

**Warrant Committee**  
**January 20, 2021 7:30pm**  
**Remote Meeting via Zoom**

**RECEIVED**  
**TOWN CLERK**  
**BELMONT, MA**

DATE: April 13, 2021  
TIME: 9:24 AM

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Members in Attendance**

**Warrant Committee:** Laurie Slap, Paul Rickter, Mike Crowley, Ellen Schreiber, Elizabeth Dionne, John Alcock, Christine Doyle, Jennifer Fallon, Elizabeth Goss, Andrew Levin, Daniel Halston, Anne Helgen, Geoffrey Lubien, Robert McLaughlin, Lynn Read, Jack Weis, Roy Epstein, Michael Crowley

**Others in Attendance:** Jon Marshall

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm.

### **I. Approve minutes.**

There were no meeting minutes to discuss.

### **II. Update on FTF2 recommendations and next steps.**

The Financial Task Force II Recommendations presentation was shared with the Committee. The presentation included the following information:

- It is assumed that town revenue in the form of state aid will remain level funded from FY21. State aid is expected to increase by 2% in FY23 and FY24.
- Additional funds are anticipated for Chapter 70 because of kindergarten enrollment.
- The town expects to utilize the \$2 million free cash baseline annually.
- Town staffing will be rolled over while the School Department is asking for additional positions.
- An additional \$500,000 in additional discretionary capital spending annually is expected.

The FTF2 is recommending a \$6.4 million override. The Select Board is expected to vote formally on that matter in the near future. FTF2 will continue to scrub the model to increase its accuracy. An agreement has been made between the Financial Task Force II and School Committee to calibrate the financial model. The school expects an increase of 4% in spending for rolled over salaries and additional costs for SPED components.

These recommendations are based on current circumstances while acknowledging that the town faces financial uncertainty, ex. unanticipated expenses or revenue shortfalls. The current financial model assumes that the town will be able to replenish its free cash but this is not

guaranteed. The recommendations provided by FTF2 are based on a best estimate of what may happen through FY24. There are too many unknowns to predict what may happen come 2025.

### **III. Update on COVID reimbursements - Jon Marshall**

The town was given a cap of \$2.3 million in CARES Act reimbursements over two rounds of funding requests. The town was granted one reimbursement of \$878,000 at the end of FY20 and another reimbursement in November for \$1.1 million. The town is expecting additional funding from FEMA. FEMA will reimburse up to 75% of request costs. The remaining 25% will be requested from CARES Act funds. A total of three requests have been submitted to date (2 for CARES Act funding, 1 for FEMA). The request for FEMA totals \$550,000 and is currently under review. The reimbursement process for FEMA is more challenging than the CARES Act reimbursement process.

The school department requested money during both rounds of CARES Act funding requests.

The money received from reimbursement requests during the first round in FY20 was put aside in a special revenue account due to timing issues as the town entered a new fiscal year. Funds received in November can be moved to free cash or be utilized.

There may be additional funds available if new federal or state legislation is passed.

### **IV. Update on Third Warrant Committee Budget Forum.**

Ms. Slap briefly reviewed a draft presentation for a third Warrant Committee Budget Forum.

### **V. Reports from Select Board, Town Administrator, School Committee, and liaisons.**

The Select Board will be meeting on Friday to interview finalists for the Fire Chief position.

- After a national search, a contracted recruiter received 21 applications for the position. Applicants completed testing at an assessment center and were ranked. Three finalists were selected for interview by a town screening committee, two are external candidates and one is internal. The State Fire Union sent a letter to union members discouraging applicants because of their disapproval for external candidates to be considered for the position. The letter had a direct impact by causing several applications to be withdrawn. All three finalists are well qualified for the position.

The School Committee reported that DESE has issued new guidelines regarding instructional time which Belmont had to make adjustments for. The state has offered to pay for six weeks of paid surveillance testing for COVID which the town will be applying for. A committee has been formed to prepare for the transition to in-person learning.

The BMHS Building Committee reported that progress on the Middle and High School is on time and in budget. About 43% of the project has been completed. They hope to be  $\frac{2}{3}$  completed with the project by the fall.

The next Warrant Committee meeting will be on February 3, 2021.

## **VI. Adjournment.**

*Motion: to adjourn the meeting (Motion passed unanimously, roll-call vote: Alcock, Dionne, Doyle, Fallon, Goss, Halston, Helgen, Levin, Lubien, McLaughlin, Read, Rickter, Schreiber, Slap, Weis, voted yes.)*

**Submitted by**  
**Katie Luczai**

## **Documents Used:**

1. Financial Task Force Model and Recommendation Update, dated 1/15/21
2. "A warrant committee forum: a fork in the road: making decisions on belmont's financial future", dated 1/25/21 (draft)
3. CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund - Municipal Program Round 2 Application Form