

BELMONT WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MAY 22, 2019, 7:30PM
CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL, LARGE COMMUNITY ROOM

2019 JUN 18 AM 8:58

Present: Chair Slap, Members Alcock, Crowley, Dionne, Fallon, Halston, Helgen, Lubien, McLaughlin, Read, Rickter, Schreiber and Weis.
Selectman Caputo. Town Administrator Garvin
Members Absent: Doyle

The meeting was called to order at 7:32pm by Chair Slap, who noted an updated agenda: the facilities request item would be postponed, as well as the report on the Town's Q3 financials.

I-Approve minutes

- April 24, 2019:
Motion (Member Helgen): To approve the April 24, 2019 minutes. Motion passed by acclamation.
- May 8, 2019: Chair Slap proposed a minor revision.
Motion (Member Helgen): To approve the May 8, 2019 minutes, as amended. Motion passed by acclamation; Member Schreiber abstained.

II-Review Town Meeting Articles – Segment B

Article 12: Approval of the salaries of elected officials, including A—a 3% cost of living increase to the salaries of elected officials for the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer.

Motion (McLaughlin): To recommend favorable action on Article 12. (Motion passed unanimously)

Article 13: Approval of water/sewer enterprise funds.

- Fallon noted the CBC had discussed the fact that items previously viewed as capital were now moved to the operating budget.
- Weis asked how far retained earnings were being drawn down; Garvin said about \$2m each.
- Garvin noted that this year a formula had been applied to more accurately capture costs incurred by the Town (this was a Collins' Center recommendation). The plan was to monitor in the coming year to see if the formula needed to be tweaked.

Motion (Helgen): To recommend favorable action on Article 13. (Motion passed unanimously)

Article 14: Transfer of a water bond premium. The premium resulted from high demand

for the bond in a recent refinancing, due largely to the Town's AAA rating. The premium was required to be transferred back to the Water Enterprise Fund.

Motion (Helgen): To recommend favorable action on Article 14. (Motion passed unanimously)

Article 15: Covering MWRA local financial assistance. There were actually two articles (15a and 15b) because of two different terms of borrowing.

Motion (Helgen): To recommend favorable action on Article 15a and Article 15b. (Motion passed unanimously)

Article 16: De-authorization of unissued borrowing from projects approved 2012-2018, including the Wellington, water mains, Police/DPW. Garvin explained the implication of de-authorization was to free up money in the operating budget that would otherwise be allocated to paying for the notes.

Motion (McLaughlin): To recommend favorable action on Article 16. (Motion passed unanimously)

Article 17: Authorization of limits for eight revolving funds. Dionne confirmed that the limits were unchanged from the previous year. Weis pointed out it would be helpful to see the balances, and how limits compare with budgeted expenditures.

Motion (McLaughlin): To recommend favorable action on Article 17. (Motion passed unanimously)

Article 18: Including all the FY20 budget appropriations. As the subcommittees had each conducted review of the individual components, a suggestion was made to move the articles as a whole. After some discussion, Chair Slap proceeded to take them one-by-one.

Dionne relayed information from the Precinct 2 and 3 caucus, that there had been a request for additional details on the fire budget, related to a critique regarding funding of two fire stations versus an ambulance center.

The components of Article 18:

- General government:
Motion (McLaughlin): To recommend favorable action. (Motion passed unanimously)
- Employee benefits, retirement:
Motion (Helgen): To recommend favorable action. (Motion passed unanimously)
- Employee benefits, health insurance / salaries:
 - o McLaughlin noted this constituted a large portion of the overall operating budget.
 - o Weis asked if the Town was still comfortable with a self-insurance approach, given the projected increase of 8%. Garvin said the Town's

consultant had advised the Town was still better off self-insuring; she reviewed recent efforts to look at plan design changes, which could help to control rising costs.

- o Dionne pointed out that on page 3 of the WC Report executive summary, health insurance was quoted as increasing by 15%. Garvin would look into this number in advance of Town Meeting, as it seemed to conflict with the 8% number.

