

MINUTES CAPITAL OUTLAY COMMITTEE

December 9, 2021

Members Present

Chair:	Paul Linehan
Select Board:	William Heitin (Alt), Emily Smith-Lee
Finance Committee:	Anja Bernier, Ann Keitner, and Jada Wang, Alternate
Planning Board:	Rob Maidman, David Blaszkowsky
School Committee:	Adam Shain; Prisnel Dominique
Town Administrator:	Frederic Turkington, Jr.
Finance Director:	Krishan Gupta

Members Absent

Select Board:	Hanna Switekowski,
Planning Board:	Kai Yu, Alternate
School Committee:	Avi Shemtov, Alternate

Others Present

Sharon Public Schools	Dr. Peter Botelho, Superintendent
	Dr. Meg Dussault, Interim Assistant Superintendent
	Dr. Angela Burke, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
	Lisa Freeley, Business Manager
	Anthony Kopacz, Facilities Director

Administrative Items

The meeting of the Capital Outlay Committee was called to order on Zoom at 7:00 pm by Chair, Paul Linehan.

Department Presentations - Schools

The School Department presented an overview of their requests for FY 2023. Ms. