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Town of Swampscott
Capital Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday April 6th, 2023 – 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Richard Raymond, Ryan Hale, Jeremiah Sullivan

MEMEBRS ABSENT

Kelley Begin, David Brodsky

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Patrick Luddy, Treasurer/Collector

Meeting called to order 7:00 PM

PL summarized internal project review that has taken place since the CIC last heard proposals in October 2022. Five additional project requests have been added since then; two from the school department and three from the town administrator.

The committee was provided with department head updates and debt service projections ahead of the meeting. AS highlighted that she is expecting recommendations from the committee either tonight or Monday in order to have them reflected in the town meeting warrant.

RH asked procedural questions about modifying the process the CIC uses to review proposals. AS responded that changing the internal process of the committee is within the committee's purview and they could choose to do so for next cycle.

AS summarized that the school department's requests were not originally submitted back in October because they were under the impression that technology was banned from the CIP by the committee and FC. However, through conversations with the school department, administration has found that the needs exceed typical consumable electronics/short-life assets and are now being brought before the committee for consideration.

RH referred to a report of previously approved projects, noting that some projects came in under budget. RH inquired as to the committee's role in addressing budget savings. PL summarized the differences between unspent authorizations and unspent funds. He also summarized that procedurally town administration would review accounts from time to time, and report out to the committee on such conditions. The committee could act in the form of a recommendation to town meeting to rescind authorized amounts, or to use unspent funds as funding sources for future projects.

PL highlighted that the administration's recommendations this year include allocating unspent funds to cover a portion of this year's projected required funding for the CIP.

RR asked if the committee felt strongly that they needed to take a stand and emphasize a drop-dead date for the committee to entertain requests each cycle.

AS commented that internally a drop-dead date for requests was explicitly provided to all departments. The list of requests before the committee at this point are final.

On **MOTION** (RR) and **SECONDED** (JS) it was **VOTED** to appoint RH as Chair of the Capital Improvement Committee. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

RH thanked RR for his time spent as chair of the committee and for his support.

The committee began their review of old and new proposals.

Chapter 90 Roadway Repairs - \$300,000

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RH) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

DPW Equipment Replacement - \$247,000

The project includes replacement of a dump truck from 2001 and a Sander from 2003, both are at end-of life.

RR asked what happens to the old vehicles. PL responded once the assets are declared surplus they are sold at auction if its valued above a certain threshold, or otherwise sold/disposed of. Proceeds from the sale are returned to the town general fund or credited directly against the replacement cost (trade-in).

RH inquired as to the utilization of these trucks i.e. are they used year round? Was a rent vs. buy analysis done? PL responded he did not receive this information from the DPW Director with the project proposal.

AS commented that the cost to rent is the highest in the winter because that is when the demand exists for these trucks. Renting for three seasons would exceed the cost of purchasing the trucks.

RR asked RH about the potential for electric dump trucks; RH commented he did not think they were available on the market yet.

On **MOTION** (RH) and **SECONDED** (RR) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Level/Grade Field at Philips Park

PL summarized the proposal; highlighted that existing field is uneven and increases risk of injury to sports participants.

PL clarified that this is not the turf field, rather the natural grass field.

RR commented he has personally witnessed the condition of the field and that he supports this project/feels it will increase on-field safety.

On **MOTION** (RR) and **SECONDED** (RH) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Non-Chapter 90 Paving - \$350,000

Recommendation is for \$350,000; less than originally proposed. The DPW Director is confident he can do a sufficient amount of work this coming year with this level of funding alone. The appropriation last year was higher than usual so he has made good headway on paving projects.

RR asked about procurement for projects such as this where labor and material prices are especially volatile given the times. PL responded the respondents to RFP/IFB need to specify pricing in their proposal. Any escalation would need to be specified in the proposal so the town understand the costs before awarding a contract.

On **MOTION** (RH) and **SECONDED** (JS) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Cemetery Paving

Roadways have not been paved in excess of twenty years. This project is eligible for funding with cemetery perpetual care funds so there is no financing cost associated with this work.

PL commented he drove through the cemetery recently and observed poor road conditions.

RR agreed that he too had observed the same conditions.

RH inquired about ongoing conversations to increase interment fees at the cemetery to offset increasing maintenance costs. PL responded that the fee review is still ongoing.

On **MOTION** (RH) and **SECONDED** (JS) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Seawall Repairs - \$250,000

Proposed work would complete repairs needed to King's beach wall; remaining funds would be used to begin work at Eisman's beach.

RH asked if completion of the work at King's Beach would allow the town to transfer ownership/responsibility for the beach to the state's DCR. PL commented the work puts us in a better spot to approach DCR about that in the future, but that Gino still has work to do on sidewalks and other components of the shoreline before they would entertain that.

JS asked for clarification that transfer of King's Beach to DCR is not automatic. PL confirmed.

JS asked for information on how much work has been accomplished with the previous appropriations for seawall repairs vs. what was expected. It seems more was accomplished with the funds than originally anticipated. PL commented that his understanding was we've gotten lucky with pricing; the same contractor was awarded the bid for the last four projects and the pricing has been favorable vs market expectations.

On **MOTION** (RH) and **SECONDED** (RR) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Town-Wide Traffic Improvements - \$1,000,000

Project will address various areas of town, potentially including Orchard Rd, Forest Ave, Forest Ave Ext, Humphrey St, Fisherman's Beach Area, Blaney St, Norfolk Ave, Middlesex Ave, Jackson Park area, and various intersections. The majority of the work would be focused around the area of the new elementary school. Improvements will make new traffic patterns that accommodate the school and relieve/redirect traffic in areas of congestion.

RR asked about grant opportunities for this project. PL responded that although a grant award has not been obtained, staff are diligently seeking out grant opportunities to defray or supplement the costs of this project.

RH asked if there was insight into how these sites were selected/more detail on the proposed work. PL referred to materials that were circulated with the committee in advance of the meeting; commented that he had no further detail on the proposed work to share.

RH proposed that the committee hold off on a vote for this project until next meeting in order to review any additional information that may become available.

Renovation of Clarke School - \$200,000

PL summarized that the request is for design dollars for a future renovation of the Clark. Originally, the request called for renovation of Clarke in FY2025; the proposal has been tweaked based on conversations with the school department and facilities manager and now the construction component is slated for FY2026.

RH asked if the change in timing works for the school dept. functionally. PL summarized that based on their feedback it does.

RR asked if MSBA funding would be available for the construction component of the project. PL responded no, due to the fact that the space will no longer serve K-12, but rather Preschool and Administration which is outside the purview of MSBA.

JS inquired about the sequencing of this renovation and the middle school renovation. PL responded that the Clarke school is to be renovated first, so that Pre-K services and administration offices can be vacated in the middle school, freeing up space for renovations to occur at the middle school without occupants.

On **MOTION** (RH) and **SECONDED** (RR) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

District Pick-Up Equipped w/ Plow

Replacement of school department pick-up truck, originally purchased in 2007. This project would be funded with tailing from old projects.

RH asked that the project specify that the truck be hybrid or electric.

JS agreed that we should at least call for hybrid for vehicle purchases.

RH highlighted the Select Board's EV-first procurement policy which was recently adopted.

On **MOTION** (RH) and **SECONDED** (JS) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item and to change the project title to specify “hybrid”. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

DPW Yard Site Study - \$100,000

Funding this coming year would address immediate concerns at the facility that were discussed in the fall when the committee met with the Facilities Director. The building is in poor condition, working conditions are not ideal.

The project would lead to a comprehensive study the following year about potential relocation of facility.

RR commented that the committee did previously indicate they would be supportive of remediation work at the existing facility.

The committee deferred action on this item until next meeting.

Facilities Director EV

Existing Gasoline-Powered Ford Explorer is nearing end of life. Proposed replacement with EV in 2026.

Field Covering System - \$250,000

Covering system would be used at Blocksidge field to cover the field for events i.e. graduation.

School department currently rents this equipment as needed.

There is significant labor associated with setup/breakdown as well as storage concerns.