Motion (Helgen): To recommend favorable action. (Motion passed unanimously)

- Public safety:

Motion (Halston): To recommend favorable action. (Motion passed unanimously)

- Belmont Public Schools:

Motion (Weis): To recommend favorable action. (Motion passed unanimously)

- Minuteman Regional Schools: ~~There were 28 students projected.~~ McLaughlin commented on the cost per student being noticeably higher relative to Belmont Public Schools. There was discussion on when the capital charge would take effect as a non-member Town going forward.

Motion (Weis): To recommend favorable action. (Motion passed unanimously)

- Public services:

Motion (Helgen): To recommend favorable action. (Motion passed unanimously)

- Human services:

Motion (McLaughlin): To recommend favorable action. (Motion passed unanimously)

- Debt / interest on debt:

- o Dionne confirmed the amount included this year's borrowing for the High School.
- o Weis pointed out that the increased debt accounted for half of the overall increase to the Town's operating budget.
- o Helgen requested that Town Treasurer Carman to show projected debt service for various projects in Town, i.e. what is coming online/offline and when; Chair Slap would pass on the request.

Motion (Dionne): To recommend favorable action. (Motion passed unanimously)

- Authorization to transfer balances to meet portion of F20 operating expenses: Lubien commented on the implication that the General Stabilization Fund would go to zero. McLaughlin suggested to break up this article for Town Meeting.

Motion (Dionne): To recommend favorable action on all the transfers. (Motion passed unanimously)

Article 19: OPEB stabilization fund.

Motion (Helgen): To recommend favorable action on Article 19. (Motion passed unanimously)

Article 20: Authorization of additional FY19 Chapter 90 funds to be used in FY20.

Motion (Helgen): To recommend favorable action on Article 20. (Motion passed unanimously)

Article 21: Authorization of FY20 Chapter 90 funds.

Motion (Helgen): To recommend favorable action on Article 21. (Motion passed unanimously)

Article 22: Capital expenditures. Fallon updated that authorization of the police station relocation funds at Special Town Meeting had freed up \$40k in the Capital Budget. The CBC had decided to allocate these funds, as per the request of Facilities Director Dorrance, towards repairs on Town Hall roof and re-paving the apron at the Fire Station.

Motion (Fallon): To recommend favorable action on Article 22. (Motion passed unanimously)

Chair Slap concluded the discussion by noting the League of Women Voters was holding a Warrant Briefing tomorrow night. As per Rickter's recommendation, feedback on the WC Report would be invited at the briefing.

III-School Department Q3 Financials

Crowley provided an update:

- Big picture, projected \$126k surplus as of Q3.
- Surplus in salaries due to leaves of absence and turnover; made up in part by substituted-spending on substitutes.
- Surplus for fringe benefits due to lower than expected uptake of retiree health insurance plans.
- SPED was higher for salaries and expenses but lower for transportation.
- There was a discussion about the balances in some of the revolving funds. Weis pointed out that certain accounts, e.g. BHS club activities, showed large expenditures relative to the amount received to-date – was this a timing or collections issue? Crowley would follow up with details for the June 12 meeting.

IV-Updates BOS and liaisons

Caputo updated from the Select Board:

- The Board recently passed a policy covering the placement of 5G poles in advance of a pole petition held on May 14. At the pole petition, a representative from Extenet had agreed to pause the time clock on their application to work towards sorting out issues raised by the Board and the community.
- Public forum for the ice rink to be held on May 30, joint with the School Committee, to receive input on whether to move forward with a process to seek out a public-private partnership for a new rink. If the process was to move forward, the goal was to have a proposal ready for Fall Town Meeting.

Crowley updated from the School Committee:

- Recent discussion about a potential new senior capstone process that would allow

students more flexibility with respect to the English requirement.

- A report from the Grade Reconfiguration Working Group put the likely configuration as Grades 4-6 at the Chenery, with Grades 7-12 at the new school.

Fallon updated from the Library Building Committee that a successful public forum had been held recently, with ~80 people in attendance, to get input on the new building design. Also, a report to Fall Town Meeting was forthcoming which would include schematic design and cost estimates.

V-Adjournment

Motion (Member McLaughlin): To adjourn at 9:12pm. Motion passed.

Submitted by
Christopher S. Henry