

**BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
CHENERY COMMUNITY ROOM  
SEPTEMBER 24, 2019**

Present: Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Chair  
Ms. Kate Bowen  
Ms. Amy Checkoway  
Mr. Michael Crowley  
Ms. Tara Donner  
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent  
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent  
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

Also in attendance: Mr. Tom Caputo, Select Board Chair  
Mr. Adam Dash, Select Board Member  
Mr. Roy Epstein, Select Board Member

Absent: Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Secretary

**1. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

1.1 At 6:00 p.m. on a roll call vote, the School Committee entered Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with union personnel given that a discussion in Open Session may have a detrimental impact on the School Committee's bargaining position.

**2. OPENING BUSINESS**

2.1 Call to order

Susan Burgess-Cox called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

2.2 Pledge of Allegiance

Susan Burgess-Cox led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2.3 Citizen's Concerns

Mary Ann Scali expressed concern about tennis courts not being replaced at Belmont High School. She provided a brief history of the tennis program in Belmont and stated her hope that providing tennis courts for students and community members would be reconsidered.

Ann Paulsen voiced her concerns about lack of tennis courts and stated she hoped there could be a public discussion as to whether tennis is important to Belmont.

2.4 Adjustments to the Agenda

2.5 Chair's Report

In the interest of time the School Committee Chair did not provide a report.

#### 2.6 Student Representative Report

There was no student representative in attendance.

#### 2.7 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan stated he would include his report with the school opening update.

### 3. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

### 4. MAJOR BUSINESS

#### 4.1 School Committee/Board of Selectmen Report out on Rink – Exhibit A

The School Committee invited the following people to the table.

Tom Caputo, Select Board Chair

Adam Dash, Select Board member

Roy Epstein, Select Board member

Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator

Jeffrey Wheeler, Senior Planner

Tom Caputo called the Select Board meeting to order at 7:23 p.m.

The group discussed feedback from the community meeting that took place on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Everyone was in agreement that some positive suggestions were made regarding the timeline for the rink. These suggestions were taken into account along with suggestions related to energy, evaluation criteria, and specific terms of the lease. The timeline being presented has been revised to reflect the changes based on the suggestions made. The new timeline will give potential bidders more time to put forth a complete bid as well as more time for the bids to be reviewed. The Select Board proposed extending the timeline for the RFP and a Town Meeting vote sometime in February.

The School Committee and Select Board discussed whether the timing of their votes on the rink RFP. It was noted that it should be fine to vote separately unless major changes were requested as part of the School Committee's vote (since the Select Board will likely vote first)..

Susan Burgess-Cox thanked everyone for their work on the RFP and stated an early 2020 date for a Town Meeting vote would likely be the most beneficial. The School Committee then opened the discussion to members of the audience.

Community member Ann Paulsen expressed concern about the location of the rink causing more traffic on streets in the area.

The topic of tennis was brought up again and Superintendent Phelan responded to concerns stating he is hopeful one more court might be added at Winn Brook. He explained that there had been discussions on the layout of the high school site over the last three years. The decision regarding the layout of the fields was decided early on in the process and was evaluated and viewed by the public. The site did not include tennis because there was not enough space on the site for all sports.

Community member Mary Ann Scali expressed concern about all the cars that would be parked along Concord Avenue once the rink is opened especially if it will be used for outside groups if it is built as a public/private partnership.

Community member Fred Paulsen suggested writing the RFP to reflect just one sheet of ice for the rink. He also noted if the town owned and operated the rink, they would have complete control of the hours of operation.

The School Committee and Select Board had discussed the pros and cons of a single sheet of ice versus a sheet and a half during prior meetings. They questioned whether the community would vote for a debt exclusion to build a rink if there is no public/private partnership.

Community member Tim Flood questioned whether a back-up plan could be expanding the Recreation Department and bringing in funds from that department to help fund the rink.

#### 4.2 School Opening Update

Superintendent Phelan stated the district welcomed seventy new students this year and noted the substantial preparation that goes into acclimating a new student to a district. Belmont has averaged ninety new students over the last five years and continues to see a rise in enrollment.

The district welcomed twenty seven new educators and three new principals. The following FTEs were added: 1 EL Director, 1.4 FTEs of full time social workers (there is now a social worker/guidance counselor in each of the elementary schools), 1 half time foreign language educator at Chenery, and a half time Principal at Belmont High School.

Fire drills take place in each school during the first week of school and Superintendent Phelan then meets with Fire Chief David Frizzell to discuss how the drills went.

Superintendent Phelan thanked everyone who prepared the schools for the start of the year.

MCAS data came out this week and will be shared after members of the Leadership Council review the data. The district continues to make improvements.

Superintendent Phelan updated the committee on upcoming events such as the Apple Run which takes place on October 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. and Spelling Bee which takes place on November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 8:30 a.m. at Chenery. Both events raise funding for the district through the Foundation for Belmont Education (FBE). He also announced a presentation on vaping for middle and high school students and parents which is being organized by the Police Department, School Department and Health Department. The presentation will take place on November 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the Chenery Auditorium.

#### 4.3 Chenery Solar Update

Superintendent Phelan updated the School Committee on the plan to install solar panels on the Chenery Middle School. At a recent meeting, Belmont Light Supervisor Chris Roy agreed to oversee the bidding process for the solar arrays and will install them but has chosen not to own them. Superintendent Phelan explained the Facilities Department does not have the staffing to install the arrays so he is grateful to Belmont Light for taking on this work. The timeline for installation was discussed and it is expected that the installation will happen by the Fall of 2020 at the latest, barring any unexpected barriers. Superintendent Phelan will get in touch with Chris about next steps.

The School Committee discussed the discussion that the Building Committee is having regarding solar panels as part of the high school building project, given that the project is currently overbudget and this is a major cost. Members discussed the overall cost savings of having solar panels and the educational benefits to students. It was agreed that it will be important to keep track of what is cut from the high school project going forward.

#### 4.4 School Committee Goals Update – Exhibit B

At a retreat/working session over the summer, the School Committee developed their draft goals for 2019-20. The School Committee discussed possible changes to the wording of the draft 2019-20 goals which were included in their packet for this meeting. There was discussion on the possibility of fees and waivers having a timeline tied to the override. There was also discussion on the possibility of the school budget supporting fees as well as changing the wording regarding solar panels from “continuing” the work of installing solar panels to “finalizing” the work of installing solar panels.

#### 4.5 School Committee Approval of Community Path Liaison

Susan Burgess-Cox announced Kate Bowen has agreed to represent the School Committee as the Community Path liaison. A vote is not required for this although the School Committee members were in agreement with Kate Bowen’s appointment.

#### 4.6 School Committee Vote on Appointment of ITAC Representative

David Goldberg has been a voting member of the Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) for several years and has offered to remain on the Committee.

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Kate Bowen it was **VOTED 5-0-1** to re-appoint David Goldberg as Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) representative.

### 5. **SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES (as needed)**

#### 5.1 Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee discussed the issue of the rink at their most recent meeting.

#### 5.2 Policy and Procedure Subcommittee

There was no report from the Policy and Procedure Subcommittee.

#### 5.3 Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee

The Curriculum and Instruction Subcommittee will be scheduling a meeting in October.

#### 5.4 Capital Budget Committee

There was no report from the Capital Budget Committee.

#### 5.5 Warrant Committee

The Warrant Committee appointed a Minuteman working group with the goal of working with Jim Gammill's financial model. They will also look at Minuteman enrollment expectations and how non-membership changes costs at different levels of enrollment.

5.6 Belmont Middle and High School Building Committee

The School Committee spoke about their discussion at the September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting and the fact that they would like the BMHSBC to take steps to look onto safer (more natural) types of fill for the turf.

5.7 Community Path

Glenn Clancy is the point of contact for questions on the Community Path. The underpass could be started earlier than anticipated. Twenty five percent of the design will be submitted this year. There was discussion of where the underpass comes out and intersects.

5.8 Financial Task Force II

The Financial Task Force II discussed the need for long-range capital planning and what a committee focused on this should look like. There was discussion about getting information from the Capital Budget Committee and the prioritization of projects.

5.9 High School Traffic Working Group

The High School Traffic Working Group met October 4<sup>th</sup>. They will meet on October 17<sup>th</sup> for a public presentation to discuss improvements on Goden Street and Common Street.

**6. OTHER BUSINESS**

6.1 Consent Agenda

On a motion offered by Tara Donner and seconded by Michael Crowley it was **VOTED** to approve the donation of \$500 to the Burbank schools.

6.2 Personnel Items - None

6.3 Business Items - None

6.4 Approval of Minutes

September 9, 2019  
September 10, 2019

After some discussion regarding the content of the minutes, the School Committee agreed to table the minutes until a future meeting due to the late time.

**7. FUTURE BUSINESS**

October 1, 2019  
Finance Subcommittee Meeting  
SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

October 8, 2019  
Finance Subcommittee Meeting

SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

October 8, 2019

School Committee Executive Session

BOS Meeting Room – Town Hall

October 15, 2019

October 15, 2019

Reception for Professional Status Teachers

CMS Cafeteria – 6:15 p.m.

Recognition of Professional Status Teachers

CMS Community Room – 6:45 p.m.

School Committee Meeting

CMS Community Room – 7:00 p.m.

October 22, 2019

Finance Subcommittee Meeting

SAB Conference Room – 8:00 a.m.

**8. ENCLOSURES**  
Strategic Plan

**9. ADJOURN**

At 10:00 p.m. on a roll call vote, the School Committee entered Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining given that a discussion in Open Session may have a detrimental impact on the School Committee's bargaining position. The School Committee will not return to Open Session.

Respectfully Submitted by



Susan Burgess-Cox, Chair