JS asked if there is a line item for replacement of the turf field as it nears end-of-life. AS commented that more conversation has to be had on the turf field; Boston no longer constructs turf fields due to carcinogen concerns.

The field covering system was rejected from the CIP; funding will need to be focused on addressing the field itself in a few years rather than a cover.

Field House Improvements

Proposal is for \$150,000 in FY25 and FY26. Includes proposed exterior improvements including new windows, trim repair, masonry repair, roofing, chimney, and possible installation of EV charging stations.

Fire Station Improvements

\$50,000 for FY2025, \$200,00 for FY2026. Fire Chief has been collaborating with facilities director on this proposal; this would add a second means of egress to the third floor, as well as interior and exterior renovations, windows, and masonry. PL commented that the Fire Chief is pursuing grant opportunities for this work, however there is no grant award at this time.

Fish House Improvements

\$300,000 for mainly fire protection upgrades; this project was pushed to FY2027 based on conversations with the Facilities Director. A lot of progress and investment has been made in the fish house in recent years, however work continues to be required on the building.

Green Communities Projects

The facilities director is expecting a grant for \$100,000 this coming fiscal year. The specific projects that the funding will be spent on are not yet clear, because the application gets filled out in the fall. Primary focus of the work is energy efficiency through upgrades to HVAC systems at the school dept and municipal buildings.

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RH) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

High School Lobby and Cafeteria Flooring

\$100,000 to replace flooring in FY2025. The building itself is not old, but these areas are high-traffic which leads to exceptional wear on the floors. Upgrades are needed before the floor becomes hazardous.

RR asked if the subfloor is concrete and if it could simply be lacquered, eliminating continued maintenance for tile that wears easier. PL responded that he was unsure but would find out from the facilities director.

High School Media Center Shades

Proposal is for \$50,000 to replace existing shade system. Vendor does not respond to maintenance calls, the system is proprietary so other vendors will not work on it. Current system is inoperable. Recommending using unspent funds from completed projects to pay for this work.

RR asked if the vocational school could be utilized for this work. PL deferred to the facilities director for an opinion.

RH asked if this work could qualify for green communities funding because of the relation to cooling expenses. PL deferred to the facilities director.

On **MOTION** (RH) and **SECONDED** (JS) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

RH asked that for the sake of time the remainder of the meeting be focused on projects which are proposed for FY2024.

Library Entries

Redo entryways at library, exterior and interior, and make the entry accessible. The \$100,000 request is for design work, to be followed by a construction phase for an estimated \$800,000.

RH asked if the scope included new furnishings for the library. PL responded that was a separate project on the plan.

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RH) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Middle School Media Center Improvements

Facilities Director has better clarity on this project since the committee initially reviewed it. The proposal is for \$70,000 in FY2024 to address immediate updates needed in the space for it to be functional.

RH inquired about the 40-50% jump in anticipated project costs. PL explained that the scope was expanded. Project would address new furnishings, new layouts, and cosmetic improvements throughout.

RH suggested the committee hold action on this item until the next meeting so that clarification can be obtained from the facilities director on the expanded scope of the work.

Police Station Controls Upgrades

Proposal is to address HVAC controls in the police building which are inadequate. Temperature controls are inaccessible (located in attic space). Upgraded controls would allow the system to be regulated from a central MS and result in energy savings and efficiencies at the station.

RH suggested that the facilities director be asked if this could be a green communities project.

School Network Upgrades

50% federal-grant funded project, recurring upgrades at the school dept. The grant is on a five-year award cycle; district may not qualify for the same level of funding in the next cycle. The school department is asking the request be double to \$140,000 (\$70,000 local share) to allow this work to be completed within the current grant cycle. Includes upgrades to wifi access points and assoc components.

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RH) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

School Phone Improvements - \$100,000

Facilities director has narrowed the scope of the project since it was initially reviewed. Limited to school buildings based on the fact that the regulations only extend to school buildings. Vendor quoted approx. \$100,000.

RR asked for clarification that this upgrade will specify room # and floor when placing an emergency call from a classroom.

