

**THE MINUTES  
OF THE  
WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING  
September 18, 2002**

Chairman Brusch called the meeting to order at 7:36 PM.

Members absent: W. Hofmann

Also present: Town Administrator Melvin Kleckner, Assistant Town Administrator Joyce Munro, Selectman Anne Marie Mahoney, Selectman Paul Solomon, the Belmont School Committee, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Peter Holland, School Department Director of Finance & Administration Dr. Gerry Missal, Town Accountant Barbara Hagg and Town Treasurer Susan Kendall Freiner

*Handout(s) given tonight:* (1) Cost Cutting Initiatives Update handed out by Chairman Brusch

*Executive Session Handout(s):* (a) Handout pertaining to the Joint Executive Session topic of health insurance collective bargaining

Chairman Brusch welcomed and introduced new members to the Committee.

With sixteen members present, Chairman Brusch and the Warrant Committee took a roll call vote enter into Executive Session at 7:38 PM for the purpose of discussing health insurance collective bargaining. The Board of Selectmen and School Committee individually took roll call votes and entered into a Joint Executive Session with the Warrant Committee regarding the same topic. Chairman Brusch passed out a (a) handout pertaining to the Joint Executive Session topic.

With sixteen members present, Chairman Brusch and the Warrant Committee took a roll call vote at 7:40 PM for the Executive Session with the Board of Selectmen following the Joint Executive Session for the purpose of discussion potential litigation. The Board of Selectmen also took a roll call vote for the purpose of discussing the same topic.

The Warrant Committee returned to regular session at 8:27 PM, and entered back into Joint Executive Session with the Board of Selectmen at 8:29 PM.

The Warrant Committee returned to regular session at 8:35 PM.

Chairman Brusch passed around the Warrant Committee Roster for the members to make any changes/revisions. (A revised copy will be handed out to the Committee at a subsequent meeting.)

### ***Acceptance of Minutes***

The Committee discussed and made amendments to the minutes of the June 5, 2002 meeting.

Member Heigham made a motion, Member Oates seconded said motion, and it was unanimously voted to accept the minutes as amended of June 5, 2002.

### ***Update on Structural Changes (see 6/5 minutes)***

Chairman Brusch handed out and reviewed a memo regarding (I) cost cutting initiative updates since the June 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. The October 9<sup>th</sup> meeting will be devoted to a much more in-depth discussion of these topics.

Pay As You Throw - Member Heigham updated the Warrant Committee on the Pay As You Throw Committee.

Solid Waste Disposal Program - Since there are no action items this year, the topic will be reviewed in the future.

Town Owned Vehicle Policies (Summer/Fall) - The Subcommittee will report at the next Warrant Committee meeting on October 9<sup>th</sup>.

Resource Sharing among Departments (Summer/Fall) - Selectman Brownsberger updated the Warrant Committee on this topic. He cited the Payroll Technician as an example of a cost analysis done this summer. Treasurer Freiner showed the Board of Selectmen it would be more cost-effective to retain the Payroll Technician position instead of outsourcing it. Selectman Brownsberger thinks it would be helpful for additional members of the Warrant Committee to get involved in this process.

Bulk Purchasing (Fall/Winter) - Chairman Brusch asked the Warrant Committee for more volunteers for this Committee.

Use of Overtime (Fall) - Chairman Brusch asked the Warrant Committee for more volunteers for this Committee.

Reviewing Collective Bargaining Contracts (Fall) - The Board of Selectmen would like the Warrant Committee to work on reviewing the contracts.

Reviewing the Branch Libraries (Fall) - They are collecting some data on what the Branches cost the Town. Member Schafer informed the Warrant Committee that Library Director Maureen Connors is working with the Subcommittee. The Board of Selectmen has tentatively set a date for a public hearing in December.

Review the Police Staffing - The Board of Selectmen noted this topic is on hold.

Review the Early Retirement Incentive (Summer) \_ Mr. Kleckner and a small working group created a template that showed every employee eligible, years of service, whether they may take the Town up on early retirement, and the cost to the Town. The Working Group analyzed this document and met with Chairman Brusch and the Board of Selectmen. The Board of Selectmen voted in August to not offer the Early Retirement Incentive.

Consider Consolidation of the Youth/Recreation Departments \_ Selectman Brownsberger noted the Board of Selectmen at their last meeting decided not to pursue this topic. He did point out the Warrant Committee could continue working on this topic.

Member Oates asked Chairman Brusch if the Town Owned Vehicles Subcommittee could present their report at the next meeting. Member Oates requested the report be given in Executive Session, but the Warrant Committee did not address that issue.

