

Capital Planning Committee minutes
Jan 23, 2020

Attendees: Audrey Kalmus (chair), Jim Henderson, Maria Hylton, Jaki Apsler, Jim Hutchinson, Peter Hussey, Mary Day (by phone)

The first part of the meeting was dedicated to reviewing all requests on the summary.

Audrey Kalmus reminded members of the review criteria. The Massachusetts Capital Improvement ratings guide provides criteria. CapCom generally aims to provide funding for level services. CapCom “kicks the tires” on requests.

New information from L-S received today indicates that Sudbury will likely approve their requests except for the area lift. Further information is needed to confirm the specifics of what has been approved.

Audrey Kalmus noted that if the mini-excavator for cemetery and last DPW request (Heavy Hook Loader) were removed, all other requests fit FinCom’s budget guidance.

Jim Henderson and Audrey Kalmus raised questions about the inventory of DPW equipment. Audrey Kalmus proposed that we table a deeper discussion of the DPW inventory for discussion at a future meeting. Jim Henderson would like better documentation to enable better inventory management/uses and replacement strategies.

The committee discussed the cemetery excavator request. Rental equipment is a possibility but is not available as quickly as needed for a limited number of cases requiring a rapid interment.

Maria Hylton asked why we consider maintenance requests with capital requests. The reason is that in the past, maintenance was included in operating budgets and was considered potentially underfunded.

The committee discussed the DPW Wacker Neuson loader request. Jim Henderson noted that DPW has a lot of equipment and it is hard for us to understand various overlapping uses with current documentation. If we approve the new request the DPW should remove the trackless loader as they are redundant. Do we really need a new piece of equipment, or should we get a larger piece of equipment?

Maria Hylton asked if it may be possible to regionalize use of some equipment among towns. Some equipment is used very rarely and each town may not need its own.

Jim Henderson volunteered to work with the DPW to help develop a plan for how to improve DPW inventory management and asset replacement management.

The committee discussed the L-S requests. The vehicle requests are replacing vehicles with relatively low mileage. The boosters are funding part of the van request. The committee will notify L-S that the mileage is low for vehicles scheduled for replacement.

The committee will schedule a discussion with the library about creating a longer-term maintenance budget. We plan to approve this year's request but expect that a long-term plan could result in lower future requests.

Jim Henderson moved to vote to approve all requests except for the cemetery excavator and the DPW heavy hook loader as agreed by the committee discussion to meet spending limit. CapCom will also break out line items for town maintenance. The total approved is \$701,194. The vote was unanimously in favor of this motion.

The second part of the meeting was dedicated to discussion of the police radio request. Mary Day summarized the request. The present equipment is outdated. If nothing else happens the current equipment needs to be updated. We can't locate parts and service labor due to the age of the equipment. We also have a section of town with no radio coverage. Public safety uses cell phones when radios don't work. The request could create a new transmitter in the Lincoln North area. There would be some savings from approving the request at once rather than splitting over multiple years.

Maria Hylton asked if there were liability concerns motivating this or was it police and fire wishing to have better communication. There are serious concerns about the quality of the services. Other towns have newer higher quality systems. The system is 21 years old and the primary driver is the cost and difficulty of maintenance.

Jim Hutchinson noted that it is both a replacement and upgrade request. We have been living with poor town radio coverage for some time now.

Maria Hylton asked if the request would establish new equipment that neighbors in the area would object to. It is not a large new piece of equipment. Where possible the antennas go on buildings.

The committee discussed the urgency of the request. The town has been living with the current level of service for some time. The equipment is out of warranty and needs to be replaced but could possibly be maintained longer if needed.

Audrey Kalmus proposed that we support the project, the whole project, but are open to giving latitude about financing and timing. Maria Hylton believes it is a serious safety issue and a higher priority than any other current year request.

Jim Hutchinson asked what discount would be possible if we pursued the first two of four phases together.

Audrey Kalmus confirmed the previous vote on approved requests. No one changed their vote.

Audrey Kalmus moved to vote on the radio project at \$1,692,250 with discretion to FinCom over how to finance the project over time in phases if necessary. The vote was unanimous in favor with Maria Hylton in abstention.

Meeting adjourned at 9:44 pm.

Approved March 11, 2020