

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
REMOTE MEETING
May 25, 2021

Present: Ms. Amy Checkoway, Chair
Ms. Meghan Moriarty, Secretary
Ms. Andrea Prestwich
Ms. Kate Bowen
Mr. Michael Crowley
Mr. Jamal Saeh
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent
Ms. Janice Darias, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Anthony DiCologero, Director of Finance, Business and Operations

1. OPENING BUSINESS

1.1 Call to Order

Committee Chair Amy Checkoway called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1.2 Citizen's Concerns

Elshad Kasumov – Commented on the changes and communication timing of the new outdoor masking guidance.

1.3 Adjustments to the Agenda

Agenda item 3.7 Verizon License Agreement will be moved after 3.4 Site Plan discussion.

1.4 Chair's Report-none

1.5 Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Phelan shared report on district student vaccinations. As of May 20, 52.58% grade 9 students, 63% of grade 10 students, 72.5% of grade 11 students and 80.5% of grade 12 students have received vaccines. 190 Chenery students are registered for the vaccine and 94 more High School students are also registered.

A staff recognition event occurred May 19 to thank Belmont Public Schools staff members with 10-25 years of service to the district. Belmont High School hosted a successful prom this past weekend along with a senior cruise.

It is the one-year anniversary of George Floyd's death, and over the past year the district has been working with diversity group Belmont Educators of Color and Allies (BECA) and strengthening relationships with different community groups.

Elementary students shared a typical recess moment with a caterpillar as a sign that learning is returning to in person.

The Fieldhouse was cleared out over weekend for storage. Slides of some artwork/artifacts from 1946/1947 were shared with community via Zoom.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

3. MAJOR BUSINESS

Begin joint session with Capital Budget Committee

3.1 Capital Budget Committee

Anne Marie Mahoney called the CBC to order at 6:47 pm.

Capital needs of the Town of Belmont far exceed available funding, with over \$4M in requests. The department was able to fund \$358,000 worth of projects, with the following facilities projects approved.

- \$200,000 worth of window replacement at Butler and
- \$118,000 Winn Brook/Butler boiler work.
- Exterior work at Wellington School under a multi-year program will begin with a \$40,000 expenditure.

School Department Capital requests totaling \$1.8 million were deferred. They include:

- Chenery Middle School flat roof replacement along with 20 rooftop HVAC units
- Alarm panels and systems replacement for elementary schools
- HVAC system repairs at Wellington School

The CBC recommended all Town groups (Select Board, Warrant Committee, School Committee, Town Administrators) begin discussing how to maintain Town buildings with limited resources. The group is looking into the possibility of using American Rescue Plan funds for some of these items.

Superintendent Phelan and School Committee members voiced their support for the Facilities Department as to the scope of work and their increasing personnel need.

Capital Budget Committee adjourned at 7:38 pm.

3.2 Town Meeting, Segment B, Articles 14 and 19

Town Meeting Article 19 Appropriation of Capital Expenditures was brought forth for a vote.

On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway and seconded by Mike Crowley, it was VOTED (5-1-0) on a roll call vote to move for favorable action on Town Meeting Article 19A.

Bowen- nay, Crowley- aye, Moriarty- aye, Prestwich- aye, Saeh- aye, Checkoway- aye.

Article 14, which covers reimbursement of Foster Care Transportation costs and entering into MOU with DESE.

On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway and seconded by Mike Crowley, it was VOTED unanimously (6-0-0) on a roll call vote to move for favorable action on Town Meeting Article 14.

3.3 Rink Location Option from Perkins & Will Presentation (Vote)

Chair Checkoway gave a brief overview of the ice rink project with the purpose of voting on the proposed rink location. The Rink Working Group was formed in 2019 to develop a *RFP* for a public-private partnership, which was not able to move forward given RFP conditions. On a request from the Town of Belmont, Perkins & Will conducted a site design study and presented three design schemes as a report to the Select Board and School Committee on May 12.

School Committee members discussed the schematic options with option 2 highlighted as the preferred design. Stephen Sefton, of Perkins & Will, was in attendance to answer questions. He explained placing the location of the rink closer to the street would have a larger negative impact on the neighborhood, and would not include parking closer to the street to also share with the library. Any building close to existing stadium would require a firewall between the two structures.

Chair Checkoway took questions and comments from community.

Sunyoung Hong – Asked if deciding the rink location was premature if tennis courts were to be placed as well.

Alex Corbett – Voiced support for school Committee to vote the rink site so the Town may begin the formal building process.

Amy Tannenbaum – A Goden Street resident, requested all Town departments take a broader, town-wide perspective to make cohesive decisions on the project.

Maria Olagunju – Asked if 100 parking spots were achieved in each design schemes and if on-street parking spots are being counted in the totals

Megan Murphy – Suggested the group refocus the conversation to the voting of the rink site so more funding is not lost.

