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BELMONT, MA

DATE: May 12, 2022
TIME: 8:56 AM

Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
Warrant Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 23, 2022
7:30pm



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

Call to Order: Ms. Dionne called the meeting to order at 7:31pm.

Member	Present	Member	Present
Geoffrey Lubien, Chair	Yes	Andrew Levin	Yes
Christine Doyle, Vice Chair	Absent	Robert McLaughlin	Yes
Elizabeth Dionne, Secretary	Yes	Lynn Peterson Read	Yes
Tom Caputo	Yes	Paul Rickter	Yes
Jennifer Fallon	Yes	Ellen Schreiber	Absent
Elizabeth Goss	Yes	Laurie Slap –	Yes
Daniel Halston	Yes	Jack Weis	Yes
Anne Helgen	Yes	Adam Dash, Ex-officio Designee - Select Board	Yes
Staff		Jamal Saeh, Ex-officio, School Com. Chair Appointee	Absent
Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator	Yes		

1. **Discuss and vote on Community Preservation Act funding applications previously presented at March 16 meeting of the Warrant Committee.**

Predevelopment Funding for Redevelopment of Sherman Gardens: Ms. Dionne reviewed the \$400,000 request.

Mr. Weis said he was not reassured by the lack of guarantee that the project would receive funding from the State, although he is in favor of the project. Mr. Lubien said his understanding is that it's a matter of when, not if, the additional funding would be available although it is not guaranteed.

Mr. Rickter pointed out that since project serves seniors, and the existing facility is being non-accessible might make it a higher priority that other projects competing for the funding.

Ms. Dionne said she is reassured and supportive of the project because Cambridge Housing has been pulled into the project.

Mr. Caputo asked if there would be any impact on the Town's Subsidized Housing Index (SHI). Ms. Dionne said her understanding is that since the number of units is being increased it should get the Town closer to the 10% threshold. She also pointed out that CPA funds are available for this project only because units are being added.

Mr. Weis asked if the CPA money would have to be returned if the project doesn't happen or if it's not possible to add additional units. Ms. Dionne said her understanding is that as long as it's an acceptable use at the time of the grant (and design funds are an acceptable use) the money does not need to be repaid.

Mr. Rickter asked if housing being lost because it is no longer habitable is permissible. Ms. Dionne said she needed to confirm, but she thought that if CPA funds were used to acquire the affordable housing then CPA can be used to preserve it. There was a discussion of this issue.

Motion: Mr. Weis moved to approve the Predevelopment Funding for Redevelopment of Sherman Gardens conditioned upon/subject to confirmation from Town Counsel that the project is eligible for CPA funds. Mr. McLaughlin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Town Field Phase II: Construction (supplemental funding): Mr. Lubien reviewed the request.

Motion: Mr. McLaughlin moved to approve the Town Field Phase II: Construction (supplemental funding). Ms. Fallon seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Payson Park Phase II: Construction: Ms. Dionne reviewed the request.

Motion: Mr. Weis moved to approve the Payson Park Phase II: Construction project. Mr. McLaughlin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Grove Street Baseball and Basketball Reconstruction Phase I: Study and Design: Ms. Dionne reviewed the \$40,000 request.

Motion: Mr. McLaughlin moved to approve the Grove Street Baseball and Basketball Reconstruction Phase I: Study and Design. Mr. Levin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Community Path Phase 2: Preliminary Design Funds: Ms. Dionne reviewed the \$200,000 request.

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved to approve the Community Path Phase 2: Preliminary Design Funds. Mr. McLaughlin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Belmont Cemetery Preservation Master Plan: Ms. Dionne reviewed the \$60,000 request.

Motion: Mr. Levin moved to approve the Belmont Cemetery Preservation Master Plan. Mr. McLaughlin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Benton Library: Reconstruction of Chimney and Roof: Ms. Dionne explained the situation with the request and recommended that this be approved with the understanding that there could be a reduction because of insurance payments.

Motion: Ms. Helgen moved to approve the Benton Library: Reconstruction of Chimney and Roof. Mr. Rickter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Belmont Library: Envelope Conditions Study: Ms. Dionne explained that this may not go to Town Meeting if the project is rolled into the Historic Assets Study.

Motion: Ms. Helgen moved to approve the Belmont Library: Envelope Conditions Study. Mr. McLaughlin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

Restoration of Belmont's Historic Clock: Mr. McLaughlin said that if there is a lawsuit, the entity that would be sued is the Town not the church. He also said he does not like spending CPA money on non-municipal buildings.

Ms. Dionne said she asked Town Counsel if there would be fines or penalties that the Town would have to pay if this was challenged. She also thinks the likelihood of this being challenged is slim because many other projects like this have used CPA funds. If the church is sued and lost, they would have to repay the Town the money. There was a discussion of this issue, including the cost to defend a lawsuit.

Motion: Ms. Fallon moved to approve the Restoration of Belmont's Historic Clock. Mr. Levin seconded, and the motion passed by roll call vote with Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Weis, Ms. Read, and Mr. Caputo abstaining.

2. Other Business

a. Administrative Matters:

- a. Mr. Lubien notified the meeting that there would be a joint meeting of the committees on April 11, 2022 at 7:00pm during the Select Board meeting.

b. Other Topics Unanticipated by the Chair: none.

c. Updates, if any, on FY2023 Budget Matters:

- a. Mr. Weis reported that the Education Subcommittee had met with the Finance Subcommittee. The Education Subcommittee will be meeting to review the budget details. He said the School Department has produced a second draft of the budget reducing the general fund portion by \$2 million because of the concerns of the Warrant Committee. Ms. Helgen pointed out that the budget stays the same, but funding will come from other places.

