelan, is appointing a work group to explore vocational education options for Belmont students in light of the change in Belmont's status regarding Minuteman. The work group will report their findings and recommendations to Superintendent Phelan.

Superintendent Phelan is soliciting a small number of educators, parents and Town Meeting members to volunteer to serve on the work group. Anyone interested should email Cathy Grant, Secretary to Superintendent Phelan, at cgrant@belmont.k12.ma.us. Meetings are expected to take place during normal business hours (8:00 am — 4:30 pm), last approximately 60-90 minutes in duration, and occur once per week or every two weeks during the remainder of the 2017-18 School Year.

Everyone who volunteered was invited to join the work group. The work group had sixteen members, with a variety of affiliations:

- 3 Town Meeting Members
- 3 Belmont Public School educators and counselors
- 8 Belmont community members and parents
- 2 Town and School financial staff

The working group sought to answer two questions: (1) where should Belmont students go for career and vocational technical education (CVTE), and (2) how should Belmont contract with CVTE providers. The working group decided to use the same framework for analysis that the Belmont school district had recently used to evaluate district configurations in preparation for the new Belmont middle and high school building project:

- * academic, social-emotional and student life factors
- * space, availability, and enrollment factors
- * financial factors
- * long-term sustainability factors

The working group met eight times from December to June. After an initial review of potential providers (see Table 2, taken from the working group's report) based on educational and demographic data, the working group identified three options for further study: Minuteman, Shawsheen Regional Vocational High School, and Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School with its Rindge School for Technical Arts.

The working group developed and sent questionnaires to the three schools. The responses made it clear that Minuteman is the answer to the "where" question, since neither Shawsheen nor Cambridge could offer space for Belmont students in the short-term. In addition, working group recognized the quality of the Minuteman program offerings, the integration of academic and vocational studies, and the positive connection and collaboration between the Belmont school district and Minuteman.

In response to the "how" question, the working group recommended to the Superintendent that they favor Belmont remaining as a member of the Minuteman District. The working group valued the strict priority that Minuteman, by DESE regulation, must give to applicants from its member towns. Given the lack of Chapter 74 courses and other CVTE programs in the plans for the new Middle High School in Belmont, the working group recognized that there is an ongoing need for a CVTE program provider for the roughly 3% of the eighth grade population that routinely seeks these programs, and that continuing membership in the Minuteman district was clearly the best way to secure continued access for those Belmont students and families.

The working group recognized that the current (2018) per student cost of attending Minuteman was higher as a member compared to as a non-member. It did note that this difference would narrow as total enrollment at the school increased, and that a capital incremental fee comparable to a member's share of the new building debt service would be charged to non-member towns as soon as the new Minuteman high school building was placed in service.

The complete working group report and all appendices and profile data and responses from Minuteman, Shawsheen and Cambridge are found at:

<https://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bps/Administration/Vocational-Education>

TABLE 2: CVTE Options Profile Data

												<u>Plans of High School Graduates (%)</u>		
	Morning Commute Time	Distance	Capacity	Level	Percentile	Enrollment	Student Teacher Ratio	% Students w/IEPs	% Economic Disadvantage	% First Language not English	4 Year Graduation Rate (%)	4 Year College	2 Year College	Work
BELMONT				2	86	1264	16.9	5.7	6.5	16.5	97.8	92.7	1.6	0.3
REGIONAL CVTE														
MINUTEMAN	12-18	7	yes	1	51	535	8.0	48.3	26.1	5.0	88.0	35.3	26.0	26.0
SHAWSHEEN	24-35	17	maybe	1	89	1336	10.3	24.0	13.1	0.9	99.1	36.0	21.6	34.5
NORTHEAST	28-40	13-23	tbd	2	40	1261	11.3	23.2	30.8	19.1	96.6	30.3	24.4	42.1
SCHOOLS WITH CVTE														
CAMBRIDGE	14-35	4	tbd	2	48	1956	11.0	16.6	27.4	25.8	92.5	69.2	16.5	4.0
SOMERVILLE	18-40	5	tbd	1	40	1259	10.2	16.9	39.6	57.4	85.0	47.4	22.9	22.2
NEWTON NORTH	16-26	5	unlikely	1	87	2126	11.6	24.6	10.4	17.5	98.2	86.1	4.3	4.9
WALTHAM	12-20	5	tbd	3	30	1586	12.4	16.8	26.0	45.0	85.7	63.6	15.1	16.4
NEIGHBORS														
ARLINGTON				1	78	1290	12.8	11.1	10.3	12.4	98.1	86.3	3.8	4.1
LEXINGTON				1	96	2185	12.6	9.9	5.6	24.1	98.1	90.3	3.6	2.0
WATERTOWN				2	31	662	10.2	21.1	23.6	36.3	87.9	68.7	12.9	10.4
STATE-WIDE, all grades								17.4	30.2	20.1	87.5	60.6	20.4	10.2

commute time and distance computed by Google, with departure from Belmont Town Hall and for arrival at 8 am on Wednesday May 9th
 capacity information -- does school have capacity to enroll Belmont students -- from conversations with school officials
 school specific data from DESE website, http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/
 note that "schools with CVTE" data are for the entire schools, not just the CVTE population

ORIGINALLY included in the Superintendent's Working Group Report, June 2018

6. TOPICS OF INTEREST FOR THE SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

This section offers eight forward-looking topics that the Town Meeting may want to debate in November.

(1) Educational Value of the Minuteman Program

Since a key benefit of remaining a member is the preferred priority for member applicants, it is appropriate to consider the Minuteman experience for its students, including the choice of 17 Chapter 74 approved programs offered by Minuteman, and the school's dual academy, full-inclusion learning model housed in the new high school building.

Town Meeting may want to address the educational value of the Minuteman program.

(2) Projected Demand for Seats at Minuteman

This has been the primary focus of the subgroup of the Warrant Committee, with whom I have met since January. For this topic, the key question is whether the past year's total demand for seats in the 9th grade class, which exceeded capacity, is a temporary or a long-lasting phenomenon.

While the design size of the new building is 628 students (or 157 per class), the long-term target size of an incoming ninth grade class is currently set at 180 students, which assumes that the new building can handle at least 720 students. (A rule of thumb is that design capacity is 85% of maximum capacity, which implies a maximum of 738 for Minuteman.)

The demand for seats has two components: those from residents of member towns, and those from non-member towns. Applicants from member towns have strict priority over those from non-member towns.

