

HUMAN SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE WARRANT COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

Virtual Zoom Meeting

1:00 p.m.

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: April 16, 2021

TIME: 10:21 AM

Committee Members Virtually Attending:

Chair Bob McLaughlin; Member Jenny Fallon, Member Lynn Read

Also in attendance:

Library Director Peter Struzziero and Library Trustee Corinne McCue Olmsted

The Chair, Bob McLaughlin, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. on April 7, 2021 and recited the protocol permitted under Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law. The Chair took a roll call attendance.

The purpose of the meeting was for the Human Services Subcommittee to meet with the Library Director and such Members of the Board of Trustees who chose to attend to discuss the FY22 Library Budget.

The proposed Budget showed an increase comparing FY22 to FY21 of \$119,731.00, which is a 5.4% increase. It should be noted, however, that the FY21 Budget had been reduced by 1.5% and, therefore, the actual increase comparing FY22 to FY20 was only 3.9%. It was noted, however, that Belmont's proposed override had failed and the Library Budget would be negatively impacted by \$65,000.

In light of the reduced Budget, there followed a discussion of possible cuts that would be necessary, including limiting hours, limiting the Library being open on Sunday and purchasing fewer print and digital items for circulation.

Because of the reduction in the Budget, the Director noted that Belmont was dangerously close to losing its state accreditation – less than 1% above the minimum required budget. If the accreditation is lost, Belmont would be eliminated from the Minuteman Library Network as well as being ineligible for any grants or state aid. Belmont regularly has been a net borrower from the network.

There followed a long discussion about the effect that the COVID-19 pandemic had upon the Library's operation. The Director explained how he maintained Library services with, among other efforts, providing programs on-line, arranging for outdoor pickup of materials, and installing plexiglass, where necessary, allowing the Belmont Library to be one of the first Town buildings re-opened to the public.

In FY19, the last year of full opening, the Belmont Public Library ranked 10th in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with a circulation of 648,000 materials, the highest in the Library's history. Despite the difficulties Covid has posed, the Library continues to be well used and appreciated by the community and hopes to continue breaking records moving forward.

There followed a brief discussion of the new Library building proposal which unfortunately seems to be stalled. The discussion then evolved into discussing the expense of maintaining the existing building and its aging systems.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Robert E. McLaughlin, Sr.