

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: February 14, 2022
TIME: 9:36 AM

**Minutes of the
Town of Belmont
Warrant Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 17, 2021
7:30pm**



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

Call to Order: Mr. Lubien called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Member	Present	Member	Present
Geoffrey Lubien, Chair	Yes	Andrew Levin	Yes
Christine Doyle, Vice Chair	Yes	Robert McLaughlin	No
Elizabeth Dionne, Secretary	Yes	Lynn Read	Yes
Tom Caputo	Yes	Paul Rickter	Yes
Jennifer Fallon	Yes	Ellen Schreiber	Yes
Elizabeth Goss	Yes	Laurie Slap	Yes
Daniel Halston	Yes	Jack Weis	Yes
Anne Helgen	No	Adam Dash, Ex-officio - Select Board	Yes
Staff		Jamal Saeh, Ex-officio, School Com. Chair Appointee	No

Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator

1. Review schedule of Town department budget meetings beginning November 22.

Mr. Lubien said that the Town department budget meeting schedule was circulated. These are kick-off meetings not the full, in-depth meetings that are done in February. The chair of any interested sub-committee or their rep could attend.

Mr. Lubien reported that the Public Services Subcommittee met. Ms. Goss is the chair, and the committee is up and running.

2. Report from Chris Doyle, Chair of Long-Term Capital Planning Committee, on proposed by-law change for the Capital Budget Committee.

Ms. Doyle explained the history and purpose of this committee. She then reviewed the draft proposal to change the Town bylaw and the rationale for the suggestions. They have shown the draft to the Capital Planning Committee, the Select Board, and the School Committee and would now like Warrant's input. The draft proposal is:

1. Amend Town Bylaws to replace the Capital Budget Committee with a "Comprehensive Capital Committee".
2. Expand Committee's composition in numbers and scope.
3. Expand Committee's mandate to include a 30-year horizon.
4. Require vote on the Warrant of Town Meeting of the Capital Improvement Plan.

Why make these changes?

1. Provide longer visibility on capital needs and funding requirements for the Town.
2. Expand public participation in capital planning and approval processes.

Ms. Doyle reviewed the current Capital Budget Committee responsibilities versus the proposed Comprehensive Capital Committee one:

Capital Budget Committee:

- Prepares Capital Budget Report annually.
- Capital Budget Report to include next 6 years of needed improvements.
- Present Capital Discretionary Spending Recommendations to Town Meeting.

Proposed Capital Committee:

- Prepare Long-Term Capital Improvement Plan Annually.
- Five fiscal years including recommended funding appropriations.
- 30-year analysis and recommendations of needs.
- Long-term Capital Improvement Plan will be included in the Warrant for approval at Town Meeting.

Proposed Composition of the Committees.

Capital Budget Committee, currently 7 members:

- SB Chair or designee
- WC Chair or designee
- SC Chair or designee
- Four voters of the Town appointed by Moderator

Proposed Capital Committee, 9-10 members:

- SB Chair or designee
- WC Chair or designee
- EC Chair or designee
- SC Chair or designee
- Town Treasurer
- 4-5 voters of the Town appointed by the Moderator
- TA or designee, non-voting or ex-officio
- Superintendent or designee, non-voting or ex-officio.

Ms. Doyle shared some comments from other committees:

- School Committee questioned whether or not the Superintendent should be on the committee. Ms. Doyle said the Superintendent was included because of the large impact the schools have on the budget.
- The Select Board asked that the Treasurer be a voting member.
- Capital Budget provided much input. They said doing the annual needs report requires a lot of time and concentration and they didn't want this lost due to large, long-term plans.

Ms. Fallon said there was also concern that this committee will be year-round, and that the Town Administrator and Superintendent should be asked about their views as well.

Mr. Weis said language in Paragraph C says there will be Capital Improvement needs assessment over 30 years which will include equipment. He suggests that the 30 year horizon include buildings and major infrastructure, not things like Police car repairs or EMT radios. Ms. Fallon responded that there are certain types of equipment like HVAC and ladder trucks that could be included because they will require special planning, and there is a balance to be found. There was a discussion about this.

Mr. Lubien wondered if the Superintendent or designee would be too much of a time constraint and perhaps Facilities should be part of it. Ms. Fallon said they expect that the Director of Facilities would be the schools designee.

Mr. Caputo expressed concern about staff time needed to do this work and asked if the group would need funding for studies or staff. Ms. Fallon said funding would be needed not only for consultants but also staff time. Part of the work would be to look at staffing.