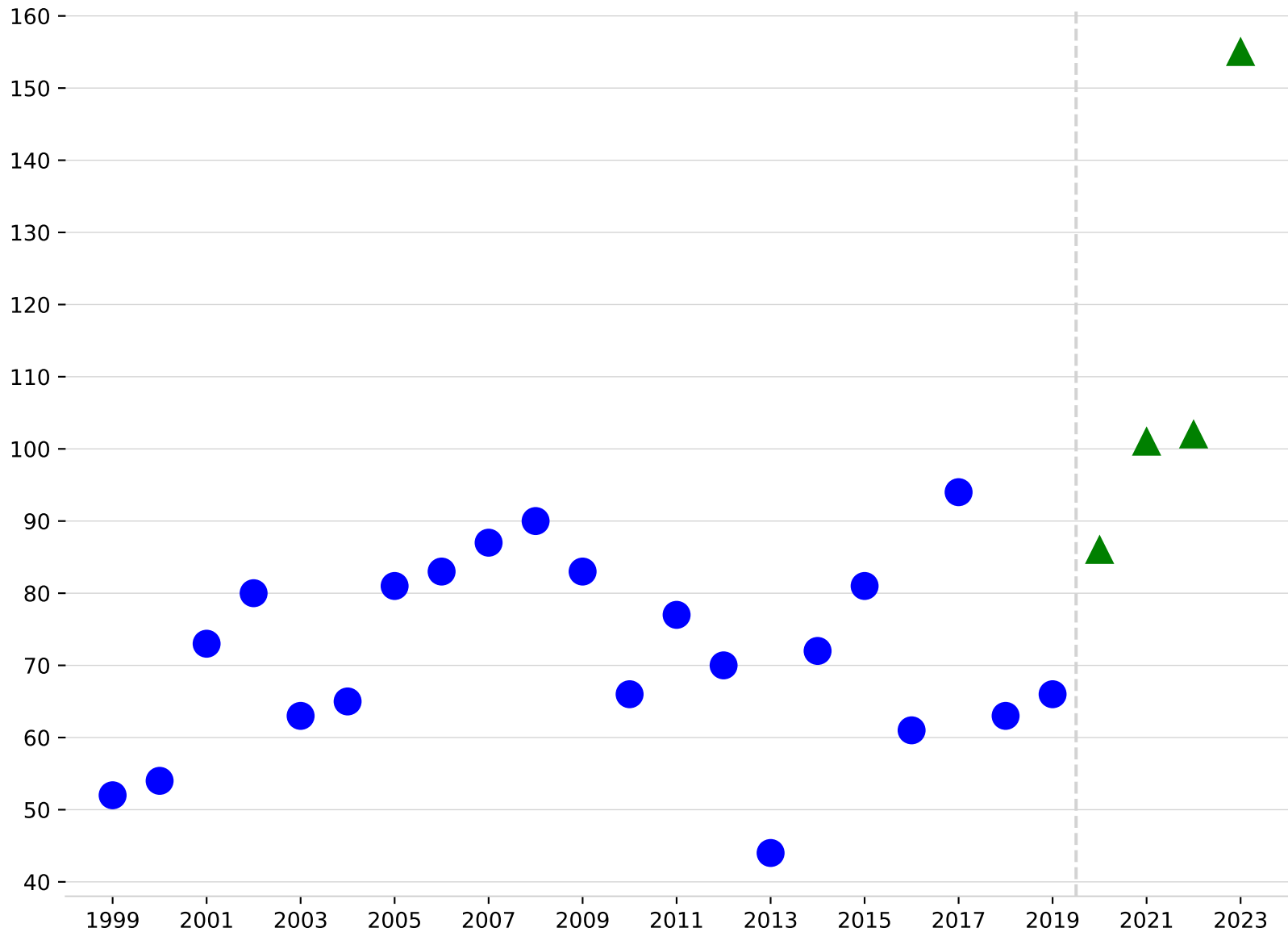
Figure 1 focuses on the historical graduation class sizes and the current enrollment by grade (future year of graduation) for the ten member towns only (including Belmont). The blue circles are the sizes of the graduating classes in the past and the green triangles are the sizes of the current classes as of mid-September. The source of the data is the same source used in Tables 1a-1d in Section 3.

If the historical graduation rates are the better predictors for future demand for seats, then there will be only 75 or so seats taken by member applicants, leaving more than 100 seats available for non-members.

Alternatively, if the most recent application and admission cycle — for the first class entering the new building — is the better basis for future projections, then member applicants will demand more than 150 of the seats, leaving less than 30 available for non-members. In addition, the current enrollment includes 163 non-member students, including 44 freshmen. If these levels of demand from members and non-members continue at this or higher levels, then some applicants from non-member communities will be denied access in the future.

Note that under the current Minuteman admissions policy, if there is more demand by non-members than there are spaces after member applicants are admitted, the non-member applicants are accepted according to their positions on a ranked list. The rankings are calculated based on five factors: grades, attendance, discipline, recommendation, and interview. Thus, those

FIGURE 1: TEN MEMBER TOWN TOTALS
GRADUATING CLASS SIZES (through 2019)
SEPTEMBER 2019 ENROLLMENT BY CLASS (2020-2023)



applicants with the lower grades, worse attendance records and greater disciplinary events are more likely to be denied admission to Minuteman.

Town Meeting may want to address the link between enrollment projections and the value assigned to priority access that membership secures.

(3) Financial Considerations of Membership versus Non-Membership

Annual Per Student Costs

As Section 4 describes, members are assessed in order to balance the budget after all other sources of revenue are considered, while non-members pay tuitions and fees approved by DESE. Almost all of the member assessments are calculated proportional to past enrollment figures, while non-member tuitions and fees are proportional to the current year enrollment.

Figure 2 is an attempt to compare how overall enrollment interacts with the assessment rules in the Regional Agreement with the current DESE tuition and fee regulations. The x-axis is total enrollment, and the y-axis is the all-in cost of member versus non-member status.

(This figure is the result of a number of assumptions about future enrollment, operating costs, and revenues. The enrollment scenarios were chosen to minimize the rolling average affect in the Regional Agreement, by pushing demand up in FY21, two years ahead of the cost comparisons.)

The main take-away from Figure 2 is that one's projections about future enrollment will also directly affect one's projections about the relative cost advantage of non-membership, under the current DESE regulations.

If future demand reverts back to the historical levels of five and ten years ago, then the cost gap between member and non-member status will persist. But if future demand continues at the higher level of the past year, then the per student cost gap narrows significantly.

Fixed Capital Obligations

If Belmont remains a member, it is making two commitments related to servicing the new building debt. First, Belmont will be assessed a make-up capital payment of \$472,667 for the three years of debt service it avoided by its previous notice of withdrawal. Second, regardless of the number of students Belmont sends to Minuteman in the future, each year it will be assessed at least 1% of the annual debt service, which will range between \$45,000 and \$67,000 per year for the next 29 years.

