

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: November 6, 2023
TIME: 9:19 AM

**Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
Joint Open Meeting of the
Select Board
with the School Committee,
Warrant Committee and
Comprehensive Capital Budget Committee
October 12, 2023
7:00pm**



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

Call to Mr. Epstein called the meeting of the Select Board to order at 7:03pm.

Order: Mr. Lubien called the meeting of the Warrant Committee to order at 7:04pm.

Ms. Moriarty called the meeting of the School Committee to order 7:05pm.

Ms. Doyle called the meeting of the Comprehensive Capital Budget Committee to order at 7:06pm.

Select Board Members	Present	School Committee Members & Staff	Present
Roy Epstein, Chair	Yes	Meghan Moriarty, Chair	Yes
Elizabeth Dionne, Vice-Chair	Yes	Amy Checkoway, Secretary	Remote
Mark Paolillo, Member	Yes	Jeffrey Liberty	Yes
Warrant Committee Members		Jamal Saeh	Yes
Geoffrey Lubien, Chair	Remote	Jung Yueh	Yes
Paul Rickter, Vice-Chair	Absent	Amy Zuccarello	Yes
Conor McEachern, Secretary	Yes	Jill Geiser, Superintendent of Schools	Yes
William Anderson	Yes	Lucia Sullivan, Asst Superintendent of Schools	Yes
Tom Caputo	Yes	Anthony DiCologero, Schools Director of Finance	Yes
Fitzie Cowing	Absent	Comprehensive Capital Budget Committee (CCBC)	
Sue Croy	Remote	Chris Doyle, Chair	Yes
Deepak Garg	Yes	Claus Becker	Remote
Anne Helgen	Absent	Patricia Brusch	Yes
Robert McLaughlin	Remote	Susan Burgess-Cox	Yes
Melissa Morley	Absent	Jill Geiser, Non-Voting, Superintendent of Schools	Yes
Lynn Peterson Read	Remote	Jennifer Hewitt, Non-Voting – ATM/Finance Director	Yes
Matthew Taylor	Yes	Melinda Huang	Absent
Marie Warner	Remote	Lawrence Link	Remote
Jack Weis	Yes	Aaron Pickilingis	Yes
Roy Epstein, Ex-officio Designee, Select Board	Yes	Mark Paolillo, Ex-officio Designee - Select Board	Yes
Meghan Moriarty, Ex-officio, School Committee	Yes	Jung Yueh, Ex-officio Designee - School Committee	Yes
Staff Members			
Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator	Yes	Matt Haskell, Budget Analyst	Yes
Jennifer Hewitt, ATA/Finance Director	Yes		

Initial FY2024 Results and FY2025 Budget Planning

Mr. Epstein explained that the discussion would focus on Revenue and expected and sources of Revenue for the FY25 budget.

Ms. Garvin thanked the employees the have been working on the budget. She then provided an overview of the presentation:

- FY2025 Preliminary Recurring Revenue Projections
- Town and School Budget Considerations
- School Enrollment - Initial October 1st Figures

- Anticipated Capital Needs
- FY2023 Initial Results
- FY2025-27 Budget Modeling
- Budget Timing

Ms. Garvin then reviewed the FY25 Budget Goals:

- Identify and project expected sources of recurring revenue to preserve existing Town Services.
- Review opportunities to restructure within the Town and Schools to achieve this goal.
- Restructuring allows the Town and Schools to keep positions competitive in the market to retain and recruit skilled employees.
- Assess Capital needs and opportunities to dedicate future funding within limited available funding.
- Develop an override number that will ultimately be approved by the voters.

She then shared the Preliminary Recurring Revenue Forecast, emphasizing recurring revenue, with no use of one-time funds. She emphasized that recurring revenue does not meet recurring expenses.

Ms. Hewitt pointed out that the Property Tax line does not include funds that go to debt service which makes it easier to see the yearly progression of this revenue. Slides that follow include the debt service information. She then explained the tax levy base components.

Ms. Garvin then reviewed State Aid history and projections, and Ms. Hewitt provided more details.

The next topic Ms. Garvin and Ms. Hewitt presented was Local Receipts. Ms. Hewitt said these receipts are mostly static but there have been some increases coming out of the pandemic. She then reviewed the receipts.

Ms. Garvin then presented on Available Funds and explained the use of Free Cash.

Next, Ms. Garvin explained the Shared Services category, and Ms. Hewitt provided details.

Dr. Geiser explained her entry planning process, and outlined the emerging needs that she sees, with some possibly having budget implications. She then reviewed the enrollment which shows a slow creep up after Covid. She spoke about the ELL trend as well as Students with Disabilities.

Ms. Garvin then reviewed the looming Capital Needs and the recommendations from the CCBC to address them.

Next Ms. Garvin reviewed the historical use of Free Cash (FY20 to the preliminary number for FY23). Ms. Hewitt provided details of Free Cash.

Ms. Garvin explained that her office is working with the Departments on the FY25 budget and shared the Multi-Year Forecast for Revenues & expenses. She spoke about the efforts to be creative and to retain employees and attract quality candidates for positions. With the current information available the forecast is a \$7.2 million deficit, but she highlighted that much information is still missing but she believes it is in the ballpark. She then reviewed the Free Cash decisions that need to be made as well as the override amount.

Ms. Garvin then reviewed the budget process calendar (see Next Meetings at the end of this document).

Members of the attending committees asked questions, and there was extensive discussion of the numbers and other issues impacting the budget, and the process as well as the impacts of a successful or unsuccessful override.

Mr. Epstein summarized the discussions of the evening and major issues, which prompted further discussion.

Next steps and process were discussed in order to build the budget, with the acknowledgement that there would be a gap, the goal of developing a multi-year strategy, the impacts of a failed or successful override, and how to educate residents about the budget.

Next Meetings

- Municipal Budget meetings happening now; Select Board budget hearings November 15th and 17th.
- School Committee has requested draft budgets at their Nov. 21st meeting.
- November 30 - Summit II - review Municipal/School budgets *with* Override.

- December 20 - Summit III - review Municipal/School budgets *without* Override.
- January 5, 2024 - Municipal and School budgets published detailing budgets with and without Override
- January 11, 2024 - Summit IV - review published budgets.
- *Further Summits and Public Forums likely*
- April 2, 2024 - Annual Town Election, override on ballot.

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting of the Belmont School Committee, and the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06pm.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting of the Belmont Comprehensive Capital Budget Committee, and the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:06pm.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting of the Warrant Committee, and the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:07pm.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting of the Belmont Select Board, and the motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:07pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary