



**Minutes of the  
Town of Belmont  
Warrant Committee Remote Meeting  
Tuesday, June 4, 2024  
7:30pm**

<b>RECEIVED TOWN CLERK BELMONT, MA</b>
DATE: June 24, 2024 TIME: 8:55 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 14 voting members present

Member	Present	Member	Present
Geoffrey Lubien, Chair	Yes	Anne Helgen	Yes
Paul Rickter, Vice-Chair	Yes	Robert McLaughlin	Yes
Conor McEachern, Secretary	Yes	Melissa Morley	Yes
William Anderson	Yes	Lynn Peterson Read	Yes
Tom Caputo	Yes	Marie Warner	Yes
Fitzie Cowing	Absent	Jack Weis	Yes
Susanne Croy	Yes	Roy Epstein, Ex-officio Designee, Select Board	Yes
Deepak Garg	Yes	Meghan Moriarty, Ex-officio, School Committee	Absent
<b>Staff</b>		<b>Others</b>	
Michael Widmer, Town Moderator	Yes	Mark Haley, Rink Building Committee	Yes
Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator	Yes		
Jennifer Hewitt, Assistant Town Administrator & Finance Director	Yes		

Mr. Epstein explained that additional information has been received about the TMMA, there has been significant resident input about the topic (and the request to have more public hearings), and that Town Counsel suggested that the agreement could be simplified in a useful way. To accommodate all of these things an amendment will be submitted, and the Select Board will propose that the TMMA not be taken up at Town Meeting on June 5<sup>th</sup> as planned. Instead, the Special Town Meeting will be continued from June 10<sup>th</sup> to June 24, 2024 for this issue. He explained the benefits of this change and why this issue has to be resolved this month.

There was a discussion of how Town Meeting will proceed with this change.

**1. Rink Discussion**

Mr. Haley explained the history of the cost of the rink and what has been changed in the design to get the price to \$32,000,000. This leaves a gap between what was previously approved at Town Meeting in May 2024. The article asks the Town to authorize \$1,500,000 to close the gap. An additional \$750,000 was received from the State to pay for the refrigeration system.

Mr. Caputo outlined what was originally planned for the rink, and that the redesign maintains the vast majority of the programming. One omission is the solar panels which can be added at a later date.

Mr. Haley explained the change to the CO<sub>2</sub> refrigeration system and the environmental and financial benefits of this change. He also explained that the roof will have the infrastructure to easily add the solar panels later.

Mr. Epstein outlined the funding plan for the extra cost:

Kendall Fund	\$950,000
Investment Income	550,000
State Earmark:	750,000

He explained how unexpected increases in Investment Income created interest income that can be used to fund this project. After this use, the Kendall Fund will have \$1,200,000 remaining. The Select Board voted to support this funding structure.

35 Mr. Anderson asked if the \$550,000 is gross or net income. Ms. Hewitt said it is gross income. He then  
36 asked why no bonds were being issued for this project, especially for the solar panels. Mr. Epstein said that  
37 would mean additional property taxes which the Select Board did not want to do, especially since there are  
38 other ways to fund solar panels. He also explained that the CO<sub>2</sub> system was prioritized because it has to be  
39 built with the building, while the solar can be added later. He also spoke about the economic benefits and  
40 drawbacks of solar and the benefit of including battery storage. There was a discussion of this issue.

41 Mr. Caputo pointed out that there is a healthy contingency, and there may be funds available at the end of  
42 the project that could be used for the panels.

43 Ms. Garvin added that they are actively seeking solutions to the solar panel issue.

44 Mr. Weis said he thinks there is a “sources and uses” imbalance and asked what would happen to the extra  
45 \$150,000. Mr. Epstein explained how the numbers were chosen and said it is similar to the contingency.

46 Mr. Caputo provided the details of the contingencies, which he explained:

Adequate contingencies to ensure successful project completion	
<b>Construction Contingency</b>	<b>\$741 K</b>
<i>Budget line-item reserves used during construction for requirements not included in the subcontractor bids but must be done.</i>	
<b>Escalation Contingency</b>	<b>\$689 K</b>
<i>Budget line-item reserves to handle cost increases due to inflation of labor and material costs between project estimation and construction. This contingency starts high and is drawn down as project construction begins.</i>	
<b>Owner's Contingency</b>	<b>\$1.55 M</b>
<i>Budget line-item reserves used throughout the project for other unforeseen design or construction requirements that must be addressed.</i>	
<b>Total Project Contingencies</b>	<b>\$3.0 M</b>

47  
48 Mr. Weis suggested some ways to represent the extra \$150,000. He also suggested that they be prepared  
49 to answer the question about where any savings would go (Free Cash, Kendall Fund, etc.). Mr. Epstein  
50 said any savings would be a turnback to either the Kendall Fund or the Capital Stabilization Fund.

51 Ms. Werner asked if there is anything in the High School Building contingency that could support the deficit  
52 in the rink project. Ms. Garvin said the audit had to be completed before this could be considered. Ms.  
53 Hewitt said there are also additional costs that are expected, so the final number is still evolving. There was  
54 a discussion about Ms. Werner's suggestion and the income expectations of the new rink.

55 Mr. McLaughlin suggested the Rink Building Committee be prepared to answer the “this is a bait & switch”  
56 comment. Ms. Garvin spoke about other projects that have needed additional funds and emphasized that  
57 this is nothing new. There was a discussion of this issue.

58 Mr. Haley explained the difference between the CO<sub>2</sub> system and the solar panels.

59 Ms. Croy said she has heard a lot of worry around Town that a “No” vote to this funding will mean no rink,  
60 and that this needs to be clarified and communicated.

61 Mr. Caputo addressed this concern, and the Committee discussed the concern and challenges that would  
62 occur if this article is not approved.

63 Mr. McEachern suggested that the Rink Committee be prepared to discuss what the rink would look like if  
64 the article fails, and what the cost escalation is of not moving forward now.

65 Mr. Caputo said they would be building a rink that is substantially  
66 less than what the community said it wanted.

67 Mr. Haley confirmed that \$3-4M has already been spent on the  
68 project. He then spoke about the “soft costs” of the project and  
69 how they will increase with any delay which will reduce how  
70 much brick & mortar can be purchased.

71 There was a discussion about this issue.

#### \$29.9M Redesign Option

*A fundamental redesign that will need to be undertaken over 2-3 months. Preliminary designs contemplate a large pre-engineered structure with a warehouse-style appearance and substantially reduced functionality.*

Expectations as of May 2024

- Redesign to budget of \$29.9 M
- Only the most basic functionality of an ice rink
- Warehouse-style building with no low roof sections or other architectural design elements and limited glass
- Lack of “program” features originally outlined in the rink project, including BHS locker rooms, storage to support recreation and non-ice programs, concessions, etc.
- Use of an ice refrigeration system based on Freon R-454 that has a worse global warming impact compared to the CO<sub>2</sub> system in Option A
- Requires a redesign of the building, incurring a minimum 2-3 month delay and additional cost of \$450K+ (inflation/escalation, professional fees, insurance, site maintenance costs, etc.)
- Project completion delayed by 3-6 months – miss another season of ice
- Impacts the FY26 operating budget with additional expense for ice rental and lost revenue opportunities

72 Mr. Anderson asked how firm the current cost estimates are (contract signed, etc.). Mr. Haley explained  
73 how the initial cost estimate was created and the bidding process. He added that there are still some  
74 outstanding bids because the funding needs to be decided before that process can begin. He  
75 acknowledged that that is when there is understanding of the actual costs. There was a discussion of how  
76 to present this process and the funding at Town Meeting.

77 Mr. Weis pointed out that it doesn't seem like there is any shared responsibility for the cost increase with  
78 the construction manager and that it appears to actually benefit them. He asked how this will be explained  
79 to Town Meeting.

80 Mr. Haley responded that it's the Construction Manager, the Architect, and the Owner's Project Manager  
81 that are involved and they are working to get them to share the pain.

82 There was no public comment.

83 *Mr. McLaughlin moved favorable action on the Special Town Meeting Article 3 Supplemental Budget*  
84 *Request for Municipal Skating Rink Project. Ms. Werner seconded, and the motion passed*  
85 *unanimously by a roll vote.*

## 86 **2. Traffic Monitoring and Mitigation Agreement Discussion (TMMA)**

87 Not discussed due to the expected changes to this article (see Mr. Epstein's comments above).

## 88 **3. Revisit TM Article 23: OPEB Funding**

89 Not discussed since it was previously resolved.

## 90 **4. Consider Any Amendments to Upcoming Motions: None**

### 91 **Schedule**

92 Mr. Lubien reviewed the schedule for the remainder of the year, and the Committee discussed the upcoming  
93 meeting schedule.

### 94 **Liaison & Subcommittee Reports:**

95 A. Library Building Committee: Mr. McLaughlin reported that the groundbreaking is on June 12, 2024 at  
96 8:30am.

### 97 **Approve Minutes:**

98 May 28, 2024: In the vote on the Women's Club article, Ms. Cowing, not Ms. Croy abstained. Mr. Weis said he  
99 does not recall asking the question on line 119 about a maintenance contract but said he is happy to be  
100 identified as doing this if no one else speaks up.

101 *Ms. Helgen moved to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2024 Warrant Committee meeting as*  
102 *amended. Mr. McLaughlin seconded, and the motion passed 13-0-1 by a roll call vote with Mr. Epstein*  
103 *abstaining.*

104 June 3, 2024: The title should say Monday, not Tuesday.

105 *Ms. Helgen moved to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2024 Warrant Committee meeting. Ms.*  
106 *Werner seconded, and the motion passed 10-0-4 by a show of hands vote with Mr. McLaughlin, Mr.*  
107 *Epstein, Mr. McEachern and Mr. Garg abstaining.*

### 108 October 24, 2023 and April 25, 2024 General Government Subcommittee:

109 *Ms. Helgen moved to approve the minutes of the October 24, 2023 & April 25, 2024 General*  
110 *Government Subcommittee meeting. Mr. McLaughlin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously*  
111 *by a roll call vote.*

113 April 18, 2024 Human Services Subcommittee:

114 *Ms. Werner moved to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2024 Human Services Subcommittee*  
115 *meeting. Ms. Read seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by a show of hands vote.*

116 **Adjournment**

117 *Mr. McLaughlin moved to adjourn the meeting of the Warrant Committee. The meeting was*  
118 *adjourned at 8:42pm.*

119

Respectfully submitted by,

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121

Susan Peghiny

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Recording Secretary