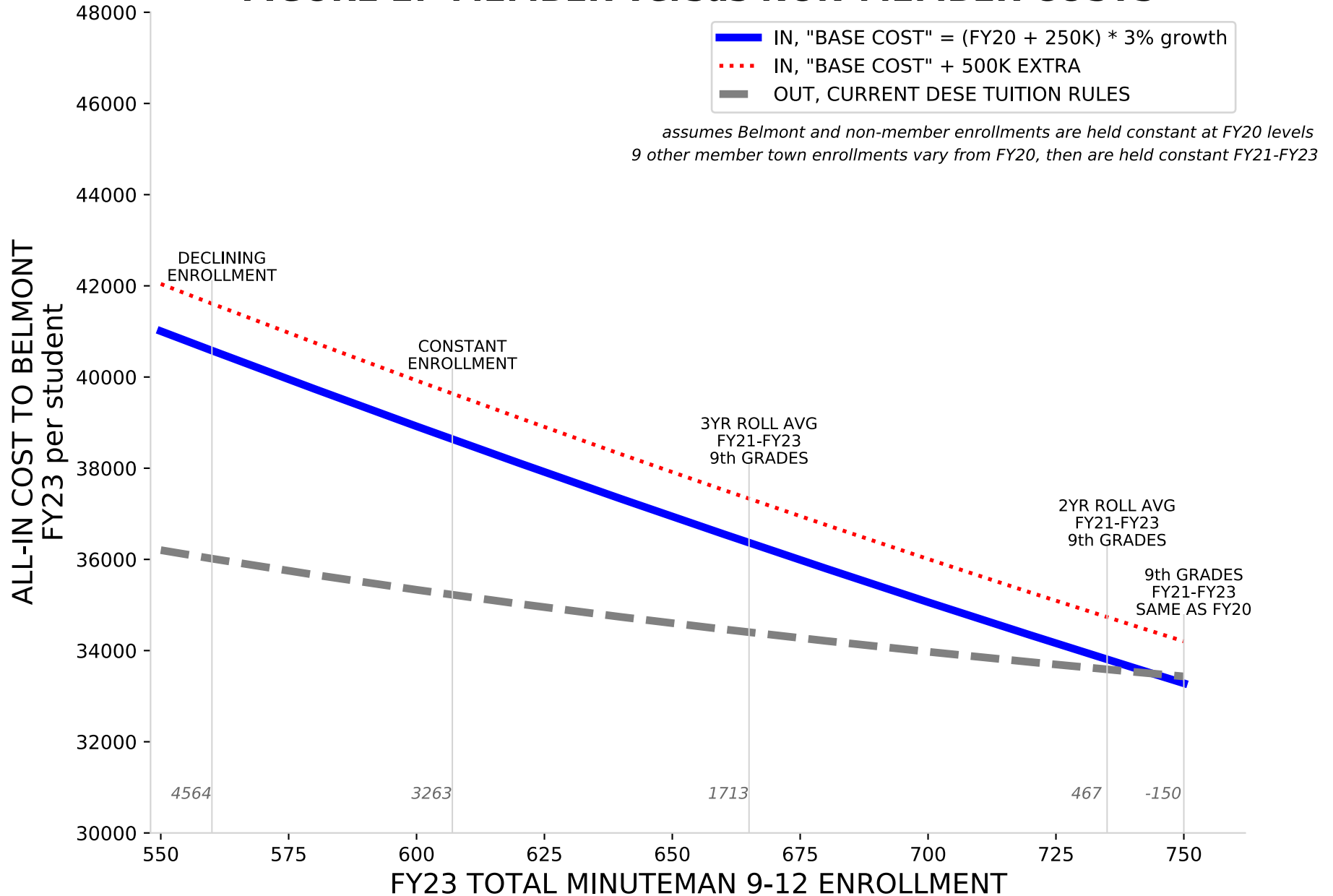
Town Meeting may want to address the link between enrollment and relative financial costs, as well as the relative financial commitments of membership.

(4) Feasibility of Alternatives to Minuteman

As described in Section 5, the Superintendent's Working Group did not identify a long-term feasible alternative out of the options it reviewed.

Again, one's projections about future demand for seats affects how one views the lack of readily available alternatives. If the demand continues at this past year's level or higher, then it is a concern if Belmont is not a member.

FIGURE 2: MEMBER versus NON-MEMBER COSTS



What are the alternatives that did not get fully evaluated by the Working Group? For instance, the Boston public school system may have capacity at its vocational schools — but is that what families who move to Belmont expect? Would nearby cities, such as Waltham and Somerville who are at various stages of high school construction projects, build enough capacity to consistently provide space for Belmont students? If so, would they expect Belmont to contribute to their debt service costs? These questions were beyond the scope of the Working Group report, and are challenging to answer.

Town Meeting may want to address the link between enrollment projections and the feasibility of alternatives to Minuteman.

(5) DESE Considerations

Thus far the financial and enrollment discussions here have assumed that DESE regulations will remain the same. However, DESE Deputy Commissioner has reported that the regulations for vocational education are under review in the department and that changes may be proposed for public comment within the year.

There are two types of discussions that Minuteman administration and school committee members have had with DESE this year, regarding potential changes to the current regulations.

First, the Minuteman Superintendent has been advocating for allowing students in Type B municipalities to access Minuteman's 9th grade exploratory program when their local or regional vocational school has a wait list. If adopted, this would expand the pool of non-member applicants, thus reducing Belmont's access if it were not a member.

Second, the Minuteman School Committee asked the DESE Commissioner whether he would allow Minuteman to charge average cost tuitions to Type A towns. The policy of average cost pricing for non-member towns written into Section X(B) of the Regional Agreement, and Chapter 74, Section 7C of the Massachusetts General Laws allows regional vocational school committees to propose their own tuition schedules for Type A communities, subject to the approval of the DESE Commissioner. Minuteman representatives met with Deputy Commissioner Wulfson and others about this over the summer, and further discussions are on hold pending the issuance of new regulations for public comment.

Town Meeting may want to address the prospect that either one, or both, changes to DESE regulations might happen and the impact on the member versus non-member question.

(6) District Membership Considerations

In addition to the priority access to seats that membership provides, and the financial commitments that membership requires, there are other considerations at the heart of the Minuteman membership issue.

Regional structures are a way for towns to share costs and gain efficiencies, particular for capital intensive enterprises. Minuteman is obviously a prime example of this. Through the regional school committee, each member town has a say in the formation and approval of the annual budget, and in the selection of a superintendent when a vacancy arises.

At the same time, being a member of a regional structure demands that each member accept some loss of control, as no one town can make the final decisions. But non-member status offers

no formal role in the governance of a regional school and no assurance that the needs of the non-members will be recognized and met.

Town Meeting may want to address to what extent it values its voice and vote on the Minuteman School Committee.

(7) Strategic Responses by Minuteman

Regardless of Belmont's decision in November, Minuteman will continue to pursue ways to fill the school primarily with member communities. This year the Minuteman School Committee has set a goal for the Superintendent to enroll at least 160 students from member towns in next fall's ninth grade class. If this goal were achieved, then there would be at most 20 seats available for all non-member applicants, a readily achievable target.

Minuteman is strategically considering ways to get to full enrollment. The revamped outreach program for member eighth grade students described above is one approach. Another is the introduction of the Animal Science (Veterinary Assistant) program which has generated high interest from middle school students. The Superintendent's discussions with DESE about expanding access for Type B residents is another initiative to increase demand. The pending local high school building projects in Arlington and possibly Lexington will likely provide at least a short term increase in the applicants from those towns. And there will be other initiatives possible if the school does not achieve full enrollment with these efforts.

If Belmont were to exit the Minuteman District, how likely would it be that Belmont could rejoin at a later date? Joining the District is a more complicated process than the rescission process to be considered at the November Special Town Meeting. Adding a town to the District requires an amendment to the Regional Agreement, which starts with a 3/4 vote by the Minuteman School Committee, followed by simple majority approval at every member Town Meeting.

Town Meeting may want to address whether the Minuteman District has other strategic options available to achieve full enrollment if Belmont were not to remain a member.

(8) Overall Risk Assessments

In 2016, there were significant unresolved uncertainties related to the Minuteman District and Belmont's access:

- * The new building project had not yet begun, so there were questions about whether it would be completed on time and on budget.

- * The new building design for 628 students was significantly higher than the historical enrollment from the ten member towns and the new DESE regulations restricting access from Type B residents was starting to take effect, so there were questions about whether Minuteman could fill the new school and the mix of member to non-member students.

- * Whether or not the school would be fully enrolled raised additional questions about Belmont's long term access to Minuteman.

- * The Belmont Superintendent had not yet investigated the available alternatives to Minuteman, so there were questions about what those options were.

- * The DESE regulation about charging non-member towns a capital fee to help pay for the

new building debt service had not been implemented or tested yet, so there were questions about whether such a fee would actually be imposed.

With all these uncertainties, the October 2016 Special Town Meeting voted to start a three year process that would allow for Belmont to exit in July 2020, with the understanding that situation could be monitored and the option to reconsider its decision would be available.

Town Meeting may want to re-assess the risks and rewards of leaving the Minuteman District, in light of the new information and circumstances realized over the past three years.

Worksheet

At the end of this report is a worksheet listing these eight topics.

7. MY RECOMMENDATION — REMAIN IN THE DISTRICT

I firmly believe that the better option for Belmont is to remain in the Minuteman District.

I offer my reflections on the eight topics of interest identified in Section 6:

(1) Educational Value of the Minuteman Program: I regard the Minuteman High School as part of the overall Belmont school system, offering a distinctly different program of studies and approach to learning that we should support and maintain. We have a commitment to provide a quality education for all, and Minuteman High School is our best plan for providing the programs and learning environment that will not be available at the forthcoming Belmont Middle and High School.

(2) Projected Demand for Seats at Minuteman: I believe the past year's experience, with a wait list for the 9th grade class, is the best predictor for future demand. I expect that a wait list for non-member applicants will be the norm going forward. If Belmont does not remain a member, I expect that some students who could benefit greatly by attending Minuteman will be denied access.

(3) Financial Considerations of Membership v. Alternatives: With fully enrolled ninth grade classes as the norm, the school will reach full capacity and the per student gap between member assessments and non-member tuitions will disappear. The one-time make-up capital payment of \$472,667, equal to the three years of exempted debt service costs, is worth paying in order to remain a member. Unlike what some asserted in October 2016, Belmont will not maintain unrestricted access to Minuteman and also save hundreds of thousands of dollars each year as a non-member.

(4) Feasibility of Alternatives to Minuteman: I don't see any practical alternatives at this point. Building new relationships with potential CVTE providers will be a challenge, and I think will be more costly, in time and money, than others expect.

(5) DESE Considerations: My impressions of DESE oversight of Minuteman and the CVTE programs has gone up in my three years as a member of the Minuteman School Committee. I have been able to bring the issue of average cost pricing for non-member municipalities to the attention of the senior staff, and while there has not been any change yet, the question is still open. If Belmont remains a member, I will work with others in Belmont and other towns to continue to advocate for this change.

(6) District Membership Considerations: I value continued membership as the only way to make sure that Minuteman takes Belmont's interests into consideration. The right to voice and vote on key school committee issues such as the annual budget and the search for subsequent superintendents is important, and can only be preserved through membership.

My own experience as Belmont's representative on the Minuteman School Committee since December 2016 has been positive. I have enjoyed working with my colleagues and I know I have been heard and been a part of the process. They elected me vice-chair last year knowing that I would push the average cost pricing issue (which was not the top priority for the Superintendent, for instance). This year I am chair of the finance subcommittee, and I will work with the committee to better understand the financial workings of the school.

I also understand and appreciate the history of Belmont and Minuteman and the times of tension, often driven by leadership in Belmont frustrated with how the Minuteman District made decisions and whether or not their voices were heard. For me, this is an unfortunate but valid example of the challenges of regional government. While we can learn from history, I urge that we don't get caught up on past grievances, and instead decide this question on the basis of what is best for Belmont going forward.

(7) Strategic Responses by Minuteman: Simply put, I think this is our last and best chance to remain as members of Minuteman. If we continue on the path towards exit in July, I am convinced that the Minuteman school committee will accept that as a final decision and move ahead with other plans and initiatives.

(8) Overall Risk Assessments: While I supported remaining a member at the October 2016 Special Town Meeting, I recognized that there was a lot of uncertainty about key concerns, and I could understand the Special Town Meeting's decision to start the exit process as the safer, lower risk choice for Belmont.

Three years later, many of those uncertainties have been resolved, and in favor of remaining a member. Furthermore, it is clear that the risk of finding an acceptable alternative is higher than previously thought. Today, I suggest to Town Meeting that the safer, lower risk choice is for Belmont to remain a member of Minuteman. I urge all Town Meeting members to vote YES on this article.

**TOPICS OF INTEREST
MINUTEMAN MEMBERSHIP ARTICLE**

(1) Educational Value of the Minuteman Program	
(2) Projected Demand for Seats at Minuteman	
(3) Financial Considerations of Membership v. Alternatives	
(4) Feasibility of Alternatives to Minuteman	
(5) DESE Considerations	
(6) District Membership Considerations	
(7) Strategic Responses by Minuteman	
(8) Overall Risk Assessments	

Town of Belmont Warrant Committee

**Summary Review of Proposal to Rescind Withdrawal
from the Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical
School District**

November 2019

Summary

- **Belmont voted to withdraw from the Minuteman Regional Vocational School (“MM” or “Minuteman”) in November 2016**
 - TM, BOS, SC, and WC all voted to support withdrawal from MM at that time after TM voted down the new MM school project

- **Belmont is now considering whether to rescind its withdrawal notice prior to the withdrawal date of July 2020**

- **Why is Belmont reconsidering its withdrawal?**
 - 1. MM had an enrollment increase in fall 2019 with the opening of the new school, raising the question of future availability of space for non-member towns if this one year increase is sustained in future
 - 2. After the 2016 withdrawal vote, the Superintendent convened a working group to examine alternatives to MM and that group did not find better available alternatives to the MM for vocational education at this time

Trade-offs for Considering withdrawal from MM

- **Are the fall 2019 enrollment increases for MM and for Belmont likely to continue in the future?**
 - No one can answer this question definitively; rather, we can each have a Point of View
- If the enrollment increases of fall 2019 for the total MM and for Belmont **continue**, then:
 - Space at MM for non-member towns could become more precious and some Belmont students could be waitlisted.
 - As the MM approaches "full" enrollment of 720, the financial advantage of being a non-member is reduced
- If the enrollment increases for the total MM and for Belmont **do not continue**, then:
 - Space at MM for non-member town would remain available
 - Financial advantage to being a non-member town would be sustained
- Qualitative Trade-offs of membership or non-membership:
 - Members have board representation and a voice in management of the MM
 - Non-members have no voice but retain flexibility to pursue other options for VocEd as they may become available.
- **Bottom line:** What is the "price" of having "full insurance" that all Belmont students are assured a space at MM?
 - A higher cost of remaining a member of MM could be viewed as the insurance premium to ensure complete access to MM.

Enrollment

- **Historically MM has operated quite a bit below enrollment capacity**
 - Thus, historically non-member students had virtually no risk of rejection
 - By policy and agreement, member towns' students are given priority over non-member towns' students
- **However, for fall 2019, MM has experienced a large enrollment increase**
 - MM freshman enrollment for fall 2019 is 192, well above the average freshman enrollment of the past 5 years
 - Belmont has had average total enrollment (all grades) of 30 over the past 5 years.
 - For fall 2019, 17 freshman from Belmont enrolled in MM, making the current year total Belmont enrollment 44
- **The fall 2019 enrollment jump for Belmont may be tied to the combined timing of i) opening of new MM building, and ii) start of construction and attendant disarray at BHS campus**
 - Is this one year jump a new pattern? Is it sustainable?
 - Staggered construction on the high schools of various towns in coming year may impact MM (Arlington, Waltham, Watertown, etc.)
- **If Belmont annual enrollment remained at the level for the freshmen fall 2019 class AND total MM enrollment matches the fall 2019 class enrollment over time, then there would be a meaningful chance that some students in the future would be rejected from MM if Belmont remained a non-member town**
 - For example, @ MM enrollment of 600, it is highly unlikely that Belmont students are rejected, as a non-member Town
 - For example @ MM enrollment of 720, it is quite likely that a some Belmont students could be rejected, as a non-member Town
 - Estimates vary by modeling assumptions, but at the 720 enrollment level, rejections might be between one and eleven