Ms. Dionne asked if the increase of FTE's has been addressed. Ms. Helgen said this is still being discussed in the Subcommittee.
- b. Mr. Halston reported that the Public Safety Subcommittee met with the Fire and Police Chiefs to consider the initial thoughts there are to emphasize in the Warrant Committee report.
- c. Ms. Dionne reported that the General Government Subcommittee has met with department heads and said the Town side is so lean that it's almost understaffed, especially in IT. Mr. Rickter added that the only significant Town increase is funding for security software for IT.
- d. Mr. McLaughlin reported that the Human Services Subcommittee met with both the Library and the Council on Aging and will meet with the Health Department next week. He said the CoA had gotten a Social Worker through ARPA funds and this needs to be explained when comparing budgets. There was a discussion of how to present ARPA funds.
- e. Mr. Lubien said that his understanding is that the Pension/OPEB/Debt Subcommittee has been getting the data they need, and members are attending Retirement Board meetings.
- f. Ms. Goss reported that the Public Services Subcommittee is working on scheduling meetings.
- g. Ms. Helgen said that the Structural Change Impact Group will have recommendations for different departments, and she will try to ensure that subcommittees get the appropriate reports.
- h. Ms. Fallon provided an update on the Capital Budget Committee, reporting that they are doing very well because there is about \$500,000 in turn backs and possible access to \$1 million from the sale of the Cushing Square Parking lot. They are in discussions on how to allocate these funds.

Mr. Weis asked if a second draft of the budget would be distributed, and suggested the joint meeting that Mr. Lubien discussed earlier should come after a second draft is available. Mr. Lubien said they want to have draft 2 before that meeting. Ms. Garvin explained the situation with insurance costs, and also reviewed the situation with State Aid and possible additional funding for Chapter 90. There was a discussion of these issues.

Ms. Slap asked for the status of the Chenery Roof Project. Ms. Fallon said it is still on the table, but Facilities said the roof will make it through a few more years with just patching so the replacement project will be delayed.

Ms. Dionne asked about the status of the fuel tanks and possibly using commercial gas stations. Ms. Garvin said there is a final forum for the fuel tanks on April 26, 2022. There was a 3-month pilot with off-site fueling and Glenn Clancy from the Office of Community Development will report the findings of the pilot at that meeting. Mr. Dash added that the Warrant has an article for the fuel pumps. Ms. Fallon confirmed that the money previously earmarked for this project is still available.

- d. Updates, if any, from subcommittees, working groups, and/or committee liaisons, including Town Administrator, Select Board, School Committee, Capital Budget Committee, Community Preservation Committee.
 - a. Select Board: Mr. Dash reported that they met for the last time as the Municipal Light Board, and then gave a summary of the Select Board's activities and decisions. He noted that Mark Paolillo will take over as the Select Board Designee effective at the next Warrant meeting. He also reported that all meetings will be remote until Belmont Media can handle hybrid meetings, which was discussed.

- b. Town Administrator: Ms. Garvin the Warrant is coming together currently has 22 Articles. She also pointed out that Town Meeting will start at 6:30, which was discussed.
- c. High School: Mr. McLaughlin said there is a \$4.25 million Covid-related expense that can be documented. He also discussed funding for PV (*solar panels*).

Mr. Weis expressed concern about using ARPA funds as a reserve for the 2024 Operating Budget when the High School project has a documented Covid-related overrun. He said he feels the money should be used on the High School rather than for the Operating Budget. There was a discussion of this issue, and the failed Override vote.

- d. Preliminary Rink Design Committee: Mr. Caputo reviewed the goals of the committee and reported that they have select CHA as their OPM, and Ted Galante's firm as the architect.
- e. Library Building Committee: Ms. Fallon said they are working to get an updated estimate for the project because of inflation.

3. Minutes Approval

February 9, 2022 Changes: Mr. Caputo said Line 19 references "SEIG", and he thinks this should be SCIG (Structural Change Impact Group).

Motion: Mr. McLaughlin moved to approve the minutes of the February 9, 2022 meeting of the Warrant Committee as amended. Ms. Helgen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

February 23, 2022 Changes: There were no changes voiced.

Motion: Ms. Slap moved to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2022 meeting of the Warrant Committee. Mr. McLaughlin seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote with Mr. Dash, Mr. Caputo, and Ms. Goss abstaining.

March 16, 2022 Changes: Mr. Weis pointed out that line 115 it should be "Mr. Saeh", and on 112 it should be "worse than now" not "worse that now". Also, his name is misspelled in several places. Mr. Rickter pointed out that he is shown as absent, but he did attend that meeting. Ms. Read said the dollar amount for Snow & Ice is missing a 0 and should be \$212,000.

Motion: Mr. Levin moved to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2022 meeting of the Warrant Committee as amended. Mr. Rickter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote with Mr. McLaughlin, Mr. Caputo and Ms. Helgen abstaining.

4. **Public Comment**: There was no public comment.

5. Adjournment

Motion: Mr. McLaughlin moved the adjourn the meeting of the Warrant Committee. Ms. Helgen seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:56pm.

Next Meeting: April 6, 2022 at 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary