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DATE: June 30, 2022
TIME: 9:19 AM

Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
Warrant Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 25, 2022
7:30pm



To view the recording of the meeting, please click [HERE](#).

Call to Order: Mr. Lubien called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Member	Present	Member	Present
Geoffrey Lubien, Chair	Yes	Andrew Levin	Yes
Christine Doyle, Vice Chair	Yes	Robert McLaughlin	Yes
Elizabeth Dionne, Secretary	Absent	Lynn Peterson Read	Yes
Tom Caputo	Yes	Paul Rickter	Yes
Jennifer Fallon	Yes	Ellen Schreiber	Absent
Elizabeth Goss	Yes	Laurie Slap	Absent
Daniel Halston	Yes	Jack Weis	Yes
Anne Helgen	Yes	Mark Paolillo, Ex-officio Designee - Select Board	Absent
Staff		Jamal Saeh, Ex-officio, School Com. Chair Appointee	Yes
Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator	Yes		
Glen Clancy, Director of Community Development	Yes		

ARPA Funds

Mr. Lubien provided an overview of how the ARPA money is scheduled to be used, and this was discussed.

Mr. Weis expressed concern that Covid-relief money [ARPA] is not being directed to Covid-related expenses on a building project that will last for decades and was approved by Town Meeting and is instead being used for Operating Expenses that were created due to a failed override vote at Town Meeting that have nothing to do with Covid and will provide only one year of benefit. Mr. Lubien said this could be discussed later but pointed out that many Towns are using ARPA funds for other things.

Ms. Fallon suggested that the Library Project be considered, especially since costs have risen. She said there are things included that are a result of the pandemic (safety protocols, etc.).

Approve minutes (if any), including all outstanding subcommittee or working group minutes.

April 27, 2022: Mr. Weis pointed out that Ms. Garvin's name is misspelled on line 44, and that Mr. Caputo is a former member of the Select Board (line 86). Also, line 149-150 should be replaced with "Ms. Slap asked how many additional FTEs the School Committee will be voting to add, and will they flow through. Mr. Lubien said they will flow through to the General Budget."

On line 104 Ms. Doyle said she does not remember using the word "derailed" and prefers the word be replaced with "sidetracked". Ms. Fallon said on line 46 it should say "Wellington" instead of "Ellington".

Motion: Ms. Helgen moved to approve the minutes as amended of the April 27, 2022 Warrant Committee meeting. Ms. Doyle seconded, and the motion passed by roll call vote with Mr. Rickter abstaining.

May 18, 2022: Mr. Weis said the start of line 45 should read "Because turnover savings (where retiring or resigning teachers are replaced by new teachers at lower salaries is a common occurrence) the Schools budgeting is taking this into account next year and has included \$500,000 of turnover savings in the FY23 budget." Also, line 50 should read "Substitute Expenses were down because there were fewer of them utilized than were anticipated".

Motion: Ms. Helgen moved to approve the minutes as amended of the May 18, 2022 Warrant Committee meeting. Ms. Fallon seconded, and the motion passed by roll call vote with Mr. Levin abstaining.

Review, discuss, and vote on remaining Town Meeting Segment B Articles.

Article 8: Establishing a Skating Rink and Playing Fields Building Committee – Mr. Lubien said some language changes about scope will likely be done, so Warrant will have to vote before the Town Meeting.

Mr. Caputo provided background to this article, explaining that a group like this could move the process forward. They would pull together information and costs so a debt exclusion could be on the November ballot. He said the discussion right now is what the purview of the committee should be, which he explained.

Mr. Weis asked if the constitution and scope of the committee will be determined by Town Meeting. Mr. Lubien said they would and Mr. Caputo confirmed.

Ms. Doyle asked what the composition of the committee would be. Mr. Lubien said it is appointed by the Moderator. Mr. McLaughlin confirmed this adding that representatives from other invested committees would be included. Ms. Doyle asked if there was a draft of which of those committees would be included. Mr. Caputo said they did not think there was. There was a discussion of the makeup of the committee.