RH asked if there was a particular building code that this project is trying to adhere to. AS responded that there is a compliance piece and that it is likely that enforcement and penalties could occur in the fall/early winter of next year.

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RH) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Senior Center Improvements - \$50,000

PL summarized that this request is for additional funding to supplement the appropriation that was made at a prior town meeting to upgrade the senior center kitchen.

The request was originally submitted for \$100,000 of funding, but the facilities director has been able to narrow the scope of the project thus reducing the cost to \$50,000 while still meeting the needs of the center.

On **MOTION** (RH) and **SECONDED** (JS) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Town Hall Basement Upgrades

Original request was for a town hall kitchenette (upgrade existing break room space). Request has been updated to encompass basement upgrades that may include a break room/kitchenette component.

RH asked the staff on the call if the upgrades would in their opinion improve the workplace.

PL offered that the kitchenette is probably in need of some upgrading and being able to relocate some break room space to the basement could free up much needed office space in town hall.

AS agreed with PLs comments generally.

RH asked if there was opportunity for natural light in the basement at all to accommodate this type of space. AS commented that there was.

RR asked if this project could also be a backdrop for an emergency operations center. AS commented that any basement meeting space would be outfitted for emergency management/command center. RR asked if there was FEMA/other money to support the project as an EOC. AS commented that no state or federal funding had been identified yet but that Chief Archer was actively looking into the availability of grants for this purpose.

On **MOTION** (RH) and **SECONDED** (JS) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Town Hall Exterior Renovations - \$300K

PL summarized that this project will address various window, roofing, and masonry repairs to the exterior of town hall.

RH asked if there were any issues or advantages relative to the buildings historic status. Specifically, he asked if there was any state or national foundations that might help subsidize the maintenance of historic buildings.

PL commented that no opportunities had been identified.

RH asked if this project could be combined with the HVAC renovation that is planned for the outer years to save some money. PL commented that it would be a different contractor doing that work so the synergies aren't necessarily there to combine the two projects.

On **MOTION** (RR) and **SECONDED** (JS) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Remove Town Wired Alarm System

PL explained the request funds the third and final phase of this project. The Fire Chief has been working to decommission the town's wired alarm system and transition to an upgraded wireless system. This phase includes removal of the copper wire that is around town connecting the systems together.

RR asked if the copper was being sold and the proceeds deposited in the general fund.

PL commented that the town collects scrap metal at the DPW Yard and a hauling company takes it away periodically. The proceeds from the scrap are general fund receipts.

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RR) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Library Service Enhancements - \$40,000

PL explained request is to replace services desks at the library and create new spaces for individuals with young children.

JS asked if the desks were at risk of falling apart, which PL confirmed was the case as reported by the library director.

On **MOTION** (RR) and **SECONDED** (JS) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

High School Auditorium Upgrades - \$400,000

Request is for a two-phase project to address audio and visual/lighting deficiencies in the high school auditorium. Request is for \$400,000 in FY24 and \$300,000 in FY25.

PEG coordinator Joseph Douillette has researched this project extensively and has hopes that the renovation would improve the auditorium to the point that it could make it more desirable to host community events beyond current offerings.

On **MOTION** (RH) and **SECONDED** (RR) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Cruiser and Cruiser Laptop Replacement - \$92,000

Request funds acquisition and equipping of two patrol vehicles.

RH commented he received a note from the Chief stating that a hybrid pursuit vehicle was available that they would purchase. It was the chief's understanding that full hybrid vehicles are not yet pursuit-rated.

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RH) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on this item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Firearms Upgrades

PL summarized the Chief's request as submitted, which generally includes replacement of 3 AR-15s, replacement of services weapons, and acquisition of bola-wraps.

RH stated that he was against the purchase of Assault Rifles for the PD.

RR stated that he would support the purchase of the Assault Rifles as requested. He stated that although no one ever wants to use these weapons, it makes all the difference in a bad situation where a bad actor is equipped with a similar firearm.

PL highlighted comments submitted to the committee by Capt. Kable at the committee's request.

JS commented that he reluctantly supported this request, understanding arguments both ways.

