

**Structural Change Impact Group  
Consolidation & Outsourcing Working Group**

Minutes  
April 22, 2021  
Meeting conducted via Zoom

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: June 15, 2021  
TIME: 11:44 AM

Members present: Mark Paolillo, Aaron Pikcilingis, Paul Rickter

Members absent:

Other attendees: Lisa Pargoli, Phil Thayer

Meeting was called to order at 8:03am.

**Minutes**

Minutes of April 1, 2021 approved, Moved: Paolillo, Second: Pikcilingis, Voted 3-0

**Updates on "Ruled out" ideas**

Subcommittee members reported on progress made on items researched since the previous meeting. All items are identified by their ID numbers and are included in the committee idea matrix posted at

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/b64yoe9y05lnwzb/AAB5iDttndB5Pfik6Wzo5Qgva?dl=0>.

- Paolillo met with Town Clerk Ellen Cushman on the idea of hiring a professional Clerk (ID 215) and the past history of the proposal of hiring a professional Treasurer. The Treasurer idea was defeated by a large margin in a town referendum in 2005. The conclusion reached is that for both Treasurer and Clerk the salary would ultimately be the same whether elected or appointed, so there is likely no cost savings. Having a qualified person in each position is more of a governance issue than a structural change. Subcommittee agreed that this idea should be ruled out.

**Updates on ideas that are completed, in progress, or ongoing**

The subcommittee members reported on work that they have done to gather details on various ongoing, in progress, and ongoing ideas:

- Share Special Education costs with other towns (ID 131) - Pikcilingis reported on LABBB Cooperative, which provides out of district special education services for Lexington, Arlington, Belmont, Bedford, and Burlington. Belmont has been a member of LABBB since 1996. We concluded that this is a good deal for the town and we should continue.
- Restrict liquor license transfers (ID 168) - Pikcilingis reported on the bylaw change that Belmont passed to prevent the transfer of liquor licenses in the future. We should continue this practice.
- Join community compact to bring in funds for the Collins Center financial modeling (ID 169) - Rickter reported on his conversation with Town Administrator Patrice Garvin. Belmont is a member of the community compact that gives us access to grants to pay

for resources such as the Collins Center financial modelling assistance. We should continue doing this.

- Withdraw from the Minuteman regional school district (ID 177) - Pikcilingis reported that Belmont left the Minuteman Regional District in 2020. The school has the highest per pupil cost for vocational/technical schools in the state and Belmont disagreed with the size of the new school that was planned. Created a new idea to explore regional vocational/technical education options.
- Partner with other towns to lower costs through large purchases of commodities (ID 180) and Hazardous waste disposal consortium with Lexington and other towns (ID 181) - Rickter talked to DPW Director Jay Marcotte and clarified what we're already doing (fuel, road salt, and hazardous waste) and will follow up with him about quantifying savings and ideas for other opportunities. Created a new idea to explore further opportunities along these lines.

### **"New, Open to be Explored" ideas**

The subcommittee members reported on work that they have done and will do to gather details on various open ideas:

- Regionalization of Fire Suppression services (ID 9) & Regionalization of EMT services (ID 10) - Paolillo will set up a meeting to discuss these issues with Fire Chief DeStefano.
- Merge service departments between school and town and reduce headcount (HR, accounting, IT) (ID 14) - Rickter will set up meetings with Town Administrator Garvin and School Superintendent John Phelan to figure out next steps.
- Cemetery charges should cover full operating costs (ID 42) - Pikcilingis reported on the cemetery, which operates at a \$400k deficit (one-time revenue from plot sales, but constant costs). Pikcilingis will talk to Ellen Cushman of the Cemetery Commission to determine the course going forward.
- How might the town improve the efficacy and efficiency of capital projects and expenditures? (ID 344) - Pikcilingis will ask whether Vision 21 Implementation could do some in-depth research on this topic.
- Consider hiring in-house counsel (ID 345) - Pikcilingis will talk to Town Administrator Garvin to research the relative advantages of in-house vs. contracted legal services. Some municipalities do this and it is worth looking into this. Pikcilingis will gather some numbers on per capita spending on legal services in other municipalities.

### **Future meeting schedule**

Next subcommittee meeting will be Tuesday, April 27, at 8:00am.

Adjourned at 9:27am (Moved: Paolillo, Seconded: Rickter, Voted 3-0)