Ms. Garvin said there is grant money through Community Compact which can help start this. She said her designee would be the Assistant Town Administrator/Finance Director. She agreed that Facilities should have a seat at the table.

Ms. Fallon said a question came up about whether it was sensible having the long-term capital plan voted on annually at Town Meeting. Should the appropriations be voted on (and a report made to Town Meeting) or should the plan itself be voted on every year. She thinks once the plan is established it will probably not change drastically each year.

Mr. Halston supported having a facilities designee participating.

Ms. Garvin said there are towns that have a capital plan that goes to Town Meeting. The most difficult year will be the first one and following years would be “tweaking”.

Mr. Weis said he thinks the long-term plan should be reported but not voted on. The binding action is the appropriation which should be voted on. Mr. Lubien supported this perspective, but felt that more discussions are needed.

Ms. Doyle said a revised draft will be prepared and then Committees/Boards will be asked for a vote on the proposal.

3. Reports (if any) from Select Board, Town Administrator, School Committee, and liaisons.

Select Board (Mr. Dash):

- The Transgender Memorial is up and there will be a vigil that night.
- There will be Select Board department meetings on December 13 & 16.
- A redrawing of Precincts 1, 3, 6 & 8 was done, so every Town Member must run again.
- The new light board needs people to run for it.
- GIC – Belmont will not join until their process is completed (2022).
- Cardboard event coming December 18th. \$5 per carload of cardboard at the DPW yard.
- Structural Change Impact Group: will be reporting in December.
- A movie is being filmed on December 6th which will cause street closures and use of the Chaffin lot.

Mr. Weis asked why the cardboard collection is being done before Christmas rather than after. Mr. Dash responded that last year there was a very large turnout on this weekend, and because of the pandemic people are ordering more online and are doing it earlier. Ms. Garvin added that the reimbursement the Town receives for cardboard is very good right now and they want to take advantage of this.

Town Administrator (Ms. Garvin):

- The Youth Coordinator/Commission has moved from the Board of Health to the Recreation Department. There will be a corresponding budget change too.
- Recreation will be taking over Adult Education.
- ARPA has gotten more complicated. She is trying to determine revenue loss calculations. How much to use in the Operating Budget cannot be determined because of this. Some of it must be devoted to the structural deficit in FY23 and possibly FY24. Before any money is spent, she wants to make sure the revenue calculation is finalized.

Mr. Weis said someone told him their understanding was that 70% of the Fire Department overtime had been spent by the end of Q1. He wondered if Ms. Garvin had input on this. She said at the end of Q1 68% of the Fire overtime budget had been expended, which creates a shortage when projected out. The problem is getting qualified candidates and when they can go to the Academy. She said there is a similar issue with the Police, but they are keeping an eye on it. There was a discussion of staffing and related funding.

High School / Middle School Building Committee (Ms. Schreiber):

- There will be a meeting on November 18th where west of Harris Field will be discussed. The rink will not be considered by this committee.

Ms. Doyle asked about the status of solar at the high school. Ms. Schreiber said this has always been planned for the end of the project because of the speed of technological change.

- Mr. Caputo said that the project continues to be on time and on budget, and there is \$7.1 million remaining in the contingency fund which is 28% of the hard and soft contingency. It turns out there is 28% of the project remaining so this fund is tracking with expenditures nicely.

Library Building Committee (Ms. Fallon): There is a lot of work going on to understand the costs of keeping the building open and/or what it would cost if it had to close before there was an alternative available.

4. Approve minutes (if any), including all outstanding subcommittee or working group minutes.

Mr. Lubien shared the list of outstanding minutes. He pointed out that each committee has to vote on joint meetings in which it participated. He will send these joint minutes out for review.

Motion: *Mr. Weis moved to approve the minutes of the Property Tax Working Group for February 26, 2020, March 4, 2020, and October 26, 2021. Ms. Dionne seconded, and the motion passed by rollcall vote.*

Motion: *Mr. Lubien moved to approve the minutes of the POD Subcommittee for April 26, 2021, and March 4, 2020. Ms. Dionne seconded, and the motion passed by rollcall vote with Mr. Levin abstaining.*

Motion: *Ms. Dionne moved to approve the minutes of the POD Subcommittee for October 30, 2019, as amended. Mr. Lubien seconded, and the motion passed by rollcall vote.*

5. Public Comment: There was no public comment.

6. Adjournment

Motion: *Ms. Fallon moved to adjourn the meeting of the Warrant Committee. Mr. Rickter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm.*

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan Peghiny
Recording Secretary