

**MINUTES  
TOWN OF BELMONT  
FINANCIAL TASK FORCE  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING ROOM  
Friday, March 28, 2014  
8:00 AM**

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TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA.  
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**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Financial Task Force (FTF) was called to order in open session at 8:10 am by Chair Paolillo in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. Town Administrator David Kale was present; Assistant Town Administrator Marshall was not present.

FTF Members Present: Mr. Charles Laverty, Mr. Daniel Dargon, Mr. Charles Clark, Mr. James Conroy, Ms. Anne Marie Mahoney, Mr. James Williams, Mr. Paul Lisanke, Dr. Kingston, Ms. Graham, Mr. DiCologero, Ms. Laurie Slap, Mr. Floyd Carman, Ms. Anne Helgen, Mr. Angelo Firenze, and Mr. James Tzouvelis

Members Absent: Mr. Justin Amico and Mr. Andrew Levin

Chair Paolillo reviewed the agenda, noting that this is the fourth meeting of the FTF and that the subcommittees have been meeting extensively.

**Report by Sub-Committee Chairs**

***Capital Budget Projects***

Ms. Mahoney said that the Capital Project's subcommittee has met with the DPW and the Police Department to hear presentations on the condition of their facilities. She said that, while studies exist regarding what it will cost to renovate and/or repair the facility, the studies do need to be updated. She said that the guidelines delineating what is a capital project really need to be updated – the 10-year life-span and \$10K are outdated. The current requests don't fit the old guidelines and the \$750K allotted for Capital items is not nearly enough. She said the remaining items this subcommittee needs to discuss include the rink and the high school.

Chair Paolillo agreed that these facilities are in tough condition and that the town is under-spending on capital – which causes the buildings to fall into further disrepair. He said a capital project spending policy is probably warranted.

***Education***

Dr. Kingston noted that five of the eight school-department-sponsored modeling groups are completed; three remain. He said the compensation report will remain closed until a tentative agreement is reached in collective bargaining.

Dr. Kingston reported out on the Special Education report. He provided an overview of the

SPED mandate, noting that the large majority of children are educated in the classroom via an IEP (Individualized Education Program). When the needs cannot be reached in-district, the child's needs are met out-of-district. He explained the various ways this occurs, e.g. LABBB, EDCO, placement at a school.

He highlighted various sections of the report, including spending trends, expenses, and the percent of children with an IEP. SPED costs are driven by federal and state mandates. He then explained how the circuit breaker – a state program – works to support SPED.

Chair Paolillo noted that the early intervention recommendation makes sense. Dr. Kingston agreed and explained the “early find” program, which identifies children (with needs) at an early age. The earlier the needs are identified and addressed, the better the outcome for those children. Dr. Kingston touched on the programmatic impact of the Response to Intervention (RTI) programs.

Mr. Kale said that the state has evaluated Belmont's SPED procedures and policies and Belmont received high marks. Dr. Kingston agreed that last year's report was good news and that the costs are stable at this time.

### *Revenue Opportunities*

Mr. Carman said that the group has met and has gathered and documented fees across town. He said a report will be issued soon and will include parking recommendations. All of the recommendations will be vetted through Mr. Kale. PILOT programs are being reviewed. This subcommittee, he said, will stay in place until June 2015.

### *Town Government*

Mr. Kale said that the group is reviewing the best practices of other communities (Winchester and Arlington) and is looking to collaborate with other communities, as well. He said the statutory mandates are being looked at department by department. Also, departments were asked what services they would like to be able to provide, if more resources were available. Departments have been asked to look ahead five-years and to project needs, service delivery efficiencies, and goals. Finally, four departments (Fire, Police, CD and DPW) have been asked to “design their departments from scratch.” The analysis from the Police and Fire Departments has been reviewed. CD and DPW will be reviewed at the sub-group's next meeting. The desire for more personnel came out of this exercise.

Chair Paolillo provided an overview of his meeting with Winchester's Town Manager (the former Mayor of Malden). He said that Winchester recently passed a debt exclusion on their high school. Mr. Firenze offered that Winchester has some differences: residents pay for trash disposal, they do not have their own Light Department, they are less economically diverse, and they have not passed as many debt exclusions as Belmont has – over the years.

Chair Paolillo said that regionalization with surrounding communities was discussed. Winchester's challenges are similar to Belmont's, he said, and perhaps the challenges could be

worked on together. He noted that Malden's Wellness Program has saved on health insurance claims.

Mr. Lisanke said that he met with Arlington recently and that Arlington has long-term planning in place, especially with regard to overrides and debt exclusions. For example, explicit timelines are laid out with regard to overrides. He said that the Recreation Department makes money. Regionalization, he said, needs to be explored. Also, Arlington's town structure seems to make much more sense than Belmont's, in that all departments report to the Town Manager.

Ms. Slap added that Arlington has very strong cost-containment goals and conservative revenue estimates. A certain percent (5%) of their operating budget is devoted to capital needs. She added that they are experiencing enrollment growth, as is Belmont. Mr. Carman said that Arlington has had a lot of long-term personnel in key positions. He said the finance committee focuses on finance issues only. He agreed that there is a lot of growth in Arlington, at this time.

Chair Paolillo said that regionalization would help with capital expenditures, especially with regard to fire equipment, for example. The challenges (union contracts, pension issues, etc.) to collaborating with other communities were discussed. Mr. Kale said that collaboration does already exist, but that it does not necessarily translate into significant cost savings.

Ms. Helgen added that Arlington does a great job of educating its public, on an on-going basis.

### ***Financial Projections***

Mr. Kale said that material is being gathered.

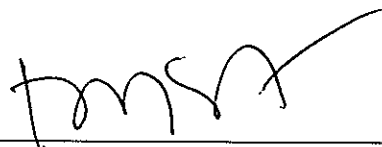
### **Schedule follow-up meetings**

Next FTF meeting: Friday, April 25, 2014 at 8:00 a.m.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes of January 31, 2014 were approved.  
The meeting minutes of February 26, 2014 were approved.

The FTF moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 am.



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Mr. David Kale, Town Administrator