

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
FINANCIAL TASK FORCE
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM
Friday, May 30, 2014
8:00 AM**

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CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Financial Task Force (FTF) was called to order in open session at 8:05 a.m. by Selectman Paolillo in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Town Administrator David Kale was present.

FTF Members Present: Mr. Justin Amico, Ms. Anne Marie Mahoney, Mr. James Williams, Mr. Charles Laverty, Mr. Daniel Dargon, Mr. Charles Clark, Mr. Paul Lisanke, Mr. Tony DiCologero, Ms. Laurie Slap, Mr. Floyd Carman, Mr. James Tzouvelis
Mr. Andrew Levin, Dr. Thomas Kingston, Ms. Laurie Graham, Ms. Anne Helgren

Members Absent: Mr. Angelo Firenze and Mr. James Conroy

Selectman Paolillo reviewed the agenda and then began with the Education working group.

Reports by Sub-Committee (working groups) Chairs

Education – Modeling Report: Supplemental Revenue Sources and Class Size/Enrollment

Dr. Kingston highlighted the major recommendations from the Supplemental Revenue Sources report:

- 1 – that the town establish a bylaw on naming rights
- 2 – employ a professional freelance developer (i.e., funding developer)
- 3 – review the user fees, as they have become a burden for many families

He commented that the core of the operating budget has to be funded from town revenue and that fees can't carry the bulk of the budget.

SC Member Graham said that the schools will also be working to craft a naming rights policy, in concert with the town. Selectman Paolillo said that it makes sense to utilize naming rights (from sponsors) to help with some capital projects. Ms. Mahoney offered that this topic has been discussed for many years. Superintendent Kingston distinguished between honorific naming rights versus receiving money in exchange for naming. Corporate sponsorship, he added, is a form of advertising. Mr. Kale said that for a corporation to have their name posted somewhere is not an effective marketing tool. It's the *connection* with people that corporations are seeking. Connecting with people who have a vested interest in Belmont (and would be willing to donate) is another area that requires exploring.

Issues relating to naming rights and corporate sponsorship were explored.

Selectman Paolillo asked about a potential economic development officer to reach out and raise funding for both the town and schools. Superintendent Kingston said that he would be open to seeing a part-time position that could grow into a full-time position that completely funds itself. Mr. Kale raised the topic of grants, noting that, in some cases, a town needs to be “qualified” for specific grants. A developer that could go after private grant funding would also be a challenge, as Belmont is perceived to be such a high functioning school.

Superintendent Kingston then referenced a memo from Mr. Dan Barry, who raised concerns about enrollment.

Revenue Opportunities

Mr. Carman said that there are several parking recommendations that have been developed and now need to go before the Board of Selectmen (BOS). These recommendations could generate \$60-65K in revenue. As for the fee schedule, data has been collected on the town side and information from other communities is being collected. Comparing Belmont to other towns has proved challenging as the systems for fee collection vary greatly. Mr. Carman added that there are some town-owned properties that exist and the BOS could decide to sell them.

Mr. Carman noted that, in some cases, fees are charged, and services are rendered in exchange for those fees. However, the services do not have to be offered, but if they are, the fees should be charged. He raised the topic of PILOT funds and noted that Belmont collects about \$36K.

Mr. Laverty said that a PILOT presentation may be ready in June. He said that, while more could be done, the community is doing well with regard to payments collected. Belmont Hill School, he said, has compiled a list of in-kind activities it does for Belmont, in lieu of paying taxes.

Ms. Helgen offered that it might be helpful to identify very specific programs that the PILOT entities could sponsor, e.g. an educational program or a piece of fire equipment. Mr. Lisanke said that “targeted donation requests” do seem to be a more effective means of seeking PILOT contributions.

The topic of new growth (its revenue) was then discussed. The new growth in property taxes amount, said Mr. Kale, has hovered around \$500K, although this amount is not guaranteed. Mr. Carman said that new growth from new homes is not beneficial if children are entering the school system. The tax revenue from a new home or condo does not cover the full cost of education if additional children enter in the system.

How the new growth number impacts the overall budget was explored.

Capital Budget Projects

Ms. Mahoney said that the group has not met, given Town Meeting commitments.

Financial Projections – Town Government

Mr. Kale said that interviews are ongoing with the DPW and Office of Community Development regarding services offered and how/if the departments could be run differently. As for the modeling groups, information is being gathered and analysis will be taken from the data collected from other groups, as well. Staffing and salaries are among the issues that are being explored with respect to the delivery of services.

Selectman Paolillo raised the topic of programmatic and performance-based budgeting, which measures the inputs and outputs, e.g., success, cost, and value of delivering services. As an example, what does it cost to clean the streets? What is the benefit of that service? Mr. Carman raised the issue of what is the cost of *not* cleaning the streets? (The impact of not offering this service could be clogging the sewers with debris.)

FTF Timeline

Mr. Kale suggested that source documents could perhaps be compiled, given that the fall report deadline is looming. It is time, he said, to gather Executive Summaries for the final report.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes of April 25, 2014 were approved, with five abstentions, from members who were absent from the meeting.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, June 25 at 8:00 a.m.

The FTF moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 a.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DKale', written over a horizontal line.

Mr. David Kale, Town Administrator