

BELMONT WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 3, 2020, 7:30PM

VIRTUAL MEETING ON ZOOM

DATE: June 17, 2020

TIME: 11:02 AM

Present: Chair Slap, Members Alcock, Doyle, Fallon, Halston, Helgen, Levin, Lubien, McLaughlin, Read, Rickter, Schreiber and Weis.
School Committee Liaison Crowley.
Select Board Member Caputo.

Town Administrator (TA) Garvin and Assistant Town Administrator (ATA) Marshall

Members Absent: Cragg, Dionne.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Chair Slap.

I-Approve minutes

- May 27, 2020:
Motion: To approve the May 27, 2020 minutes. (Motion passed, roll-call vote: Slap, Alcock, Rickter, Doyle, McLaughlin, Weis, Fallon, Read, Lubien, Caputo, Levin, Halston, Schreiber and Crowley voted yes).
- June 1, 2020:
Motion: To approve the June 1, 2020 minutes. (Motion passed, roll-call vote: Slap, Alcock, Rickter, Doyle, McLaughlin, Weis, Fallon, Read, Lubien, Caputo, Levin, Halston and Schreiber voted yes; Crowley abstain).

Subcommittee / working group minutes:

- Pension/OPEB/Debt: *Motion: To approve the May 29 minutes of the Pension/OPEB/Debt working group. (Motion passed: Lubien, Doyle and Levin voted yes.)*
- Public services subcommittee: *Motion: To approve the January 29, 2020 minutes of the Public Services subcommittee. (Motion passed: Lubien, Weis, Halston voted yes; Schreiber abstained.)*
Motion: To approve the March 6 and May 8 minutes of the Public Services subcommittee. (Motion passed: Lubien, Weis, Halston and Schreiber voted yes.)
- Education subcommittee: *Motion: To approve the May 5 minutes of the Education subcommittee. (Motion passed: Doyle, Helgen, Lubien, Rickter and Weis voted yes.)*
- *Motion: To approve the May 7 minutes of the Education subcommittee, joint with the finance subcommittee of the School Committee. (Motion passed: Doyle, Helgen, Lubien, Rickter and Weis voted yes.)*
- *Motion: To approve the May 14 minutes of the Education subcommittee, joint with the finance subcommittee of the School Committee Doyle, Helgen, Lubien, Rickter and Weis voted yes.)*

II-Review of FY21 Capital Budget

Anne Marie Mahoney (Chair, Capital Budget Committee (CBC)) was present and gave an overview of the process for FY21. Prior to COVID, department heads had already been asked to provide limited requests compared with a normal year, due to the tight constraints on the Town's operating budget. Mahoney further noted that certain capital items belonging to the departmental budgets had also been deferred in FY21, items such as Fire turnout gear, Police cruisers, Facilities equipment, etc.

Once COVID-19 hit in the spring, the normal Capital Budget process was completely disrupted. The Town requested support from the Capital Budget in the form of \$1.7m in roads money (from previous overrides), along with a \$525k reduction to discretionary capital funds. A long debate among the CBC ultimately resulted in a 5-1 vote (with 1 absent) to approve this request. Mahoney cautioned that the transfer of roads funds was intended to be a one-time event and should not be repeated. She also pointed out that the Capital Budget was covering a large portion of the budget shortfall resulting from the COVID-19 impact.

Mahoney reviewed the list of FY21 recommended projects, as well as the list of items that had been cut due to the transfer of discretionary funds.

Comments/questions from WC:

- Doyle: What happens to the road work that usually follows water/sewer repairs? Mahoney said the planned work would fall behind schedule – it is particularly difficult to catch up in a given year, due to constraints of weather and the physical amount of work that can be done in a given construction season. Lubien added it was his understanding a more durable patch would be applied, which would hopefully last until the road work could be taken up again.
- Weis questioned the logic of setting aside \$65k in ambulance reserve funds, in a year where critical cuts are necessary. Mahoney and Fallon said the CBC wanted to keep on track for larger purchases, so as to not get hit with a big expense down the road. TA Garvin noted the ambulance ultimately brings in revenue for the Town.

III-Review of Town Meeting Articles (and potential vote)

TA Garvin reported the Warrant had been signed by the Select Board on Monday; final motions would be submitted tomorrow for sign-off by Town Counsel.

