

**BELMONT WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**JANUARY 15, 2020, 7:30PM**  
**CHENERY MIDDLE SCHOOL, LARGE COMMUNITY ROOM**

Present: Chair Slap, Members Alcock, Doyle, Gonzalez, Halston, Helgen, Lubien, Read, Rickter, Schreiber and Weis.  
School Committee Liaison Crowley.  
Select Board Chair Caputo. Town Administrator (TA) Garvin. Assistant Town Administrator (ATA) Marshall

Members Absent: Cragg, Dionne, Fallon, McLaughlin

The meeting was called to order at 7:33pm by Chair Slap.

**I-Approve minutes**

- December 11, 2019:  
*Motion: To approve the December 11, 2019 minutes. Motion passed by acclamation.*

**II-Q1 School Report**

Crowley gave an overview of the Q1 report, noting that the Q2 numbers would also be available soon:

- Savings in the teacher/support staff salaries line item due to turnover, unpaid leave of absences.
- Still early, however the SPED transportation line item currently overspent by \$70k (projected out for the year).
- Overall, projected \$81k to the positive, with expenses generally in line with what was budgeted.
- Revolving fund balances are positive, but this is likely a timing issues as fees are paid at the start of the school year.
- Lower amount of Circuit Breaker grant funding this year compared with 2019, resulting from lower out-of-district tuitions last year. Recommendation from the State is to maintain one year's worth of Circuit Breaker funds in reserve for unanticipated expenses. For FY21, the School planned to use up to \$1.7m in Circuit Breaker reserve funds to contribute to the budget deficit.

With respect to enrolment numbers as of October 1, the increase of ~60 students was closely in line with projections from consultant McKibben – several class sizes at the Middle and High Schools were above the School Committee's recommended limit.

### III-Review Town Administrator's office capital plan

ATA Marshall had taken the lead in preparing the capital plan this year via meetings with department heads and in collaboration with TA Garvin and Budget Director Castro. The plan represented the views of the Town Administrator's office regarding how to allocate discretionary capital spending for FY21; the plan has been submitted to the Capital Budget Committee for its consideration as it prepares the annual Capital Budget.

New features of this year's plan included a projected summary of capital needs out to FY26 (where possible), as well as an assessment of the urgency of each need by department heads.

Marshall highlighted a particular recommendation for partial funding of replacement of the fuel tanks at DPW – this request had been deferred in previous years and the tanks could no longer be insured going forward. Replacement was a two-stage process and the hope was to find the remainder of the funding to complete the project in FY22.

The WC raised several questions/comments concerning the plan:

- Helgen asked about long term capital needs for the Library, and how those would dovetail with a possible reconstruction. The current recommendation was to push off requests as far as possible, unless they were safety critical. TA Garvin noted that if a debt exclusion for the Library were to fail there would be significant capital needs to address at that point.
- With respect to Facilities, Marshall noted that the requests trailed off after FY23. Facilities Director Dorrance was currently undertaking work to assess the needs of all Town and School buildings, and did not feel prepared at this stage to project out to FY26.
- Schreiber asked about capital vs maintenance, i.e. at what point does an item become a capital request, for example painting at the Wellington. This largely depended on the amount and expected useful life of the proposed item.
- Doyle requested a tab for other sources of capital funding such as CPC money, Capital Endowment Fund, etc. It was noted that the recently established Long Term Capital Planning Committee would be taking a more holistic view of capital needs and funding sources.
- Schreiber asked why there were no IT requests for capital. Typically these are funded in the operating budget; IT was one of the few departments that had not deferred capital in the operating budget for FY21, due to the critical need to maintain security of the infrastructure.

### IV-Updates on Financial Task Force II, Rink RFP and McLean project

Rink RFP:

- Caputo provided background context on the efforts to undertake a public-private partnership to build a new ice rink.
- On January 7, the School Committee and Select Board had voted to finalize the RFP, which formally went out for bid today. If a successful bid were to be received,

Town Meeting would be required to vote on two issues at upcoming Annual Town Meeting for the project to move forward: 1) to lease the land to a private developer for purposes of building a rink; 2) to amend zoning to allow a public-private partnership as municipal recreational use.

#### Financial Task Force II:

- The Task Force was now meeting on a regular biweekly schedule, calendar out to the summer.
- The next major milestone was finalizing a 5 year model to help inform the amount of the override request. Meeting with department heads currently ongoing to assess requirements for providing level services over the next 5 years, in addition to prioritizing additional asks. Plan is to put the 5 year model in front of the WC in late February/early March to get input.
- Recently, many questions/concerns have been raised by residents over their tax bills – it was felt that more education on the assessment process is needed. The Board of Assessors have been invited to attend an upcoming Select Board Meeting.

#### McLean project:

- First public hearing of the Planning Board on the proposal by Northland Residential for development of Zone 3 will be held January 21.
- TA Garvin was engaging McKibben Demographics (who had conducted the School enrolment projections) to conduct an assessment of the impact of the potential development on Town services. The report would be finished by end of March, meaning that a vote on the McLean project would be slated for Annual Town Meeting (not a special Town Meeting in March as had been previously raised).

#### V-WC Spring calendar

Chair Slap circulated a draft calendar. General plan was to meet biweekly, allowing off weeks for subcommittee work. Due to the early budget process this year, there would hopefully be time for discussion of subcommittee work related to the WC Report at full WC meetings. Going forward, add to the calendar milestones for the Financial Task Force II, McLean, and Rink, as needed.

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

The Select Board had recently approved a traffic calming policy, formalizing a mechanism for residents to seek implementation of traffic calming measures.

From the School Committee, budget work was underway but nothing has been presented as of yet.

From the Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee: 1) steel (Canadian!) going up on site this week; 2) bids were due back on February 9, at which point it would

become more clear where the project is with respect to the budget.

## **VII-Adjournment**

*Motion: To adjourn at 8:52pm. Motion passed.*

Submitted by  
Christopher S. Henry