

Capital Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes – 1/24/23

Committee Attendees: Steve Metz, Alex Aiken, Dan Healy, John Skyeck, Ira Smolowitz

Absent: None

Guests: Lyn Simmons, Sean Van Deusen, Tom Ewing, Dave Marinelli, Fire Chief John Dearborn, Fire Department Captain John Rigney

Meeting called to order at 7:07 by Steve Metz. The meeting was conducted by video.

The minutes of the December 6th, 2022 meeting were accepted as submitted.

The purpose of the meeting was to review and discuss the FY 2024 General Fund Capital Plan Recommendations as submitted by the Town Manager.

- I. Section 1, Project Development and Project Reserve line items were reviewed without questions;
- II. Section 2, Public Safety;
 - a. Fire Chief John Dearborn was asked to discuss the \$100,000 fire truck fund request. He explained that it is part of a seven year replacement plan for a basic fire pumper engine. The plan includes future requests of \$125k in FY 2025, \$150k in FY 2026 and \$150k in FY 2027 for a total of \$900k. The amount is in line with current cost estimate of \$800 – 900k.
 - b. Chief Dearborn explained that the cardiac monitoring request is for one item. It is a multifunctional machine that can read many essential bodily functions in addition to defibrillating. While in operation it is in direct communication with the hospital. He noted that the machine will be funded from the ambulance fund and not from the capital plan allotment. It is on the capital plan budget because it is greater than \$25k and it avoids a separate warrant article for the annual town meeting.
- III. Section 3, Facilities;
 - a. Lyn Simmons explained the difference between the department head capital budget requests and her recommendations. This eliminated a discussion of some of the “Extractions” which Steve Metz highlighted in advance of the meeting (chiller, glass doors, painting, LHS traffic island)
 - b. Facilities Other – Town Wide G & A
 - i. Steve Metz raised a question regarding the appropriateness of General Administrative and Engineering Funding as a capital line item. Lyn Simmons and Sean Van Deusen explained that the town needs these funds to get capital projects in a “shovel ready” state in FY 2025. It was further explained that the Building Committee does not have a budget like the Capital committee. This further explains why this request is a necessary component of the annual Capital Plan request.
- IV. Section 4, DPW - Equipment

- a. Electric Vehicle – Ford Mac E will be used by the new Building Department code enforcement officers who educate and enforce the town by-laws. This is the first electric vehicle in the town’s fleet. Expect more to come.
- V. Section 5, Roads, Sidewalks
 - a. Dan Healy inquired about expectations of the cost of asphalt going forward. Sean Van Deusen noted the cost of asphalt has increased by about 50% over the past two years. The pavement management plan is being updated in the next few months. Plan will include sidewalks update as well. Mass DOT will reimburse much of the cost of the plan.
- VI. ADA Upgrades – Playground Replacements
 - a. Steve Metz noted that the requested amount is nearly a quarter of the budget and relative to other population segments and their needs it appears unbalanced. He asked whether this project could be accomplished over more than one budget planning year so other important needs can be balanced.
 - b. Sean Van Deusen explained that the request covers three parks for a total of \$1.9M. He explained that he submitted his request for all three parks because it is more cost efficient to do them all at once and it is not his role to prioritize the order. He indicated that he will send the plan covering all the parks along with the cost for each. The remainder of the funds will be requested from the Community Preservation Committee. The decision of this group is to be determined.
 - c. A discussion followed among the members regarding the comparative value of certain requests and how the committee will makes its recommendations.
 - d. Sean Van Deusen discussed the process of determining the order of road repaving and the associated costs. The challenge of cost estimating and budgeting depends on which roads are selected since more traveled roads are more expensive to repair than less traveled roads.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55

Submitted by John Skyeck