

MINUTES
Warrant Committee Meeting
March 22, 2021

Warrant Committee Members	Participating remotely: Sharon Tatro (Chair), Ed Vozzella, Robert Sliney, Jeremy Marsette, Kristine Barton, Newton Thompson and Amanda Hall (departed meeting at 8:30). Absent:	
Guests	Kristine Trierweiler, Town Administrator Nicholas Milano, Assistant Town Administrator Mark Cerel, Town Counsel Steve Ganem, Article 36 co-petitioner Jerry Potts, Article 36 co-petitioner Christine Potts, Article 37 petitioner Michael Pastore, Articles 36 & 37 opposer Michael Quinlan, School Building Committee Chair	
Meeting Location	By remote participation via Zoom	
Meeting Times	Meeting convened: 7:01 pm	Meeting adjourned: 8:45pm
Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minutes for March 18, 2021 were unanimously approved by those Warrant Committee Members in attendance at the time of the vote. 	
Operational Budgets (including votes taken)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● None 	
Warrant Articles (including votes taken)	<p>Warrant articles approved unanimously by Warrant Committee members in attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Article 36 “Recommendation for Dale Street School Site Selection Amendment with MSBA”(Citizens’ Petition): Warrant Committee will be heard. ● Article 37 “Bylaw Committee for School Building Committee” (Citizens’ Petition): Warrant Committee will be heard. ● Article 7 “Appropriate funds for F21 School Budget COVID 19 Deficit” - Voted to recommend withdrawal of article. 	
List of all documents and exhibits used	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Dale at Dale Medfield Campaign” in support of Article 36. ● “Citizens Petition/Warrant Article for 2021 Annual Town Meeting” in support of Article 37 ● March 18, 2021 memorandum from Superintendent Marsden and Finance Director LaFrancesca entitled “FY21 Deficit” ● “Financial Policy Scenarios” schedule prepared by Sharon Tatro 	
Other Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● None 	
Follow-ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● None 	