Financial Aspects of Membership and Non-membership

- If MM operates at the current enrollment level of about 600 students, then the cost benefit of non-membership is real and will continue to exist
 - Modeling changes with myriad assumptions, but the benefit of non-membership might be an estimated \$3,300-\$4,300 per student, or approximately \$100,000 - \$190,000 annually for 30 – 44 students depending on assumptions
- If MM operates at full enrollment of approximately 720 students, then there would likely be minimal financial benefit or even financial cost to being a non-member Town.
 - Again, modeling changes with myriad assumptions, but the benefit of non-membership might be \$0; or, there could be a modest savings to membership, depending on assumptions
- In addition, beyond the impact of just the enrollment level, the cost differential between being a member and a non-member is highly dependent on the assumption of the added marginal operating costs related to serving the additional 120 students (600 vs. 720)

“Remain-In” Payment - \$472,667

- **Because Belmont voted to withdraw from MM, the Town did not pay debt service in connection with the new MM school debt for three years in FY17-19, while the other member towns did make such payments.**
 - The total of this debt service is \$472,667
- The whole town budget “saved” this \$472,667 over these past three years
- **If Belmont votes to rescind withdrawal and to remain in the MM, MM has indicated that it will expect Belmont to pay this \$472,667 to remain the MM**
- **Currently, MM has indicated that it expects such repayment in 1 year**
 - This would be a meaningful one-time charge to the FY21 budget
 - It represents about 50% of the FY20 MM assessment of \$984,887.
 - To provide context \$472,667 is 1.1% of the total Town FY20 budget and about 5.8% of Free Cash (Town reserves)
- **A vote to rescind withdrawal from the MM needs to consider the management of the proposed “Remain-In” Payment**
- Questions might include:
 - Would MM agree to the “Remain-in” spread over three years since it represented three years of debt service?
 - Can the rescission of the withdrawal be conditional on an agreement regarding the “Remain-In” payment?

Recap

- **MM offers the best VocEd opportunities for Belmont students, whether as a member or a non-member Town**
- **Assumptions regarding MM future enrollment (both for Belmont and for all the member towns) are key to the decision whether to rescind Belmont's withdrawal**
 - **Will all Belmont students who wish to attend MM be accepted if Belmont is non-member?**
 - **What will be the cost-differential between members and non-members?**
 - **@ ~ 600 MM enrollment, the cost gap is real and will continue to exist (modeling can show differences myriad ways, but a possible savings range may be \$3,300 - \$4,300 per student)**
 - **@ ~ 720 MM enrollment, estimated cost difference could be \$0, or even a modest savings to membership.**
- **Belmont must pay the \$472,667 debt service it avoided in 2017-2019 if it votes to remain**



Appendix:

Rules on Joining and Leaving MM

Rules for Joining and Leaving the MM

● Rescinding 2016 Withdrawal from MM

- Belmont could vote to rescind its withdrawal after votes of BOS, SC, and TM
- Majority is needed from BOS and TM. (This contrasts to the withdrawal vote, which required 2/3 of Town Meeting)
- Then the MM School Committee must vote unanimously to permit Belmont to rescind its withdrawal

● To Rejoin MM in the Future (i.e. beyond 2020)

- If Belmont does not rescind its withdrawal, it could rejoin MM in the future with the following steps:
 - Request MM to permit it to rejoin
 - MM School Committee would need to vote by 75% to amend the Regional Agreement to admit another member
 - Then, membership needs to be approved unanimously by all Member Towns acting by a majority vote at their respective Town Meetings
- Note – MM member towns have an incentive to add new members towns to spread the fixed costs of the MM, although some member towns might be annoyed with future requests by Belmont for a change in status

● To withdraw from MM in the Future (i.e. beyond 2020)

- If Belmont remains in the MM (by rescinding its withdrawal and garnering unanimous consent from the MM School Committee), then Belmont could withdraw from MM in the future only by securing the unanimous consent of all Member Towns acting by majority vote at their respective Town Meetings.
- Note – MM member towns do not have an incentive to permit a member to withdraw as a member's withdrawal increases the fixed cost burden on the remaining members.

● The steps and approvals to rejoin MM in the future are less complex politically than the steps to withdraw from MM in the future, but neither rejoining in the future nor withdrawing in the future is “easy”

ARTICLE 5: Amend General Bylaw: Town Meeting, Chapter 30, Procedural Rules

TEXT AFTER SUBSTITUTE MOTION BY THE BYLAW REVIEW COMMITTEE

MOVED:

(1) To delete said § 30-115F and replacing it in its entirety with the following:

F. Counting and Recording of Votes:

- (1) As used in this section, the words "electronic" and "electronically," when used in reference to voting or the counting of votes at Town Meeting, shall refer to the use of computer software to record votes transmitted from wireless handheld mobile devices distributed and assigned to each Town Meeting Member in attendance. The Moderator shall review proper use of the mobile devices and direct a test of the electronic system at the beginning of each Town Meeting session.
- (2) Except as otherwise provided in this section or by any other applicable law, all votes shall be taken in the first instance by a "YES" and "NO" voice vote. If the Moderator is in doubt as to the vote, or if any Town Meeting Member immediately doubts the vote, the Moderator shall count the vote electronically, provided that at the beginning of each session of Town Meeting, at least two-thirds of the Town Meeting Members present and voting have approved a motion to allow electronic counting of non-roll call votes for that session of Town Meeting.
- (3) Electronic Roll Call Votes Required.

Any main motion that requires at least a two-thirds vote to be adopted by the Meeting shall be taken in the first instance by electronic roll call vote.

Any electronic vote on a main motion or amendment to a main motion that passes or fails by 10 votes or fewer shall be retaken by electronic roll call vote.

In all other cases, an electronic roll call vote shall be taken only on a motion supported by at least 50 Town Meeting Members.

Roll call votes shall not be taken on privileged, incidental, or subsidiary motions except for:

- (a) motions to postpone indefinitely that result in final action on the main motion; and
 - (b) motions to amend (or substitute) that, in the sole judgment of the Moderator, would substantially alter the purpose of the main motion.
- (4) If an electronic roll call vote is taken as provided in this Subsection, the Town Clerk shall cause the operator of the electronic voting system to preserve the electronic file recording the "YES," "NO," and "ABSTAIN" votes of each individual Town Meeting Member who shall have voted, and such record shall be made available to the public at the office of the Town Clerk and on the Town's web page within two business days of the vote, and shall be printed in the Town Annual Report. The individual roll call votes of Town Meeting Members shall be displayed contemporaneously to the Meeting. The Town Clerk shall cause the operator of the electronic voting system not to generate or preserve an electronic file

recording the individual vote results unless the Moderator has duly called for an electronic roll call vote.

- (5) In the event that an electronic voting system is not available, then:
 - (a) in all cases where an electronic vote would otherwise be required under these Bylaws, the Moderator shall direct the "YES" and "NO" voters to stand and be counted by the tellers; and
 - (b) in all cases where an electronic roll call vote is required under these Bylaws, the Town Clerk shall call the roll, record the vote, "YES", "NO," or "ABSTAIN" of each Town Meeting Member and make such record available as provided in Paragraph F(4).

