



**Minutes of the  
Town of Belmont  
Warrant Committee Meeting  
Thursday, December 21, 2023  
7:30pm**

**RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: February 2, 2024  
TIME: 8:10 AM

To view the recording of the meeting, please click [HERE](#).

**Call to Order:** Mr. Lubien called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. There were 11 voting members present

Member	Present	Member	Present
Geoffrey Lubien, Chair	Yes	Robert McLaughlin	Yes
Paul Rickter, Vice-Chair	Yes	Melissa Morley	Absent
Conor McEachern, Secretary	Absent	Lynn Peterson Read	Yes
William Anderson	Yes	Matthew Taylor	Yes
Tom Caputo	Absent	Marie Warner	Yes
Fitzie Cowing	Absent	Jack Weis	Yes
Sue Croy	Yes	Roy Epstein, Ex-officio Designee, Select Board	Yes
Deepak Garg	Absent	Meghan Moriarty, Ex-officio, School Committee	Yes
Anne Helgen	Absent		

**Overview of Special Education Funding Plan**

Mr. Weis explained the difference between how the Town and Schools do their quarterly reporting, pointing out that the Schools project to where they think the financials will be at the end of the year. The current projection is a deficit of \$365,000. He pointed out that it is about one-half of 1% of the General Fund Budget. He then focused on the following specific line items:

Teacher Salaries & Special Education Expenses: Teacher Salaries shows a positive variance of about \$389,000, some of which is due to traditional turnover but also includes 4-5 Special Education positions that are currently unfilled. These services still need to be provided so Special Education Expenses show a deficit of \$400,000 for contractors needed to provide those services.

District-Wide Non-Salaried Expenses: This shows a negative variance of \$310,000. The School Department has flagged 4 drivers of this deficit:

- \$100,000 is due to higher instructional software expenses, which Ms. Moriarty explained.
- \$60,000-\$70,000 related to reconfiguration expenses, mostly for unbudgeted purchases for the new school. Because there are remaining unexpended reserves in the school building budget, he recommended that this budget be used to cover this variance, instead of the General Fund.
- \$40,000 in legal expenses which are higher than budgeted.
- \$10,000-\$20,000 in Chromebook repairs, and he and Ms. Moriarty explained these repairs and the efforts to charge for the repairs.

Special Education Tuitions: This is budgeted at \$8,700,000. The variance is zero but he pointed out that this number is almost 15% of the budget and has a lot of unpredictability. He then went on to discuss Out-of-District Tuitions including variable expenses and revenues from Belmont as well as State, Federal and others.

Mr. Weis pointed out that for FY24 the Schools are projecting \$12,200,000 of OOD tuitions which is up about \$570,000 from FY24's budget. This includes the projection of 6 current students who will likely enter an OOD program, and he outlined some of the questions and variables that still remain about this number. The Subcommittee believes that this projection is slightly overstated and he explained why.

He then went on to review offsets of these costs including Circuit Breakers, increased revenues, etc. and how the variance may be covered in the budget.

There were questions about what the School Department is thinking to offset the deficit, with Ms. Moriarty outlining the process.

39 There was a discussion and questions about the Schools budget, particularly around the Out-of-District  
40 expenses and how to address them.

41 Mr. Lubien reviewed the next steps and dates in the budget process.

42 **Liaison Reports:**

43 A. Select Board: Mr. Epstein reported on the April Special Town Meeting and the status of the decision on  
44 an override number, which was discussed.

45 B. School Committee: Ms. Moriarty reported on the activities of the Committee regarding the budget.

46 **Subcommittee Reports - None**

47 **Approve Minutes:**

48 December 13, 2023 Warrant Committee: Mr. Rickter asked that the regular version of the High Level  
49 Concepts/Guiding Principles be included in the minutes along with the iambic pentameter version.

50 *Mr. McLaughlin moved to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2023 Warrant Committee meeting.*  
51 *Mr. Rickter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.*

52 October 16, 2023 Public Services Subcommittee:

53 *Mr. Anderson moved to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2023 Public Services Subcommittee*  
54 *meeting. Ms. Croy seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.*

55 **Other Business - None**

56 **Public Comment** – there was no public comment.

57 **Adjournment**

58 *Mr. McLaughlin moved to the adjourn the meeting of the Warrant Committee. Mr. Rickter*  
59 *seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13pm.*

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Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny  
Recording Secretary