



Town of Swampscott
Finance Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday April 12th, 2021 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Tim Dorsey (Chair), Mary Ellen Fletcher (Vice-chair), Eric Hartmann, Joan Hilario, Matthew Kirschner, Cinder McNerney, Gail Rosenberg, Jill Sullivan

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Rich Raymond (Chair), Jay Sullivan, Ryan Hale

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

Michael McClung, Town Moderator; Sean Fitzgerald, Town Administrator; Amy Sarro, Town Accountant; Ron Mendes, Asst. Town Administrator Admin & Finance; Gino Cresta, Asst. Town Administrator Operations/DPW Director; Graham Archer, Fire Chief; Max Kasper, Facilities Director; Patrick Luddy, Asst. Town Accountant

Meeting called to order 7:06 PM

Approval of Minutes

None.

Public Comments

None.

Review of FY2022-26 Capital Plan

Fire Dept

Fire Chief Graham Archer discussed his capital requests that are captured in the plan, including replacement Fire Engine, Ladder truck, Chief's Truck, Service Truck, and a Van.

Ryan Hale asked for clarification on the utilization of the vehicles at the station, and whether there were any synergies available that would drop a vehicle from the request. The chief clarified that the boat is launched 20-25 times a year for investigations and rescues. The Chief further clarified that his primary vehicle is rated to tow the boat, however the vehicle is not always available for deployment of the boat because the Chief is often out-of-district at times during the week.

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked if there was any opportunity for the Chief to leverage an electrical vehicle, such as one from Town Hall.

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald commented on the necessity for the Chief to be able to respond to an emergency, and the advantages of a larger vehicle in certain emergency situations.

Chief Archer further clarified that the Chief's vehicle must have special communications equipment that is specialized and often designed for installation in larger utility vehicles. Also, the deputy chief typically inherits the Chief's old vehicle, so both vehicles historically have been SUVs.

Chief Archer further stated that there is an after-market kit available that hybridizes these vehicles. Asst. Town Administrator Mendes stated that the budget request should be sufficient to cover the new vehicle with the Hybrid option.

Mr. Mendes asked if anyone had any questions on the project proposal to decommission the wired municipal fire alarm system.

Cinder McNerney asked for clarification regarding why the project spend is spread across three years.

Chief Archer provided clarification that there are private businesses on the system that will require sufficient notice to find an alternative solution before the system is decommissioned.

- Year 1 – Upgrades to Fire Station Watch Desk Dispatch Console
- Year 2 – Decommissioning of Municipal Boxes/Replacement with Radio Boxes
- Year 3 – Removal of Wiring

On **MOTION** (Jay Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Rich Raymond) it was **VOTED** to approve purchase of the service vehicle as proposed in the capital plan. **ROLL CALL:** Jay Sullivan (YES), Rich Raymond (YES), Ryan Hale (YES).

Facilities

Cinder McNerney asked Facilities Director Max Kasper to clarify on the timeline for completing the projects that are proposed to be funded for FY2022, relative to the fact that there was an amount listed in the 3/1 Town Meeting warrant that represents unspent bond proceeds.

Ms. McNerney also asked how much funding for building maintenance is provided for in the FY2022 proposed operating budget. Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald clarified that there is approximately \$558,000 funded in the town's operating budget for this purpose. The School dept proposed \$2,422,348 for building maintenance in their FY2022 operating budget.

Max Kasper stated that the capital project for extraordinary maintenance projects is representative of repairs that are needed now as a result of some neglect of maintenance over the

past few years. He stated that the breadth of the list of projects being requested this year exceeds what is typical.

There was some discussion regarding the \$400,000 capital request for Misc./Emergency Capital for Facilities. Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald discussed the prospects of funding the project from free cash in the capital budget or in the operating budget as a component of the finance committee reserve.

Asst. Town Administrator Mendes elaborated, stating that the three options are to fund the capital project at \$400,000 (\$200,000 of which are clearly identified), adding the \$200,000 of unidentified maintenance to the finance committee reserve, or creating a reserve in the facilities budget to be used at the discretion of the Facilities Director, under the supervision of the Town Administrator.

Jill Sullivan stated that she opposed the project as currently proposed because of the component of the funding that is not associated with clearly defined projects.

Mary Ellen Fletcher proposed that the project be funded at \$200,000 to cover the identified projects and some amount of funds (~\$50,000) be added to the finance committee reserve to address unknown or extraordinary maintenance items that could present themselves in the fiscal year.

Town Administrator Fitzgerald again stated that the facilities director is a new position and it is critical that the facilities department is supported and funded in a manner that addresses the needs of existing building systems.

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked if there was any reason why the capital project was described as specifically for “Elementary School” repairs. Facilities Director Kasper stated that most of the punch list items identified that required action were elementary-school related.

Senior Center

There was discussion regarding the proposed kitchen remodel project for Fiscal 2022.

Asst. Town Administrator Mendes spoke to the history of the project, which was been in the plan for a number of years and previously projected to Fiscal 2024 but had been moved up to Fiscal 2022 in the plan based on need. Currently, no design work has been completed for the project which would need to be done before any renovation takes place. The \$300,000 request is estimated.

Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald commented that he was in support of this project.

Debora Newman was recognized in the meeting; she spoke to the return the town would recognize on the proposed investment in the senior center kitchen remodel. She expanded that the kitchen would have a multitude of uses, across different departments, and which has applications that could generate revenue through certain programs. She also commented that the

project would likely cost much less than \$300,000 based on her experience with equipping a commercial kitchen. Based on her experience she recommended \$100,000 of funding to allow for configuration and the cost to upgrade equipment.

Max Kasper reiterated the need for professional design services for this project to ensure that the kitchen will meet the needs of the community and be safe and compliant with code.

Mary Ellen Fletcher asked Mr. Kasper to clarify if the current year operating budget has the capacity to carry design costs for this project. Max stated that he cannot specify the exact cost of the design work because it will depend on the project specification, but he assured the committee that some design work could be done within the parameters of the operating budget to get the project off the ground.

Mr. Kasper anticipates that design-work could be completed over the Summer, and then the project could get underway as early as this Fall.

Ryan Hale asked if expanded utilization of the existing High-School kitchen had been evaluated as a potential way to supplement the Senior Center's existing kitchen. Marilyn Cassidy and Deb Newman clarified for Mr. Hale that the option was explored, but ultimately was not feasible due to schedule conflicts and volume constraints between School and Senior Center operations.

Jill Sullivan commented that the project it would be prudent to perhaps appropriate funds for the project at special town meeting in the fall when design work is complete and costs are known rather than provide funding at annual town meeting without the design work.

On **MOTION** (Jill Sullivan) and **SECONDED** (Gail Rosenberg) it was **VOTED** by **ROLL CALL** to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 PM. **ROLL CALL:** Eric Hartmann (YES), Joan Hilario (YES), Matthew Kirschner (YES), Cinder Mc Nerney (YES), Gail Rosenberg (YES), Jill Sullivan (YES), Mary Ellen Fletcher (YES) Tim Dorsey (YES).

True Attest,

Patrick Luddy

Patrick Luddy, Assistant Town Accountant

Minutes APPROVED by vote of the Finance Committee 6/28/2021