AND

- (2) By inserting the following new sentence into § 30-115H between the first and second sentences of that section:

If the vote to be reconsidered was taken by roll call vote, a motion to reconsider will not be in order unless it is made by a Town Meeting Member who had voted with the prevailing side.

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

Amendment to Article 5

Submitted by Donald Mercier, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 8

2019 OCT 22 PM 2:24

Moved to amend the text in Article 5, §30 – 115F (3), third sentence by changing the number 50 to the number 35 so that it reads:

“In all other cases, an electronic roll call vote shall be taken only on a motion supported by at least 35 Town Meeting Members.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Donald H. Mercier". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D" and a stylized "H".

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

AMENDMENT 1 TO ARTICLE 5 TEXT, SUBMITTED BY SCOTT STRATFORD, PREC 8

2019 NOV -1 PM 12:23

AMENDMENT to Warrant Article 5 regarding the number of Town Meeting Members required for a roll call vote, Special Town Meeting, November 2019

As submitted on November 1, 2019 by Scott Stratford, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 8

MOVED: that the text in Article 5, §30 – 115F (3), in the third sentence, be changed by replacing the number “50” with the number “75”, so that the sentence now reads as follows:

“In all other cases, a roll call vote shall be taken only on a motion supported by at least 75 Town Meeting Members.”

Amendment to ARTICLE 5 By Substitute Motion
Proposed by Mary Bradley & Travis Franck, Town Meeting Members, Precinct 5

MOVED: That the Town vote to amend Chapter 30, Sections 115 (F)and (H) of the General Bylaws as set forth in the document, "Article 5: Amend General Bylaw: Town Meeting, Chapter 30, Procedural Rules: Text After Substitute Motion By Town Meeting Members Mary Bradley and Travis Franck, Precinct 5 that has been distributed to all Town Meeting Members.

Amendment to ARTICLE 5:
Amend General Bylaw: Town Meeting, Chapter 30, Procedural Rules
Submitted by Mary Bradley, Precinct 5 and Travis Franck, Precinct 5,
As Approved by the Bylaw Review Committee as to form and placement

F. Counting and Recording of Votes:

- (1) As used in this section, the words "electronic" and "electronically," when used in reference to voting or the counting of votes at Town Meeting, shall refer to the use of computer software to record votes transmitted from wireless handheld mobile devices distributed and assigned to each Town Meeting Member in attendance. The Moderator shall review proper use of the mobile devices and direct a test of the electronic system at the beginning of each Town Meeting session.
- (2) Except as otherwise provided in this section or by any other applicable law, all votes shall be taken in the first instance by a "YES" and "NO" voice vote.
- (3) Electronic Roll Call Votes Required.

Any motions and amendments to motions

- a. that were not decided unanimously by voice vote; and
- b. that were not approved for a non-roll call vote; and
- c. are not privileged, incidental, or subsidiary except for:
 - i motions to postpone indefinitely that result in final action on the main motion; and
 - ii motions to amend (or substitute) that, in the sole judgment of the Moderator, would substantially alter the purpose of the main motion.

shall be taken by electronic roll call vote.

- (4) If an electronic roll call vote is taken as provided in this subsection, the Town Clerk shall cause the operator of the electronic voting system to preserve the electronic file recording the "YES," "NO," and "ABSTAIN" votes of each individual Town Meeting Member who shall have voted, and such record shall be made available to the public at the office of the Town Clerk and on the Town's web page within two business days of the vote, and shall be printed in the Town Annual Report. The individual roll call votes of Town Meeting Members shall be displayed contemporaneously to the Meeting.
- (5) Prior to declaration of the vote result by the Moderator, if a Town Meeting Member wishes to change her/his electronic roll call vote, she/he shall immediately rise to request a change to her/his electronic roll call vote. As soon as practicable after a recorded vote is taken

electronically pursuant to Paragraph F(3), the results of that vote will be posted on the Town website and will remain so posted for a period of at least three years.

(6) In the event that an electronic voting system is not available, then:

- (a) in all cases where an electronic vote would otherwise be required under these Bylaws, the Moderator shall direct the "YES" and "NO" voters to stand and be counted by the tellers; and
- (b) in all cases where an electronic roll call vote is required under these Bylaws, the Town Clerk shall call the roll, record the vote, "YES", "NO," or "ABSTAIN" of each Town Meeting Member and make such record available as provided in Paragraph F(5).

(7) Electronic Non Roll Call Votes Required:

Provided that at the beginning of each session of Town Meeting, at least two-thirds of the Town Meeting Members present and voting have approved a motion to allow electronic counting of non-roll call votes for that session of Town Meeting, electronic non roll call votes shall be taken only on a motion made prior to the voice vote and supported by at least 50 Town Meeting Members.

AND

(2) By inserting the following new sentence into § 30-115H between the first and second sentences of that section:

If the vote to be reconsidered was taken by roll call vote, a motion to reconsider will not be in order unless it is made by a Town Meeting Member who had voted with the prevailing side.

Amendment to Article 5, substitute motion submitted by the Bylaw Review Committee

Submitted by Jill Clark, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 7

MOVED:

Remove §30-115F (2) and replace with:

“Except as otherwise provided in this section or by any other applicable law, all votes shall be taken in the first instance by electronic roll call vote.”

Remove §30-115F (3) and replace with:

Electronic Roll Call Votes Not Required:

Electronic roll call votes shall not be required on motions that are privileged, subsidiary, incidental, or non-binding; in these cases the vote shall be taken in the first instance by a "YES" and "NO" voice vote. If the Moderator is in doubt as to the vote, or if any Town Meeting Member immediately doubts the vote, the Moderator shall count the vote electronically, provided that at the beginning of each session of Town Meeting, at least two-thirds of the Town Meeting Members present and voting have approved a motion to allow electronic counting of non-roll call votes for that session of Town Meeting.

Edit §30-115F (4) as follows:

Delete the third sentence: (“The Town Clerk shall cause the operator of the electronic voting system not to generate or preserve an electronic file recording the individual vote results unless the Moderator has duly called for an electronic roll call vote.”)

RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

AMENDMENT 2 TO ARTICLE 5 TEXT, SUBMITTED BY SCOTT STRATFORD, PREC 8

2019 NOV -1 PM 12:23

AMENDMENT to Warrant Article 5 regarding roll call votes on "non-binding" articles or main motions,
Special Town Meeting, November 2019

As submitted on November 1, 2019 by Scott Stratford, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 8

MOVED: that the text in Article 5, §30 – 115F (3) the fourth sentence, be changed by adding the words
"non-binding", before the word "privileged" so that it reads as follows:

"Roll Call votes shall not be taken on "non-binding", privileged, incidental, or subsidiary motions except
for:"

John Robotham
19 Scott Road, Belmont, Massachusetts 02478

November 7, 1919

Ellen O'Brien Cushman,
Town Clerk
Town of Belmont
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, Massachusetts 02478

Re: Amendment to Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 5.

Dear Ms. Cushman:

I am hereby filing an amendment to Article 5 of the Special Town Meeting Warrant to amend § **30-115F(3)** as set forth in Article 5, in order to eliminate various requirements for electronic roll call votes currently set forth in that proposed Article.

Therefore,

I move that Article 5 on the Warrant be amended by deleting the entire proposed Subsection § **30-115F(3)**, and replace it with the following:

- “(3) When Electronic Roll Call Votes are Required. An electronic roll call vote shall be taken only upon a motion supported by at least 75 Town Meeting Members, except that
- (a) no roll call vote shall be taken on articles setting the salaries or compensation of Town employees or elected Town officials, and
 - (b) no roll call vote shall be taken on privileged, incidental, or subsidiary motions.”