The committee decided to postpone a vote on this item to a future meeting.

Middle School STEM Lab Upgrades - \$30,000

PL summarized the request from the school department, which includes replacement of specialized laptops that run STEM Lab software; 1 for an instructor and 30 for students. Funding would also replace associated equipment in the lab necessary to instruction.

Equipment of this nature has a useful life of approximately seven years, according to the school dept's IT Director. The equipment being replaced was purchased through private donor funds several years ago.

Interactive White Board Replacement - \$100,000

Request is for \$100,000/yr for three years to replace aged interactive white boards in classrooms at the middle school and high school.

RH commented he was skeptical of this request originally but found several academic papers that studied the relationship between interactive whiteboards and learning outcomes.

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RR) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on the preceding two items. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Electric Van for Medical Rides

PL explained this request is to replace an existing six-person gasoline-powered van at the senior center. Purchase of the van is to be funded by a federal grant that is not yet secured. No employees would be added to accommodate operation of the van; the senior center already employs a driver for this purpose.

RR asked if the van is supporting medical rides for any veterans/senior veterans and if that opens up funding opportunities for this purpose.

PL commented he would bring that up with the Senior Center team.

RH echoed that there are other parts of the community beyond the senior center that might have similar transportation needs/could help maximize utilization of the vehicle.

RR commented that depending on who you are driving, licensing requirement may differ (i.e. students).

RH asked if the town could save money if they just hired a transportation service instead.

RR commented that he is in the business and in his opinion that would likely not be economical for the town in this case.

On **MOTION** (RH) and **SECONDED** (JS) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on the preceding two items. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Cemetery Surplus Fill - \$250,000

Second phase of project approved last fiscal year. Involves removal of fill that has been stored in the back of the cemetery, largely resulting from sewer/water operations of the past 20 years.

Committee deferred vote on this item until next meeting.

Digitization of Departmental Records

Building Inspector researched this project; would use a phased approach to digitize and archive town hall physical records. Physical storage space is limited at town hall; digitization would make records more accessible and better preserved. Would also free up physical space at town hall.

AS commented that the building inspector obtained three quotes already from reputable companies that other towns have used.

RH asked if departments would begin digitizing records as they go to prevent a similar dilemma in the future. AS confirmed.

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RR) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on the preceding two items. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Municipal Property Capital - \$100,000

Similar to Elementary Small Capital, which was a project approved previously. The funding would be used to address primarily issues that may arise at properties that are vacant/will be vacant in the near term.

Committee deferred vote on this item until next meeting

Vinnin Square Planning - \$100,000

Town Administrator has requested this funding to support efforts to activate the vinnin square commercial area in town.

RR asked for clarification on how the funding would be deployed to accomplish change in the area given that the property is all privately held.

PL summarized that the funding could be used for master planning-type activities that would inform policy decisions, which may invite new development or redevelopment in the area.

RH asked if the town administrator had a vendor in mind for the project. PL responded no.

Committee deferred vote on this item until next meeting

Lynn Dispatch Upgrades – \$50,000

Contract with Lynn Dispatch was renegotiated recently. In those conversations, it was brought up that an additional FTE has been added and additional/upgraded equipment is needed.

RR asked if Nahant was also being asked to make this level of investment in the facility.

AS responded her understanding is that Nahant is accepting a higher operational cost rather than a lower operational cost paired with a one-time capital investment.

PL commented he was unsure if Nahant was on the same contract cycle as Swampscott.

Committee deferred vote on this item until next meeting.

Water Main Replacements - \$750,000

Recurring project to replace water mains throughout town. MWRA offers a 0% interest loan program to finance water improvement projects. The town continues to remain eligible for this financing. The \$750,000 appropriation paired with previous appropriations will allow DPW to maximize the funding opportunity available.

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RR) it was **VOTED** to recommend favorable action to town meeting on the item. **ROLL CALL:** RR (YES), JS (YES), RH (YES).

Meeting adjourned 9:23 PM

True Attest,



Patrick Luddy
Treasurer/Collector

Approved by vote of the Capital Improvement Committee 9/12/23