Dates for Meetings including WC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Warrant Committee Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ March 25 (Final budget vote) ○ March 29 - NO MEETING (Town Elections) ○ March 30 (if necessary) ○ April 1 (Warrant Hearing)
Names of people participating remotely and why	All Warrant Committee members and invited guests participated remotely; see above for names of attendees.
Other	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sharon Tatro opened the meeting at 7:01 pm and 1) discussed the proposed format and time allotments for tonight’s meeting in general and the citizens’ petitions specifically; 2) recognized Attorney Mark Cerel, Town Counsel, to discuss the process of citizens’ petitions and the Warrant Committee role related thereto; 3) asked for a review of the rationale for withdrawal of Article 7; and finally, 4) presented a proposal to balance the budget. 2. Attorney Cerel addressed the topic of Citizens’ Petitions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. He noted that they are treated like any other article before the Warrant Committee, although there is no case law establishing the ‘rules of road’ for them. b. Further, he noted that it is important for the Warrant Committee to understand what kind of relief is being requested in the petition. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bob Sliney, who is a non-voting member of the Dale Street School Building Committee, raised a question about the adequacy of current bylaw in light of Article 37. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attorney Cerel responded that due to a recent bylaw change, the Board of Selectmen appoint building committees instead of the Moderator. ii. Bob Sliney followed up with a question concerning the legitimacy of the current board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attorney Cerel responded that school projects come under the jurisdiction of the MSBA which has extensive requirements to obtain their financing - one of which is the formation of a school building committee. ● Notwithstanding these requirements, they recommend who should serve and what the committee composition should be. ● In the Dale Street School project, the MSBA did not accept our Permanent Building Committee which resulted in the Town setting up a special committee for the project.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The bottom line is that it doesn't matter what we do with our bylaws; MSBA rules will govern. <p>iii. Finally, Bob Sliney asked about the validity of any Dale Street School Building Committee vote by a non-resident member of the committee who because of their Town or School position is duly appointed to the Building Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attorney Cerel stated that in the absence of any prohibition (i.e., there is nothing in the law), there is nothing against non-resident members of the Town or School administration voting on matters that come before the School Building Committee. <p>3. Sharon Tatro called on Steve Ganem and Jerry Potts, proponents of the Article 36 petition.</p> <p>a. Jerry Potts presented a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Dale at Dale Medfield Campaign" (see handout posted on the Warrant Committee Meeting site)</p> <p>i. The primary points of the presentation are that the citizens group is concerned about the higher costs of the move to the Wheelock School site and object to the decision process that arrived at that conclusion.</p> <p>ii. The petitioners' belief is that presenting their article now should help from failing at Annual Town Meeting.</p> <p>b. Steve Ganem concluded the petitioners' argument by stating that the School Building Committee hasn't listened to public feedback and won't say why Dale isn't the correct site</p> <p>c. Sharon Tatro recognized Michael Pastore to give the opposing view of Article 36.</p> <p>i. Michael is asking the Warrant Committee to recommend dismissal of this petition due to a number of concerns, two of which are technical in nature.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The petition is asking Town Meeting in May to vote on an issue (the approval and funding of the Dale Street School Building project) that will be dealt with at a subsequent Town Meeting; he suggested that the petitioners' concerns be presented at the meeting where the school building issue will be decided, not before.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This article only needs a simple majority vs school vote which requires a two-thirds margin; in light of low turnout at the prior Town meeting due to the pandemic, it is conceivable that another low turnout would occur in the forthcoming Town Meeting. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> d. After excusing the proponents and opposer for Article 36 from participating in the meeting, Sharon Tatro called for discussion from the Warrant Committee. e. Bob Sliney noted that it is positive getting input from both sides, but remained troubled by petitioner comments about the process having a predetermined outcome, when the Dale Street Building Committee has been diligently following the MSBA process. f. Jeremy Marsette asked what a vote for or against would mean? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Attorney Cerel stated that this is a non-binding resolution on the Town that has no legal basis; though it may generate public attention, it cannot force reconsideration of the School Building Committee’s decision. g. Amanda Hall asked if Article 36 is recommended and passes at Town Meeting, what's the impact? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bob Sliney noted that it is unclear what impact a delay would have, but a real possibility is that the MSBA might reject any Town-caused delay and thereby require reapplication of any new project. ii. Attorney Cerel stated that since Article 36 is a nonbinding resolution, it’s up to the ultimate deciders of the new school building project to address the results of the vote, cautioning that the MSBA sets an aggressive timeline for its funding decisions. <p>4. Sharon Tatro called on Chris Potts, proponent of the Article 37 petition.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Chris Potts introduced her petition (see her handout on the Warrant Committee website site for this meeting) by stating that it is basically calling for appointment of a study committee to examine and potentially makeover the process for appointing School Building Committees in the future. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. She cited two key concerns about the current process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The current process lacks clarity, and ● It is unclear how members are appointed.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. She proffered that there are gaps in our bylaw that other town's have in their bylaws and a study group might find those gaps. b. Sharon Tatro recognized Michael Pastore to give the opposing view of Article 37. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Michael Pastore believes that there is a better way to deal with this and that is at the future Special Town Meeting called to decide upon the funding of the New Dale Street School building. c. Sharon Tatro asked Attorney Cerel whether we have bylaws for every committee in town? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Attorney Cerel responded that we do not have bylaws for each committee, although there are committees with a particular purpose, such as the Warrant Committee and the Affordable Housing Trust that do. ii. He continued that the MSBA was apprised of our Permanent Building Committee and rejected it as not meeting their requirements. Hence, Town officers assembled a committee to meet the specific requirements of the MSBA. Notwithstanding school building requirements about appointing a committee consistent with local practice, the MSBA imposed their needs. d. Sharon Tatro recognized Michael Quinlan, chair of the Dales Street School Building Committee, who stated he was not opining on either petition, just presenting the process the Committee followed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Mike Quinlan feels that school projects are more rare than other town buildings and therefore do not require codification in a bylaw, though one could write a bylaw to add these needs. ii. Attorney Cerel concurred that hypothetically you could broaden the Permanent Building Committee membership to meet MSBA needs as well as the needs of other projects. e. Sharon Tatro called for discussion or questions from the Warrant Committee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Various members expressed concern about needing more time and information prior to the Town Meeting to come to a decision. ii. The Committee concluded "to be heard" on both Articles 36 and 37. 5. Sharon Tatro called on Ed Vozzella to present an overview of the details behind the School's ability to reduce the budget deficit related to COVID-19 expenses through expense savings and reductions along with additional grant monies not previously
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	<p>anticipated and their implications for Article 7 withdrawal. Ed referred to the March 18, 2021 memorandum from Superintendent Marsden and Finance Director LaFrancesca entitled FY21 Deficit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sharon Tatro ask for a motion to recommend withdrawal of Article 7, which was seconded and voted unanimously by a roll call of all Warrant Committee members present. <p>6. FY22 Budget update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sharon Tatro present a schedule entitled “Reserve Fund and Financial Policy Analysis” that compared three budget scenarios and their implications on reserves, free cash and financial policy tests: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Scenario 1: “Article 7 kept and fund full \$420K deficit” ii. Scenario 2: “Article 7 withdrawn and fund full \$420K deficit” iii. Scenario 3: “Article 7 withdrawn and fund \$350K deficit.” b. Discussion focused on the potential for new funding from federal and statesources, though guidance on how the funds can be used was not yet available. c. Also, the final capital budget is still outstanding and will be reviewed at the next Warrant Committee meeting. <p>7. There being no other business, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and voted unanimously by a roll call of all Warrant Committee members present.</p> <p>8. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.</p>

Respectfully Submitted: Newton H Thompson

Approved minutes to be sent to: nmilano@medfield.net