Sincerely,

John Robotham
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 2

John Robotham
19 Scott Road, Belmont, Massachusetts 02478

November 7, 1919

Ellen O'Brien Cushman,
Town Clerk
Town of Belmont
455 Concord Avenue
Belmont, Massachusetts 02478

Re: Amendment to Special Town Meeting Warrant Article 5.

Dear Ms. Cushman:

I am hereby filing an amendment to Article 5 of the Special Town Meeting Warrant to amend § **30-115F(3)** as set forth in Article 5, in order to eliminate the automatic requirement for electronic roll call votes on motions that require a two-thirds vote.

Therefore,

I move that Article 5 on the Warrant be amended by deleting the entire first paragraph of proposed Subsection § **30-115F(3)**.

Sincerely,

John Robotham
Town Meeting Member
Precinct 2

November 5, 2019

To: Discussion Leader, LWV Warrant Briefing for November 2019 Special Town Meeting

From: Scott Stratford, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 8

Re: My two proposed amendments to Article 5

I have a prior commitment cannot attend tonight's briefing. Here is a short statement about each of my proposed amendments, in case Town Meeting members in attendance inquire about them. I will also make an address to the Special Town Meeting when they are being considered.

75 TMMs for a roll call vote (Amendment 1 of 2):

In the proposed revision of the by-law, Section 30 – 115F, item 3 states that, in cases where a roll call vote is not required, it must be requested by at least 50 Town Meeting members. This amendment would raise the number to 75.

Of approximately 200 Town Meeting members who responded to an "informal poll" in May of this year, a substantial number wanted a minimum number higher than the 50 in the text of the warrant article. Moreover, the views of nearly 90 other Town Meeting members were not recorded in the poll.

I would like to give Town Meeting the opportunity to debate a minimum number higher than the 50 in the proposed article.

"Non-binding" motions and roll call votes (Amendment 2 of 2):

I would also like to give Town Meeting the opportunity to discuss whether roll call votes are appropriate for "non-binding" main motions in warrant articles. At present the proposed by-law is silent on the issue.

John Robotham, Precinct 2 - Amendments for Article 5

I have proposed two amendments with different purposes.

The first amendment is intended to create a “time out” to allow a much broader discussion of the role that electronic voting should play in town meeting. The one change to current process, requiring 75 TMMs to call for an electronic roll call vote, is intended to address the issue in the last town meeting where we saw repeated calls for electronic votes, even after articles were decided with certainty. This will return us to a situation comparable to what we had a year ago, and allow emotions to cool while thinking through this important issue.

With the current proposed article, or any of the variants being proposed, we are on a certain path to having an electronic roll call on nearly every vote. There are many thoughtful people who feel that electronic roll call is the best way to ensure transparency, and I respect their opinion. But I have noticed a distinct deterioration in the discourse and ability to reach consensus after the introduction of the electronic voting, and this has only increased at each subsequent town meeting. Electronic roll call voting is, in my opinion, only accelerating this trend.

It would be my preference to limit the use of electronic roll call voting to situations similar to the prior use of paper roll call, while allowing much faster tallies. On our current path, we are essentially eliminating the stand-up vote, which had all the virtues of transparency within town meeting, but with far less rancor. Frequent electronic roll calls open the door to reprisals based on votes taken in good conscience, and future campaigns based on single votes taken completely out of context. It will undoubtedly lead to warrant articles intended to put each individual “on the record” on issues where a respect for complexity, nuance and consensus would better serve the interests of our town.

However, I know that many have very different opinions. I would welcome continued discussion, treating this amendment as a temporary measure. I am hoping this amendment will allow us to step back from the current path, reduce the emotional temperature, and think this through more carefully after some healthy debate within the context of town meeting.

The second amendment is far more limited in scope. It simply removes the necessity for an electronic roll call vote on measures that are routine and typically pass unanimously or overwhelmingly on voice votes. This problem was pointed out by others during the excellent discussion led by our town moderator a few weeks ago. I did not see any other amendments specifically addressing this issue, and therefore I am proposing this amendment.

The Reducing Health Benefits for Town Employees Article

To Belmont Town Meeting Members:

My name is Dan Barry. I'm a Town Meeting member and I would love to not be taking up your time with this article. However, the Select Board made a decision in late August to reduce the health benefits of our employees. This move will squeeze the compensation of the people who protect our safety, maintain our infrastructure and teach our children. I think this action will harm our community and I believe that Town Meeting should have the chance to weigh in on it.

On August 26th, the Select Board voted to use Sections 21-23 of Mass. General Law Chapter 32B to change health insurance benefits. This law permits the town, outside of the normal collective bargaining process, to more than double the deductibles and increase most of the co-pays that our employees will have to make when they seek medical care for themselves, their spouses and their children. While this change will decrease the premium, the deductible/co-pay jumps will be so large that the average employee will likely end up losing hundreds of dollars annually, and employees facing a health crisis will take an even bigger financial hit.

Firefighting, policing, teaching, and all other forms of public service are honorable professions. However, these civic occupations are also types of employment that people take to earn the money they need to pay their rent or mortgage, to make their student loan and car payments, and to feed and clothe their families. When the town chooses to reduce the health benefits of its employees, it is making it more difficult for them to provide for themselves and their families – and to continue to work for Belmont.

And this isn't the first time this has happened. Soon after the Massachusetts State Legislature added Sections 21-23 to 32B, the town invoked it in 2012 to raise deductibles and co-pays on our employees. The idea of our employees being made, once again, to subsidize the expense of running our community through higher out-of-pocket medical payments troubles me. The Select Board's action does not reflect my values. I filed this article because I suspect that the Board's move may not reflect your values as well and I think you should have the chance to say so.

What this Article Will Do

This article asks Town Meeting to express its disapproval of the Select Board's action to reduce the health benefits of our employees. Present and past members of the Select Board have often stated that they respect the opinions expressed by Town Meeting and would be guided by them. Since the health benefit cuts at issue here will not take effect until January 1, 2020, the Select Board will have the ability to respond to a favorable vote on this article by preventing or quickly reversing the reductions in question or by taking steps to adjust our employee's pay to make up for them. I ask you to please support this article.

Dan Barry

Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1 danbarbaral@verizon.net 617-429-8510



*Human Resources Department
Town of Belmont
Massachusetts*

455 CONCORD AVENUE
BELMONT, MASSACHUSETTS 02478-2573
TEL (617) 993-2740
FAX (617) 993-2741
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JESSICA PORTER
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PLAN DESIGN CHANGE

Why is the Town seeking changes to the plan design? We set the current plan design in 2011. Until recently, costs were manageable for both the town and the employees/retirees. But costs have shot up in each of the last three years. Our insurance trust balance was being depleted and redesigning the plan became urgent. Without changes, the working rates (i.e., premiums) for FY2021 will increase by at least 8%.

What statutes and laws govern health insurance plan design? M.G.L. c32B §§21-23 and 801 CMR 52.00 cover the plan design process. Everything the Town is doing in regard to plan design meets statutory requirements.

The Town is self-insured for health insurance. What does that mean? Plan participants and the Town pay into our Health Insurance Trust Fund. Everyone's premium (called the "working rate" for self-insured groups) is the same. Since we are claims based, we pay actual claims from the Trust Fund.

Will employees lose access to their current doctors or preferred hospital choice? No. Plan Design only addresses co-pays, deductibles, and out of pocket maximum limits.