### ***Federal Police Grant Shortfall from FY02***

Mr. Kleckner gave some background regarding the Federal Police Grant the Town had that would provide some “seed money” for a couple of years for additional officers in the police department (Fast Cops). The Board of Selectmen has made certain decisions that could be perceived as reducing staffing below the level of the Grant. The Belmont Police Department has been reluctant in putting in the reimbursement application, but Mr. Kleckner said he and Town Accountant Hagg are planning to move forward with submitting the application. Ms. Hagg noted there was a deficit of \$65K in this grant because we have not received reimbursement from the federal government. Mr. Kleckner noted the Town will be applying for full reimbursement from the federal government.

Member Kobus asked for clarification on the terms of the Grant. If the Town does not qualify for the Grant, then would there be a \$65K deficit? Ms. Hagg noted the Grant must be used to “supplement” not “supplant” officers in the police budget. She added nothing is currently being charged to the Fast Cops Program.

Member Widmer asked what the Town's “vulnerability” is both now and in the future. Mr. Kleckner noted there is some fear there could be some retroactive responsibility, but worst case is the Town would be out the \$65K.

### ***Discussion of Minuteman Excess***

Chairman Brusch informed the Committee that State Aid for Minuteman is more than was anticipated by the State in April by \$8,650 (about \$500 per Minuteman community). She added if all 17 communities do not vote on this, then the State would not give Minuteman the money. Chairman Brusch discussed this topic with Ron Fitzgerald, Superintendent for the Minuteman School Committee. Mr. Fitzgerald has requested a vote to allow Minuteman to access the money.

- Member Oates made a motion, Member Flewelling seconded said motion, and it was **unanimously voted in favor** of recommending approval of allowing Minuteman to access the \$8,650 in additional State Aid.

### ***Discussion of FY02 Revisions (worksheet handed out with meeting packet materials)***

Member Schafer asked about Chapter 90 Reimbursement from the State (page 4 of the spreadsheet) and why there was a note of “memo” in the space. Ms. Hagg noted the money has been budgeted but it has not been received yet.

Member Schafer also asked about the Water Department running in a surplus. Treasurer Freiner noted when the Water Department requested to raise the rates, the surplus would be placed in a Stabilization Fund. Town Accountant Hagg corrected Treasurer Freiner and said it will be kept in a special revenue fund (retained earnings), and it would not be considered a Stabilization or a “Slush” Fund.

### ***Discussion of FY03 State Aid, Other FY03 Revenues (i.e., unused levy capacity)***

Selectman Brownsberger noted the Town received over \$400K more than expected in State Aid, and there was a question as to whether the Town should go ahead and spend that money. The Board of Selectmen has decided to put that money towards the Tax Levy. He added it would have been logistically difficult to do anything else than reduce the Tax Levy.

Member Widmer asked about how this will affect Fiscal Year 2004. Selectman Brownsberger said this does not impact the FY04 unused tax capacity. Town Accountant Hagg also added the new growth came in at \$630K, which is \$230 more than what was estimated for FY04. She added the Overlay account has been increased to a little over \$900K. The Assessors wanted to have enough money in their Overlay account as a reserve for tax abatements. Selectman Brownsberger explained that, in effect, the Assessors have increased the Town's reserves.

### ***Warrant Committee Calendar and Tentative Meeting Dates***

Chairman Brusch reminded the Warrant Committee of the Mega Meeting tomorrow night, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM at the Selectmen\_s Meeting Room.

Following that, there is a meeting of the Warrant Committee scheduled on October 9<sup>th</sup>, then the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Chairman Brusch said this is anticipating a Town Meeting on Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. She reminded the Committee they will meet prior to any Town Meeting night at 6 PM.

### ***Other Issues***

Chairman Brusch reviewed the Subcommittee request handout (sent with meeting packet) and asked members to return the sheet to Member Widmer as soon as possible.

### ***Bond Issue & Tax Rating***

Mr. Kleckner recognized the efforts of Town Treasurer Freiner for the Athletic Field and the Town Hall Complex projects. He credited her with taking the initiative and pursuing going out for a long-term bond issue. Mr. Kleckner said the Town did retain their AAA bond rating, and they received a less than 4% interest rate on a little over \$14 million over a 20-year period.

### ***Report of Nominating Committee***

Member Schafer spoke for the Nominating Committee. They are nominating Mike Widmer for Chairman, Robie White for Vice Chairman, and Linda Oates for Secretary.

- Member Heigham made a motion, Member Flewelling seconded said motion, and it was **unanimously voted in favor** of the Nominating Committee's recommendations.

Member Flewelling thanked Pat Brusch for all her hard work and dedication during the past year.

Member McCormick made a motion, and it was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristina E. Frizzell

Recording Clerk