

Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC)
Town of Belmont
18 January 2024
Conference Room Virtual via Zoom

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: February 16, 2024
TIME: 10:25 AM

APPROVED MINUTES

[Minutes are sent to the Town Clerk, belmont-ma.gov!townclerk when approved]

Voting Members Present

- Jim Berets <gmail.com!jberets> (VM)
- Dan Ellard <gmail.com!ellard> (co-chair) (VM)
- Dave Goldberg <verizon.net!david.goldberg6> (co-chair) (VM)
- Phil Lawrence <live.com!plaw> (VM)
- Paul Roberts <gmail.com!paulroberts> (VM)
- Charles Smart <verizon.net!cnsmart> (secretary of the day and founding chair) (VM)

Voting Members Not Present:

- Jonathan Birge <mit.edu!birge> (VM)
- Jonathan Green <gmail.com!green.jbg> (VM)
- Kristin Nelson-Patel <gmail.com!kristin.nelson.patel> (VM)

Meeting called to order at 7:40PM

Jim Berets moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting on November 16, 2023. The vote on approval of those minutes follows:

Jim Berets: yes
Dan Ellard: yes
Dave Goldberg: yes
Paul Roberts: yes
Phil Lawrence: abstain
Charles Smart: yes

Motion carried. Dave Goldberg to submit minutes to Town Clerk.

There were no comments or questions from the public.

The Committee decided to have a rotating secretary, who would function as a secretary of the day/meeting. The secretary would be designated at the time of the meeting and the secretarial duties would be shared by all members except the two co-chairs. The secretary for this meeting will be Charles Smart.

At the start of the meeting, the Committee discussed a variety of topics, including the need to update the Town's webpage, the goal of the Town achieving net-zero emissions, and clarification of the roles of the Committee's two new co-chairs, Dave Goldberg and Dan Ellard. Both Dave and Dan will share the duties and responsibilities of committee chair, with Dave being the primary co-chair and Dan being

the subordinate co-chair. Dave said he would try to contact the chair of Belmont's Energy Committee regarding ITAC's help in reviewing IT concerns related to achieving net-zero emissions, installing public EV Chargers and other energy-related initiatives.

The Committee then moved on to discuss a follow-up meeting on December 20th with Belmont Municipal Light Department (BMLD). Paul Roberts attended the meeting representing ITAC with Robin Tillberg (IT Director) and Craig Spinale (General Manager) representing BMLD. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for Dragos, a vendor specializing in industrial control systems (ICS) for cyber security, to describe their product solutions to BMLD. Paul noted that Dragos has introduced a new *free* program aimed at assisting small local utilities, such as BMLD, with specialized monitoring and threat detection solutions, along with consulting services to help implement their technology. Paul mentioned that he had connected Dragos with BMLD, because he believed it was the type of organization that Dragos was hoping to collaborate with. He felt that the meeting was successful, with Dragos explaining their program well and BMLD understanding the potential value Dragos' cyber security technology provided. However, there was no apparent commitment from BMLD to focus on this issue at this time, primarily because they wondered whether they had sufficient staff and time to implement the new technology.

There was some debate among ITAC members about the potential value of Dragos' system and services to BMLD, with Paul Roberts emphasizing the need for enhanced cyber security measures for small municipal organizations like BMLD due to increased targeting. There were also a variety of concerns about possible cyber security vulnerabilities at BMLD and the need for additional staff and other resources to successfully handle these security issues. The Committee's discussion concluded with a suggestion by some members to have a future executive session to discuss these concerns further.

Dave Goldberg also recommended, and Committee members unanimously agreed, that it might be a good idea for ITAC to send a letter to the BMLD Board of Directors suggesting that they appoint a member from the general public to ITAC to better represent BMLD's information technology needs at a Town-wide level. This appointment would be similar to those of the Select Board, School Committee, and Library Board of Trustees. Dave said he would prepare a draft of the letter, circulate it via email to all Committee members, and the members would then vote on a final version of the letter at the next ITAC meeting in February.

There was some discussion among Committee members about the Town's future transition to digital systems, rather than current paper ledger systems, for various voting procedures in Belmont. This could lead to efficiencies checking in members at Belmont's Town Meetings and voters at voting centers at election time. However, Paul Roberts expressed concern regarding the potential risks and the need for backup

contingency plans in case the digital system malfunctioned due to hardware or software failures.

The conversation then shifted to the security risks associated with using the same vendors for physical security systems in all municipal buildings town-wide. Both Dave Goldberg and Paul Roberts emphasized the need to assess these risks, since all buildings in Belmont seemed to be using the same systems. The challenges of system security and diversity were discussed, with concerns raised about potential vulnerabilities when every building uses the same system from the same vendor for a particular security purpose. At the same time, Committee members acknowledged the increased security value and benefits of standardization of using just one ICS vendor to provide cyber security systems town-wide. This is especially true for a town like Belmont with a relatively small IT staff.

Lastly, Dave Goldberg proposed inviting Dave Petto, the Town's IT Director, to ITAC's next meeting in February to discuss Belmont's Incidence Response Plan. All of the members agreed to the invitation and also agreed that Dave Petto should be sent all of our questions ahead of time to avoid any surprises. Dave Goldberg will send the invitation, including the possibility of arranging a meeting with Dave Petto outside of the regular ITAC meeting schedule if necessary.

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 7:30PM

A motion was made to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00PM.