Amy Kirsch – Support all sports and a placement that includes rink, tennis and baseball.

On a motion offered by Jamal Saeh and seconded by Andrea Prestwich, it was VOTED unanimously (6-0-0) on a roll call vote to support the preferred Scheme #2 in its placement and orientation of the rink, for planning purposes as developed and presented by Perkins and Will at the May 12 and tonight's meeting.

3.4 Reconsideration of Approved Site Plan West of Harris Field

The Original Belmont Middle and High School site plan was approved by the School Committee in 2018. In the fall of 2019, the School Department was asked to review the plan in hopes of adding tennis courts. After meeting with the various groups in town and consulting with the Town Assistant Manager, the School Department and School Committee decided to continue with the original plan in January 2020.

Bill Lovallo, Chair of Belmont Middle and High School Committee spoke regarding the building process since 2017, giving an overview of the previous public meetings. A synopsis of the parking situation was offered. Mr. Lovallo thanked the School Committee for voting to move ahead with the rink as that allows the Building Committee to move forward as well.

The School Committee discussed the approved site plan West of Harris Fields and the request to add tennis courts on campus.

Chair Checkoway took questions and comments from community.

Margaret (Peg) Callahan- Encouraged School Committee member to not remove the JV baseball diamond field, which is a shared space, and to respect the process going forward.

Marianne Scali – Supporter of tennis asked to bring Varsity tennis to the high school campus.

Sunyoung Hong- Tennis supporter asked to bring Varsity tennis to the high school campus.

Anne Paulsen – Tennis supporter asked School Committee to reconsider tennis on the campus.

Maria Olagunju- Commented that Winn Brook School is not a viable option for tennis courts for safety and aesthetic reasons.

Heather Rubeski – Tennis supporter commented that the additional Winn Brook School court is not a guarantee and must be approved by Town Meeting.

Katherine Stievater – Advocate of all sports and supporter of keeping tennis courts on high school campus does not understand why JV is prioritized over Varsity sports.

Jon Marshall, Assistant Town Administrator offered his thoughts on past meetings regarding the fields and tennis courts.

Chair Checkoway checked in with School Committee members regarding their position of reconsideration of the site configuration with member Crowley advocating for a new look and a potential working group to review addition of tennis courts. Member Moriarty inquired about using the courts at the Chenery School when the modular classrooms are no longer needed. Several Committee members stated restroom facilities and water needs at Winn Brook should be addressed.

The School Committee is not recommending changing course with the current site plans.

3.5 Verizon License Agreement for BMHS Communication Line (Vote)

BMHSBC Chair, Bill Livallo spoke on the need for a license agreement between the School Committee and Verizon to pull a communication line to the new building.

On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway and seconded by Mike Crowley, it was voted unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0-0) to enter into agreement with Verizon to pull the communication line for the new Middle and High School building.

3.6 Grade Eight (8) Accelerated Geometry Program

Assistant Superintendent Darias and Director of Mathematics Jonathan Golden presented the Challenger Geometry Program, which is a new middle school program for the 2021-2022 school year. The program will be offered to rising eighth graders, and current eighth graders who will take Algebra 1 or 2 and the accelerated geometry program simultaneously.

Over the summer, participating students will be assigned Khan Academy summer work through Google Classroom. An instructor will be assigned to review students' work before the fall start. Throughout the year, Edgenuity, an online honors level course-specific platform, will be used for the geometry course. Students will meet in person with an instructor once per week, after school. Students will take the Geometry final exam. Eighth graders will select Algebra 2 for their ninth-grade math course. Ninth graders will select PreCalculus for their tenth-grade math course.

Program costs of approximately \$13,000 will be absorbed by the district. Information sessions will be offered to students next week with a sign-up deadline of June 11. If there is enough interest, they may offer two sections. Looking long term, the district will address the issue of disproportionate underrepresentation of our Black and Brown students with programming by 2022.

3.7 Return to In Person Learning Working Group Update – moved to a future meeting

4. SUBCOMMITTEE/LIAISON UPDATES

Equity Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for May 27

Policy Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for June 10

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Consent Agenda

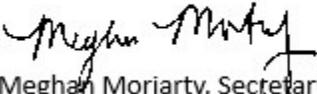
- Technology Surplus Equipment
- Textbooks/Supplies Surplus Items
- Library Surplus Items

On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway and seconded by Jamal Saeh, it was VOTED unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0-0) to approve the disposal of surplus textbooks, items and equipment.

6. ADJOURNED

On a motion offered by Amy Checkoway and seconded by Kate Bowen, it was VOTED unanimously on a roll call vote (6-0-0) to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:



Meghan Moriarty, Secretary