

**MINUTES  
TOWN OF BELMONT  
FINANCIAL TASK FORCE  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM  
Friday, June 27, 2014  
8:00 AM**

RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA  
2014 NOV -3 PM 1:30

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Financial Task Force (FTF) was called to order in open session at 8:06 a.m. by FTF Chair Paolillo in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Assistant Town Administrator Marshall was present.

FTF Members Present: Mr. Justin Amico, Ms. Anne Marie Mahoney, Mr. James Williams, Mr. Paul Lisanke, Ms. Laurie Slap, Mr. Floyd Carman, Mr. James Tzouvelis, Dr. Kingston, Ms. Graham, Ms. Anne Helgen, and Mr. James Conroy

Members Absent: Mr. Angelo Firenze, Mr. Charles Laverty, Mr. Daniel Dargon, Mr. Charles Clark, Mr. Tony DiCologero, Mr. Andrew Levin

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

**Reports by Sub-Committee (Working Groups) Chairs**

***Education – Modeling Report: Operations***

Dr. Kingston highlighted the major recommendations from the Operations and Maintenance report. The practice of deferred maintenance is clearly not a desirable one, going forward. He said that this report echoes many of the points raised by the Capital Budget subgroup. The report will attempt to attach dollar amounts to various maintenance needs. He described advantages of having the consolidated maintenance department for the facilities and noted that while it may not be an immediate cost saver, it is more efficient. A recommended increase of \$150,000 for Capital Projects is needed and a Capital Stabilization Fund Policy similar to OPEB is some of the recommendations in section III of the report. He invited the Financial Task Force members to read them.

***Revenue Opportunities***

Mr. Carman noted that there is an Assessors' Report which identifies town-owned properties that could be sold. The fee comparison data collection is nearly complete.

Potential increase in parking revenue could be achieved with an estimated cost of \$200 in signage and a modest increase in the rate for parking. He will meet with the Selectmen regarding implementation. The group will also look at evaluating possible programs that could be offered by the Recreation Division that could maximize the programming at the pools in Belmont while generating fees to cover the costs.

Ms. Helgen added that other communities are creating self-supporting recreation programs through

increased utilization, non-resident usage and expanded programming. The Revenue Opportunities Subcommittee has been looking at recreation models across comparable communities and will be presenting this analysis to the Financial Task Force in the fall.

Ms. Helgen used the Higginbottom Pool as an example of a facility that has significant operating and maintenance costs which could be funded by new revenues from market rate rentals and new programming such as early hour lap swim, birthday parties, underwater hockey, and so on. Belmont needs to do a better job of leveraging its assets and charging appropriate fees for use of these assets.

Mr. Carman agreed that Belmont is not maximizing its assets. He noted that many fields are not being used all summer. He said recreation programs could be developed to help working parents – all summer long. Ms. Helgen added that there is year round demand for pool time and this presents an opportunity for all sorts of programming that could generate revenue for the town. She said there are a lot of models out there that Belmont could learn from.

Extending the recreation program season for athletic fields and maximizing the programming at the new pool were discussed. Ms. Mahoney noted that when usage of a field/pool is expanded, there is a significant impact on the neighboring residents. All of these facilities are in extremely dense neighborhoods with limited parking.

In answer to a question, Dr. Kingston added that there are school rental opportunities in the summer and throughout the year.

### ***Capital Budget Projects***

Ms. Mahoney informed the Financial Task Force that the Harris Field Renovation project is underway and will be for the entire summer. The new field will be ready in August.

The Capital Budget subgroup is meeting with various groups across town: Police, DPW, Library, and VFW. She reviewed the highlights of the recent meeting with the Library Trustees regarding the status of the building. She noted that the Capital Budget Committee has been discussing its criteria for funding capital projects, which has focused around maintenance. Money remains an extremely constraining factor in the budget development. The combined Facilities Department has helped give the Capital Budget Committee a better handle on the overall maintenance projects.

Mr. Carman reviewed some of the improvement projects on the docket including the Winn Brook field, a building coming down on Flanders Road, and the White Field House. Mr. Williams asked about safety issues with regard to the town's approach of not maintaining its facilities. Dr. Kingston replied that the schools are safe and have implemented additional safety steps in the past year. Chair Paolillo mentioned that the Police Station and DPW facility may have some issues that could be safety concerns. Ms. Marshall indicated that the facilities are subject to a loss control audit annually performed by the Town insurance carrier. Mr. Williams then raised the topic of the depreciation factor with regard to maintenance spent.

Chair Paolillo agreed that the town needs to spend more on maintenance. He said this has been a priority of his. Mr. Carman then listed some of the capital improvements the town has authorized in the last 10 years: Town Hall, Fire Stations, Senior Center, Wellington, new pool.

### ***Financial Projections – Town Government***

Chair Paolillo said that interviews are ongoing with the DPW and Office of Community Development regarding services offered and how/if the departments would change if an ideal level of service were offered by the respective Town departments. The responses have centered on the need for more people. Discussion with the departments included descriptions of “essential” and “non-essential” services. The community will need to consider how the essential services are provided and whether non-essential services can continue without additional funding.

### ***FTF Timeline for Draft Reports***

Chair Paolillo informed the group that the preliminary reports should be ready in September. However, some groups of the Financial Task Force may still continue to meet after the final report is issued to look at how to move forward with recommendations in the spring of 2015. A final report with recommendations will be due in November of 2014. He said the final report will be presented to the Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting and Precinct meetings Town wide. The findings/recommendations of this task force need to be widely disseminated. He added that the capital needs of this town will need to be focused on, going forward. Mr. Carman said that the Library, DPW, and the Police Station may need to be focused on as part of state requirements.

Ms. Graham noted that there are a significant number of people across town who want an override on the November ballot. If this is not going to happen, we will need to explain the reason it is not. Chair Paolillo agreed but added that a potential override question should be scheduled in April after recommendations are presented to the Town instead of November, 2014 before the report is completed.

Mr. Carman then reviewed what an override and a major capital project would cost the average taxpayer. Chair Paolillo said that a comprehensive financial plan for the next 20 years needs to be created. Mr. Williams returned to the topic of deferred maintenance. He said the home-ownership metaphor certainly applies to the town and residents have an obligation to invest in town capital and maintain the value of properties.

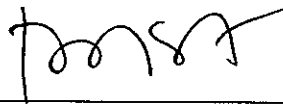
### **Next Meeting**

Friday, July 25 at 8:00 a.m.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes of May 30, 2014 were approved.

The Financial Task Force moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 a.m.



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Mr. David Kale, Town Administrator