Will employees be forced to change prescriptions or lose access to prescriptions they currently take? No. As with doctors and hospitals, there is no change to what prescriptions are covered. No one will lose needed medicines.



*Human Resources Department
Town of Belmont
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JESSICA PORTER
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PLAN DESIGN CHANGE

Will employees lose services or see a reduction in offered benefits?

No. The same level of care, covered services, covered prescriptions, and physician networks and hospitals will remain the same.

What is the estimated cost savings? Under the Town's proposal, the Town AND the employees will save approximately \$1M in the first 12 months. 25% of this first year savings will be provided directly to the employees. The remaining 75% will be shared by both the Town and the employees through reduced (or at least steady) monthly working rates.

Will employees see an increase in the percentage amount they pay each month? Plan Design does not address the monthly working rate contribution percentages paid by employees. Currently, all School employees (union and non-union) contribute 20% towards their health insurance plan (HMO¹), and all Town employees (union and non-union) contribute 20% or 25% based upon their hire date and bargaining unit.

Is Plan Design the same for everyone? Yes.

What do individuals currently pay (e.g., per month) for an individual plan and for a family plan? See attached rate sheet for the FY 2020 rates.

What is the deductible for each of these plans? Our current deductible is \$250 for individuals and \$750 for a family.

¹ The Town also offers a PPO plan for which all town and school employees contribute 50% should they choose this plan.



*Human Resources Department
Town of Belmont
Massachusetts*

455 CONCORD AVENUE
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JESSICA PORTER
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PLAN DESIGN CHANGE

How does a deductible work? Does this mean an employee will have to pay the first doctor bill of the year entirely up front? Only certain procedures and care are subject to the deductible. Routine office visits, well child visits, therapy and counseling sessions are not subject to the deductible. For example, an employee could attend weekly counseling sessions and never be subject to deductible, but just the office copay. Routine doctor visits for things like vaccinations will not be subject to the deductible. Lab work may or may not be subject to the deductible depending upon where it is done. Annual physicals do not even incur a copay thanks to the Affordable Care Act. A full summary of benefits for our plan can be found here: https://www.belmont-ma.gov/sites/belmontma/files/pages/sbc_hmo_fy_20.pdf

How does Belmont's current plan design compare to the GIC Benchmark plan? The GIC Benchmark plan is the most widely chosen plan by state and municipal employees in Massachusetts and has more than 32,000 participants. The table at the end of this FAQ shows the current copays and deductibles (grey column) and the copays and deductibles of the GIC Benchmark plan (blue column).

How will co-pays and deductibles change, based on the Board's August vote? The statute provides for negotiation of plan design between the Town and the Public Employee Committee (which consists of a representative from each Union, as well as a retiree representative) up to the limits of the State's Group Insurance Commission (GIC) Benchmark



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Plan². The 30 day negotiation period with the Public Employee Committee also allows for negotiation of a mitigation plan which provides for up to 25% of the first year savings to be shared directly with the employees. Because the section 21-23 process is still under way, the parties cannot divulge specifics about what has been negotiated between the Town and the PEC.

How many people actually pay the out of pocket maximums? The average for the last three years was eight individuals per year and two families per year (out of more than 700 enrollees). After that, their claims and care were covered without any additional cost to them beyond their monthly working rate.

Does the Town assist employees with budgeting and paying for increased copays and deductibles? Yes. The Town offers optional medical Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) which provide an opportunity for employees to set aside money from their paycheck each week, tax free, to cover medical expenses. The maximum amount an employee can elect is \$2,700³. When an employee elects to participate in an FSA, he or she receives the lump sum amount on January 1. This money is then deducted in equal weekly amounts during the course of the year.

² The Benchmark Plan is the GIC plan with the most subscribers. Currently, it is the Tufts Navigator plan.

³ This limit is determined by the IRS and can change in any given tax year.



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TOWN OF BELMONT			
CURRENT HPHC PLANS VS BENCHMARK PLAN			
		CURRENT HMO/PPO	BENCHMARK PLAN
Calendar Year	IND	\$250	\$500
Deductible	FAM	\$750	\$1,000
Out-of-Pocket Maximum	IND	\$2,000	\$5,000
	FAM	\$4,000	\$10,000
Primary Care	Tier 1	\$15	\$10
	Tier 2	N/A	\$20
Office Visit	Tier 3	N/A	\$40
Specialist	Tier 1	\$15	\$30
Office Visit	Tier 2	N/A	\$60
	Tier 3	N/A	\$75
PT/OT/Speech		\$15	\$20
Urgent Care (non-hospital facility)		\$15	\$20
Emergency Room		\$100	\$100
Hospital Admission	Tier 1	\$300	\$275
	Tier 2	\$300	\$500
	Tier 3	\$700	\$1,500
Hospital Outpatient Surgery		\$150	\$250
High Tech Imaging (MRI, CT, PET)		\$100	\$100
Prescriptions			\$100/200 Deductible Then:
Retail	Tier 1	\$5	\$10
30-day supply	Tier 2	\$25	\$30
	Tier 3	\$40	\$65
Mail Order	Tier 1	\$10	\$25
90-day supply	Tier 2	\$50	\$75
	Tier 3	\$120	\$165



Town of Belmont
Fiscal Year 2020 Health Insurance Rates
Active Employees and Non-Medicare Retirees
Effective July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

Harvard Pilgrim HMO (80/20 Split)

	EMPLOYEE COST				TOWN COST			TOTAL COST	
	Employee Weekly	Employee Monthly	Employee Annual		Town Monthly	Town Annual Cost		Total Monthly Cost	Total Annual Cost
Individual	\$38.70	\$167.69	\$2,012.29		\$670.76	\$8,049.14		\$838.45	\$10,061.43
Family	\$104.84	\$454.32	\$5,451.89		\$1,817.30	\$21,807.56		\$2,271.62	\$27,259.45

Harvard Pilgrim PPO (50/50 Split)

	EMPLOYEE COST				TOWN COST			TOTAL COST	
	Employee Weekly	Employee Monthly	Employee Annual		Town Monthly	Town Annual Cost		Total Monthly Cost	Total Annual Cost
Individual	\$154.49	\$669.46	\$8,033.50		\$669.46	\$8,033.50		\$1,338.92	\$16,067.00
Family	\$420.22	\$1,820.93	\$21,851.19		\$1,820.93	\$21,851.19		\$3,641.86	\$43,702.37

Harvard Pilgrim HMO (75/25 Split)*

	EMPLOYEE COST				TOWN COST			TOTAL COST	
	Employee Weekly	Employee Monthly	Employee Annual		Town Monthly	Town Annual Cost		Total Monthly Cost	Total Annual Cost
Individual	\$48.37	\$209.61	\$2,515.36		\$628.84	\$7,546.07		\$838.45	\$10,061.42
Family	\$131.06	\$567.91	\$6,814.86		\$1,703.72	\$20,444.59		\$2,271.62	\$27,259.45

* Newly-hired employees in the following groups will pay twenty-five percent (25%) of the HMO Cost:

- * Non-Union Employees hired on or after October 1, 2015
- * AFSCME Employees hired on or after November 1, 2014
- * Library Employees hired on or after January 1, 2015
- * SEIU Employees hired on or after July 1, 2015
- * Fire Employees hired on or after January 1, 2016
- * Police Patrol Employees hired on or after July 1, 2016
- * Police Superior Employees hired on or after July 1, 2016