

BELMONT SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORKING SESSION MINUTES
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING CONFERENCE ROOM
SEPTEMBER 9, 2019

Present: Ms. Susan Burgess-Cox, Chair
Ms. Andrea Prestwich, Secretary
Ms. Kate Bowen (absent from 5:30 – 6:15 PM)
Ms. Amy Checkoway
Mr. Michael Crowley
Ms. Tara Donner
Mr. John Phelan, Superintendent

1. OPENING BUSINESS

1.1 Call to order

Susan Burgess-Cox called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. MAJOR BUSINESS

2.1 Update on Turf

Kate Bowen gave an update on work done by the SC and BMHSBC on the turf field proposed for the new middle-high school. The update included information about the current plan to install one synthetic turf field as well as the discussions that BMHSBC members are having about potential risks raised by community members regarding the installation of turf. Ms. Bowen provided copies of reports done by herself and Bob McLaughlin that were presented to the BMHSBC. The group had an extensive discussion regarding health, environmental and financial issues associated with the installation of natural grass and synthetic turf fields. During the discussion several members expressed concern about using crumb rubber infill and a preference for a material that has a less toxic profile (such as coconut or walnut shells) as well as organically managed grass.

2.2 Update on Minuteman

Mike Crowley gave an update on work done by the Minuteman working group over the summer. The new Minuteman building is open one year ahead of schedule and is currently being used. There has been a sharp increase in enrollment from both members and non-member town, including 19 new students from Belmont. There is currently a small wait list. If the enrollment continues at this level for the next 3 years, the school will be close to capacity.

One of the reasons Belmont voted to withdraw from the Minuteman district was the unequal distribution of construction costs between member and non-member districts. However, that has now changed and non-members pay a share of the construction costs proportional to the number of students they have enrolled at the school. Models of the new payment structure suggest that if Belmont has more than about 45 students at Minuteman, it is more cost effective to be a member than non-member. Belmont currently has about 44 students enrolled, and if current trends continue we will soon

exceed that threshold value. Mr. Crowley recommends that we reconsider withdrawing from Minuteman because (1) rescinding membership may no longer be cost effective (2) as non-members we do not have guaranteed places at Minuteman and (3) the Vocational Task Force found that Minuteman offers the best vocational education in the surrounding areas.

8. ADJOURN

At 6:50 p.m. on a motion offered by Susan Burgess-Cox and seconded by Andrea Prestwich, it was **VOTED** unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted by Andrea H Prestwich
Andrea Prestwich, Secretary