Article 13: Citizen's Petition: Resolution Requiring Middle/High School Solar Funding – Mr. Lubien said Warrant is not asked to weigh in on this article. He explained that the commitment of the Middle/High School Building Committee to the solar project makes this article moot.

Article 17: Establish Expenditure Limitation for Revolving Funds – The Warrant Committee previously voted on this article, but Mr. Weis pointed out that the Expenditure Budgets are 2-7 times larger than the accrued balances in the funds, but the actual expenditures to date are only about 25% of what is authorized. He said people should understand there is no meaningful oversight or constraint in the numbers being presented for approval. Ms. Garvin explained how the expenditure limits are set, and this issue was discussed.

Mr. Weis also pointed out that the Stormwater Consulting budget is \$50,000 and the beginning balance is \$108.00 and FY22 expenditures were zero. He asked why there needs to be a \$50,000 budget for this item. Ms. Garvin suggested that Mr. Clancy could answer this question when he joins the meeting.

Ms. Doyle suggested that summer discussions consider whether or not the Warrant Committee should look into the Enterprise Funds more robustly. Ms. Garvin said she has always wanted to do this, and she has discussed this with the new Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director.

Mr. Clancy joined the meeting at this point, and Mr. Weis asked his question (above) about the Stormwater Consulting fund. Mr. Clancy explained the history of the fund, saying that fees were paid by applicants. He said they chose \$50,000 because they don't really know what will come before them, and that the \$108.00 is left over from previous projects.

Article 19: Appropriation of Capital Expenditure Fuel Tanks at DPW Yard – Mr. Clancy reviewed the two fuel tank proposals, explaining that the base need is two 4,000-gallon tanks but that could be reduced to 2,000 if private gas stations were also used. He went on explain that after study and review it was clear that using private stations was not financially viable. The result was the need to choose between a 4,000 gallon unleaded and a 4,000 gallon diesel set above ground or below ground. The Select Board voted to support the below ground option. He explained that the price of above versus below were very close but above ground would require fencing which makes the cost about even and the neighbors wanted a canopy. The below ground option was also more acceptable to the neighborhood in general.

There was a discussion of the cost of the project over 25 years.

Mr. Lubien asked how much more the project will costs because of the delay of a year. Mr. Clancy said the June 2021 estimate for two 4,000-gallon underground tanks was about \$1.4M and the current estimate is \$1.9M.

Ms. Doyle asked what the useful life of the tanks is, and if a canopy and fencing would be required. Mr. Clancy said his understanding is they have a 25-year life, although the current ones are 37 years old (his analysis is based on 25 years). Ms. Doyle asked if the tanks would need to stay partially full if they were no longer used before the end of their life span. Mr. Clancy said there is an element of that, but there would need to be a decision at some point to “turnover” the fuel to maintain the tanks or to decommission them. Mr. Clancy said abutters felt a canopy was important, although it is not required. He then explained the components of pricing out the fencing which added up to close to \$200,000.

Ms. Fallon asked if the fencing is needed for the below ground option, and Mr. Clancy said no. She asked if the fence in that area is in disrepair and will need replacement, especially for security purposes. Mr. Clancy said there are access areas to the yard, but the pump house and other equipment are locked and secure. He thinks it likely that there will soon be a capital request to repair some existing fencing and add some new fencing.

Mr. Weis said the higher cost of the underground tanks is because the contingency number is \$70,000 higher than the contingency number for the above ground tanks and because of that thinks the underground tanks could be less expensive.

Mr. Lubien expressed his concerns on the process of this project and the financial impact the delay in this project will have. He also expressed his concern about a letter basically threatening litigation if the Select Board voted to support the above ground option. He said this is a bullying tactic especially since the numbers suggest a solution that the letter writers supported. He does not appreciate the threat and felt that this tactic was not appropriate.

