

**BELMONT WARRANT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
FINAL**

2017 OCT 26 PH 2:30

**OCTOBER 18, 2017, 7:30 P.M.
CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM**

Present: Chair Epstein; Members Alcock, Crowley, Dionne, Doyle (arrived 8:24 p.m.)
Fallon, Gammill, Lubien, McLaughlin, Schreiber, Slap, Weis, and School Committee
Chair Fiore

Interim Town Administrator Marshall

Members Absent: BOS Chair Williams, Helgen, Libenson, Lisanke

The meeting was called to order at 7:31 pm by Chair Epstein.

Chair Epstein began by reviewing the evening's agenda. He noted that the WC study groups had run into an issue concerning new Open Meeting Law (OML) guidelines, therefore no action will be taken (on establishing the working groups) tonight.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of 10/11/17 were approved (as amended) with two abstentions.

***Major Capital Projects Working Group (MCPWG) and Library Trustees
re: Library Proposals for November Special Town Meeting (STM)***

Chair Epstein invited MCPWG Chair Mahoney to the WC table.

Chair Epstein noted that the MCPWG will report out to Town Meeting next month. While the report is not finished, he requested an update from MCPWG Chair Mahoney.

MCPWG Chair Mahoney provided some background information on the major projects in town: BHS, Library, DPW, Police Station. The DPW and Police were studied with regard to scope and cost of what was needed. The BHS application was accepted by the state, which meant that it was going forward. The MCPWG was formed to deal with the three remaining projects: Library, DPW, Police Station. The Library recently completed a feasibility study and are now enthusiastic to move forward. Meanwhile, the MCPWG is engaged is assessing all three projects and, at the same time, the Library is asking for a Building Committee for fundraising purposes, which leaves the MCPWG focusing on the DPW and the Police. It is not yet known whether the short-term plan to remedy the Police Station will work.

Chair Epstein stated that the Library Building Committee will need to look at private fundraising as well as the timing for a debt exclusion. The timing of the BHS debt

exclusion will need to be considered as well. The hope is that the short-term plans for the DPW and Police will allow the permanent solutions for these buildings to be pushed off for 10 years or so. If the short-term plan to remedy the Police station does not prove feasible, a long-term solution may need to be accelerated. This could escalate the Police project, perhaps even placing it ahead of the Library.

The WC asked questions and discussed the issues relating mainly to the Library. Member Fallon provided some information on the Library project. She noted that the cost of the project rises by a million dollars in inflationary costs for every year that the project is pushed off. MCPWG Chair Mahoney noted that inflation in construction costs is an issue for all of the projects under consideration. Member Schreiber added that she will be a part of the fundraising team for the Library. She said she does not have a specific goal number (for fundraising), however, the amount privately raised is finite, and the costs will escalate. She agreed with Member Fallon that potential donors want to see a plan, before committing to a contribution.

Ms. Kathy Keohane, Library Trustee, approached the WC table. Ms. Keohane stated that, unlike the DPW/Police, the Library does not have viable short-term solutions. She circulated a report from the structural engineer and noted that more information is on the Library web site. The impetus for the Building Committee request is that one is needed to create a schematic design (a detailed design of the building). She said \$300,000 is being requested in the STM Article, to be shared (50/50 split) by the town and the Library Foundation.

Ms. Keohane noted that the Building Committee and schematic design allow for a plan for a path forward for the Library. She detailed some of the building's issues, e.g., heating, walls not rated (under current code) for the load placed on them, asbestos floor tiles, weak roof.

Member McLaughlin noted that, once a building committee is formed it becomes an autonomous entity who answers only to Town Meeting. He expressed concern that this project will compete with the BHS (with regard to debt exclusion timing).

Member Fallon stated that a schematic design cannot be created *without* a building committee. The formation of the building committee will be the first time the town becomes involved in the project. This will show that the town is committed to building a new library. Member Schreiber noted that it will take time to fundraise (it won't happen in 9 months). She added that the Board of Selectmen will need to put the Library on the ballot. The potential make-up of a Library Building Committee was discussed.

The potential timing of the Library debt exclusion and the formulation (and membership) of the building committee were discussed. It was noted that the Moderator has discretion in appointing the Library Building Committee. Ms. Keohane stated that a balanced building committee is desired by the Trustees. She noted that all donations will go through the Library Foundation which has been active and is 501(c)(3). Ms. Marshall explained Article 5, which concerns the funding request for the building committee

(\$300K).

Initial Discussion of STM Articles

Chair Epstein noted that Ms. Marshall will provide an overview of the Articles. She began with Article 2.

Article 2 – Revolving Funds

This is a housekeeping article, which will amend the bylaw so that the revolving funds are all listed together. The funds will be appropriated annually.

Article 3 – Modular Classrooms at the Burbank

Chair Epstein noted that the Modular units will be discussed in detail at next week's WC meeting. He noted that the Kendall fund will likely fund the DPW and Police schematic designs. There will be another funding source for Modular units (also explored next week). Ms. Marshall noted that funding the Modular units will likely involve bonding.

Article 4 – Schematic Design and Building Committee Formation for Short-term Solutions for the DPW and Police Station

Ms. Marshall explained the article, which involves funding schematic designs for short-term solutions for these buildings at their current locations.

Article 5 – Schematic Design and Library Building Committee Formation

Ms. Marshall noted that this Article was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Article 6 – Citizen's Petition Regarding Planning Board Appointments

Ms. Marshall explained that this article would amend the bylaw to make the Planning Board an elected board, not one that is appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Chair Epstein stated that the WC will not opine on this article. He encouraged WC members to explore this issue as Town Meeting members. This article's financial impact is unclear, but it does raise a lot of practical questions concerning the organization of the Planning Board. The wording of this article will be reviewed by the Bylaw Review Committee and a revision is likely. Town Counsel also is reviewing the wording with a concern that the article may not be enforceable as drafted.

Other (Kendall Fund)

Chair Epstein informed the WC that the Town Treasurer weighed in on the notion of reimbursing the Kendall Fund for the schematic designs for the DPW/Police projects. It was not looked on favorably as the Kendall Fund was earmarked for the purpose of funding schematic designs. Additionally, there is not a clear way to reimburse the

money. Member Doyle noted that these are small amounts of money. She discussed her reasoning – that in the current interest-rate environment it could be financially advantageous to borrow now (e.g., to repay the Kendall Fund), as the town will likely face even higher interest rates for capital projects down the road. However, she said that it would make the most sense to do this for projects involving larger sums of money. The WC explored the topic of reimbursing the Kendall Fund.

Updates: Board of Selectmen, School Committee, and Minuteman

Board of Selectmen: No report.

School Committee: SC Chair Fiore reported that the SC is fully ensconced in “business as usual” e.g., contract negotiations, modular units, curriculum, etc. She reported that the enrollment increase – as of October 1 – is 123 students for this year. Total enrollment for the district is 4,531 students (not including the Pre-K program).

Minuteman: Member Gammill reported on Minuteman’s enrollment, which is unofficially up 15 students for the freshman class (the numbers are not yet certified).

Adjournment

Member McLaughlin moved to end the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Submitted by Lisa Gibalerio
WC Recording Secretary