The WC took up review of the articles for which there was financial interest, and voted on a number of the articles while deferring a vote on others:

- Article 3, Salaries of elected officials: No changes since the previous year.
Motion: To recommend favorable action on Article 3 of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. (Motion passed unanimously, roll-call vote: Slap, Alcock,

Helgen, Rickter, Doyle, Weis, Fallon, Read, Caputo, Schreiber, Crowley, Halston, McLaughlin, Levin and Lubien voted yes.)

- Article 4, Enterprise funds: Deferred, Garvin wanted to double check something with respect to the Motion.
- Article 5, Revolving fund limits: Deferred, Weis requested information be provided on revolving fund balances as context for voting on the limits.
- Article 6, Appropriation of Transportation Grant: Money from the State coming from rideshare (Uber/Lyft) taxes.

Motion: To recommend favorable action on Article 6 of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. (Motion passed unanimously, roll-call vote: Slap, Alcock, Helgen, Rickter, Doyle, Weis, Fallon, Read, Caputo, Schreiber, Crowley, Halston, McLaughlin, Levin and Lubien voted yes.)

- Article 7, Capital budget: Deferred, wait for final motion.
- Article 8, OPEB: Deferred, wait for final motion – a reduced amount of OPEB contribution was expected this year.
- Article 9, FY21 budget: Deferred, wait until finalized.
- Article 10, CPC budget and projects: Deferred, wait until appropriations to the CPC buckets are specified in the motion.
- Article 11, CPC amend prior appropriation for establishment of Emergency Rental Assistance program: This item was taken up at the May 13 WC Meeting, where-in Housing Trust Co-chair Rachel Heller had been present to explain the program. McLaughlin reiterated his objections to the program: needs were being addressed (and should be addressed) via other State/Federal programs; compromising long-term goals of the Housing Trust by utilizing these funds, which were intended for development of projects; bad optics in a time of crisis, other needs in the community that could be addressed with the funds. Weis expressed support for the program, pointing to the professional program administration to evaluate needs and factor in other assistance programs.

Motion: To recommend favorable action on Article 11 of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. (Motion passed, roll-call vote: Slap, Alcock, Helgen, Rickter, Doyle, Weis, Fallon, Read, Caputo, Schreiber, Crowley, Halston, Levin and Lubien voted yes; McLaughlin voted no.)

- Article 12, Home rule petition to validate results of a remote Town Meeting: The Legislature (specifically the House) had not yet agreed to pass legislation approving the holding of a remote Town Meeting. This Article was part of a contingency plan in lieu of such approval, where-in remote Town Meeting would go ahead and the outcomes would be legally validated down the road. This would ensure any financial actions were on solid legal ground.

Motion: To recommend favorable action on Article 11 of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. (Motion passed unanimously, roll-call vote: Slap, Alcock, Helgen, Rickter, Doyle, Weis, Fallon, Read, Caputo, Schreiber, Crowley, Halston, McLaughlin, Levin and Lubien voted yes.)

IV-Review of draft WC slide presentation for Town Meeting members

Chair Slap shared an outline for the presentation she would give to Town Meeting members; the presentation would be recorded on video, which would then be shared in advance of Town Meeting. The outline closely followed the structure of the Warrant Committee Report. Doyle suggested to add a point about the fact that all contracts are up for renewal next year.

V-Reports from Select Board, Town Administrator, School Committee, and liaisons

Caputo updated from the Select Board: Successful second tranche of borrowing for the Middle and High school project, 2.2% interest rate. Moving forward with joint process to fill School Committee vacancy. Town received notice of a proposed 40B housing development at 91 Beatrice Circle, 16 units on a half-acre lot directly off access road to Route 2. Started the reopening process for Town services, including opening parks/tennis courts for passive activity. McLean economic impact analysis available on the Town website.

Crowley updated from the School Committee: Last Thursday meeting was a public forum in which Superintendent Phelan presented the budget. Next Tuesday School Committee will vote on the budget and hold a public forum on plans for the fall.

Garvin reported that the Town will submit reimbursement application under CARES act for ~\$1m (including on behalf of Schools).

VI-Adjournment

Motion (Member McLaughlin): To adjourn at 9:00pm. Motion passed.

Submitted by
Christopher S. Henry