Mr. Weis agreed with Mr. Lubien but said the passage of time has changed the outcome of the Warrant Committee's views on the project (last year there was support for the above ground, and this year it is for below ground).

Mr. Rickter also agreed with Mr. Lubien and said the date of the letter is the day after the Public Forum which helped form consensus around below ground tanks. He said he is considering offering an amendment to go to above ground just to let Town Meeting vote on the below ground option.

Mr. McLaughlin said although he does not like what happened, the American system allows people access to the courts when they feel oppressed, and he doesn't want to discourage citizens from accessing legal counsel.

Mr. Lubien said the Select Board voted \$1,904,266 for the below ground tanks. There is a previous balance in the Capital Budget for this project that is \$404,868, Belmont Light will contribute \$200,000, the Town Administrator is proposing \$649,699 from Free Cash, and \$649,699 from ARPA funds. These sources will cover the costs.

Ms. Doyle asked if the costs are based on fuel usage of the Enterprise Funds. Mr. Clancy said Belmont Light's percentage was about \$172,000 so when other associated costs were considered \$200,000 seemed like a good price. He explained that the Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds have no money available to contribute to the tanks project. Ms. Doyle asked if they could contribute to the project in the future. Ms. Garvin said although she likes the idea, she can't say what funding will be available in the future although there could be other costs these funds could absorb for their contribution.

Motion: *Mr. McLaughlin moved that the Town appropriate and transfer \$649,699 from the General Fund (Free Cash) for the purpose of replacing underground fuel tanks at the DPW Yard located at 37 C Street with underground storage tanks. Ms. Fallon seconded, and the motion passed 10 in favor, 1 no, and 1 abstention by roll call vote. Mr. Lubien voted yes but under protest because of recent developments, Ms. Doyle voted no, and Mr. Saeh abstained.*

Several members discussed why they voted the way they did, especially in view of the threatening letter.

Mr. Caputo left the meeting at this point.

Belmont Community Forum Land & Community Path: Mr. McLaughlin said some residents think the appropriation of \$200,000 for the path is unwise because Belmont does not have a legal right to acquire the needed land and the path is ineffective if it can not reach Alewife. He believes this issue may come up at Town

Meeting. Mr. Clancy said he has a very good handle on the processes involved in this project and he is prepared to discuss this at Town Meeting. He summarized the situation with the easements required for the project.

Article 20: Appropriation of FY23 Capital Expenditures – Ms. Fallon pointed out that the Project Bid Reserve has been increased because of an error in appropriately counting sidewalk money. If the money is not used it will be added to Turnbacks.

Motion: Ms. Doyle moved A) That the following amounts be appropriated for the purchase of Public Safety Equipment, Site Improvements, Public Works Equipment, Equipment for Town Facilities, and consulting services in connection therewith, to construct public ways, and for Building and Facility and Public Works Construction; and for Major Maintenance and Alterations (including design work) as follows, said sum to be expended under the direction of the Select Board:

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved affirmative action on:

(1) FACILITIES DEPARTMENT

2022 Hybrid Utility Vehicle	\$55,666
Butler Masonry Façade Repair	\$487,000
Butler KalWal Replacement	\$415,000
Butler PA System	\$300,000
Electric Van	\$54,756
Wellington Heat Pump	\$97,595
Winn Brook Fire/PA Systems	\$75,000
TOTAL FACILITIES	\$1,485,017

Mr. Rickter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved affirmative action on:

(2) FIRE DEPARTMENT

Air Packs	\$376,584
Ambulance Replacement	\$80,000
Cardiac Monitor Replacement	\$7,000
Ambulance Power Load Cot System	\$45,081
Replace Staff Car	\$75,000
TOTAL FIRE DEPARTMENT	\$583,665

Ms. Doyle seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved affirmative action on:

(3) IT DEPARTMENT

Fiber Burbank/Wellington	\$20,000
Network Storage	\$60,000
Fiber Line to Antenna Site	\$150,000
TOTAL IT DEPARTMENT	\$230,000

