

Capital Planning and Investment Committee

*** Final Minutes ***

November 25, 2019

Present: SusanMary Redinger, John Seeley, Nate Finch, Alice von Loesecke, Lori Bolasevich, Linda Dwight, Tim Bragan

Absent: Teresa Jardon

The meeting was called to order at 8:17am

Ms. Redinger moved to approve the minutes of November 4, 2019 as amended. Mr. Finch seconded. Minutes approved 4/0.

Fire Department articles:

Chief Sicard updated CPIC members on the status of the **Fire Ponds**. He is awaiting a report on the status. \$78,378 is unexpended. The sunset date may need to be extended.

Trucks: **Engine 3** is 16 years old. The **Hook Truck** is a replacement to Engine 3. Tower trucks typically last 30 years. Engine 3's life expectancy is 20 years. The hook truck can do anything/everything that Engine 3 can do. It is more effective than brush fires. \$5k-\$10k residual value if Engine 3 is sold.

The current forestry truck can't be driven during the winter because it contains water. That would be the only option (other than driving a personal vehicle and getting reimbursed for mileage) for an additional employee to drive unless the hook truck is added to the inventory. That person would be able to do both fire and emergency but would be assigned to one role.

The option of purchasing a refurbished truck was discussed. As was purchasing a truck in partnership with a surrounding town. The availability of equipment vs. the availability of the personnel is a complex balance. "Automatic Aid" is set up for certain situations. The long term effect of Devens is unknown.

The Tower Truck has not responded to any Mutual Aid calls. Harvard has less fire incidents than surrounding towns so we go out 30 times/year to help others but receive aid only 5 or so times year.

The cost of vehicles is increasing about 5% year. The CPIC instructions indicate the prices on requests should be in today's dollars. Members agreed that the instructions should be updated to reflect today's dollars plus the current inflation rate.

DPW Articles:

Mr. Kilhart reviewed members' questions on the various DPW requests:

The request for Ayer Road work (\$75k) will be separated from the larger project of reconstruction work on town roads (\$225k). Chapter 90 has been underfunded (at \$350k/yr) in relation to the work that needs to get done.

The **Light Duty truck** is at the end of its life. It receives heavy/daily use.

Ayer Road project needs additional funds to complete the study. We are on track for getting into the TIP program, but even if everything goes according to plan, once receiving the go ahead from Mass DOT it will take 2 years to finalize plans and another 2 years for construction.

Road Repairs: Overall funding for road repairs has been insufficient to keep pace with all of the needed work. Funding requested will allow DPW to catch up on work.

DPW Building Design: Mr. Seeley thanked Mr. Kilhart for taking the time to show members the current building which is in poor condition and in need of attention.

Tractor: When funds were allocated at STM for field maintenance, Mr. Kilhart met with members of Parks and Rec and subsequently with individuals representing the town, schools and finance committee. An initial plan to address the fields was agreed upon. The tractor was identified by DPW as a critical part of the solution that would allow DPW to do critical field maintenance (liming, aerating, seeding and mowing). Resting the fields has been discussed. The timing of putting a maintenance program together has been difficult, but having the tractor in the spring to begin work would be preferred. Mr. Kilhart affirmed that he has the personnel to do the agreed upon maintenance. The bagger system is the priority attachment in order to mow the fields in short timeframe and have it be game-ready without grass clumping. This is a first step in addressing town field maintenance but many other pieces have yet to be worked out. Should fields need to be taken out of play it was discussed that police monitoring would be needed to protect the surface during remediation.

Planning Board Article (Ayer Road Market Study and Fiscal Impact Analysis):

Mr. Ryan reviewed the questions/answers submitted by CPIC members. There are many options for the C-District land that are not just commercial which include a Park and ride lot, possible shuttle service to Littleton station, an electrical vehicle charging area. Currently, even with the Ayer Rd. special permitting there isn't enough incentive to build in that corridor. It's better than the current zoning, and it anticipates what the ultimate goal for what residents want from that area.

The zoning really needs to be in place before development is pursued. Mr. Ryan expressed his appreciation for the importance of getting this project right. He feels that it is possible to develop this area in a way that residents feel it is an asset and can be excited about it. Road work, infrastructure and public participation are all important components of the development of this area. Mr. Ryan is interested in determining how we get those people who are supportive to engage in the conversation/discussion. Visual demonstrations that help people envision what the goals/possibilities are for this year would be helpful.

There will be a public process after the study is going to be expansive and engaging. Mr. Ryan would like to mirror the process that he is currently taking part in at Devens.

Town Hall

Mr. Bragan explained that the cost of replacing the current unit is \$5,500. The original request of \$30,000 for this project is being rescinded.

Debt Schedule

Ms. von Loesecke made further adjustments to the debt schedule to reflect the delay of the purchase of the tower truck and the increased cost due to inflation. The hook truck cost of \$250,000 would need to be added. The earliest the DPW building renovation would hit is 2025 and the assumed cost is \$2.5M for now (to be updated once the study is done).

The Hildreth House (\$4.3M) at 3.25% rate bonding would occur in 2024. The middle school ramp would happen in FY 2023 \$1.1M (full price) at 3.25%.

Taking all of the updates into consideration, if all of the requests are funded, the debt service goes to 11.3% in FY21. For FY22 it drops to 10.5%; FY23: 10/1%; FY24: 10.3% ; FY25 10.9%. This year the taxes will increase for the median taxpayer by \$250. \$873 in FY 22 next year without any support from CPIC/Schools. Then in FY23 it actually drops by \$100. To smooth out the tax increase, it would be best to front load the debt payment from CPIC/Schools. Putting in \$600k would limit the increase to \$595, (\$500k = 640). This would represent a much lower increase for the school project than originally forecasted. Keeping the debt service under 10% would be ideal.

Members agreed to aim for using \$600k (\$300k from CSF and \$300 from Devens).

Ms. Redinger moved to use \$600k in funds towards the debt service (\$300 from CSF and \$300 from the Schools). Seconded by Ms. von Loesecke. **Vote 4/0.**

Ms. Redinger will relay that vote to the school committee at their next meeting.

Ms. von Loesecke will update the debt schedule to take into account the items approved at ATM (DPW dump truck, Ayer Rd study, Old Library roof payments to begin in FY21). STM Projects were all funded out of the CSF.

Liaison Reports:

Mr. Bragan informed members that the study on the Old Library roof indicated that the problem is more extensive than originally anticipated. The SB will be receiving the results of that study on their next meeting.

Next meeting will be Monday, December 2nd when we will meet with the school department.

Members agreed to add another meeting on December 9th and to keep the meeting on December 16th.

Ms Redinger is suggesting the use of Google Sheets to collect members' ratings. It will reduce user error and will allow for easier/instantaneous updating of the master rating sheet. She will send out the updated Google sheets before the December 2nd meeting and project ratings are to be completed by December 8th.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:20am.

Respectfully submitted,
SusanMary Redinger, CPIC member