Mr. Rickter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved affirmative action on:

(4) LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

RFID Tags	\$32,306
TOTAL IT Department	\$32,306

Ms. Read seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved affirmative action on:

(5) POLICE DEPARTMENT

Radio Amplifier	\$30,000
Replace EMD Server	\$12,000
TOTAL POLICE DEPARTMENT	\$42,000

Mr. Rickter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved affirmative action on:

(6) DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Tree Inventory	\$55,000
#117 Cemetery Pick-Up Truck	\$58,310
#108 Parks Front End Loader	\$112,450
#110 Parks Pick-up Truck	\$58,310
Replace Trees	\$25,000
Sidewalks from Balances	\$100,000
TOTAL DPW	\$409,070

Mr. Rickter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved affirmative action on:

(7) ALL DEPARTMENTS

Project Bid Reserve	\$383,480
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Ms. Read seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved affirmative action on:

(8) OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Roads Rebuild and Patch	\$150,000
TOTAL OCD	\$150,000

Ms. Doyle seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved that to meet the foregoing appropriations, the sum of **\$1,549,953** shall be raised from the tax levy, and **\$722,863** be transferred from Capital Project Balances (Turnbacks) and that **\$1,042,722** be transferred from the Sale of Town Owned Property. Mr. Rickter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved that **\$1,857,772** be appropriated for road paving projects, and **\$237,730** be appropriated for sidewalks as follows:

Capital Roads Non-Discretionary	\$1,857,772
Sidewalks	\$ 237,730
Total Paving/Sidewalks	\$2,095,502

said sum to be raised and expended under the direction of the Select Board. Ms. Read seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote.

Mr. Caputo rejoined the meeting at this point.

Article 22: FY23 Budget Appropriation and Authorization to Transfer Balances to Fund the FY23 Budget –

Ms. Garvin explained the changes that had happened during the process.

Mr. Weis asked about the variability of the interest rate shown in the debt schedule. Ms. Garvin said she was looking into this.

Motion: Mr. Rickter moved favorable action that the following amounts be appropriated for the Fiscal Year 2023 operating budget and be raised in the tax levy or from general revenues from the Town. Mr. McLaughlin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote:

A. General Government.	\$5,077,631
B. Employee Benefits, Retirement Expenses.	\$10,092,024
C. Employee Benefits, Other Reserves (including Health Insurance, Insurance and Salary Reserve).	\$7,202,558
D. Public Safety.	\$13,465,276
E. Belmont Public Schools.	\$66,982,926
F. Vocational Education.	\$1,137,269
G. Public Services.	\$15,543,342

H. Human Services.	\$3,493,791
I. Principal Debt and Interest.	\$15,778,851

Motion: Mr. Levin moved favorable action that the Town transfer the following sums to meet, in part, appropriations for capital expenditures and for Fiscal Year 2023 operating budgets made at this Town Meeting. Mr. McLaughlin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by rollcall vote:

from fund balance in Abatement and Exemption Surplus Account	\$300,000
from Belmont Municipal Light Department (PILOT Payment)	\$350,000
from Unreserved Fund Balance (Free Cash)	\$6,609,452
(Updated to add Fuel Tank Amount from Article 19)	
from Parking Meters Receipts	\$30,000
from Water Revenue for indirect costs	\$519,000
from Sewer Revenue for indirect costs	\$519,000
from Capital Endowment Fund for various capital expenditures	\$150,000
from Capital Projects Fund for various capital expenditures	\$545,121
from Perpetual Care Fund Interest Transfer Out Account	\$25,000
from Sale of Town Owned Property	\$1,042,722
from American Rescue Plan Act	\$163,303

Public Comment – there was no public comment.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. McLaughlin moved the adjourn the meeting of the Warrant Committee. Mr. Halston seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:37pm.

Next Meeting: Monday, June 6 at 5:30pm

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary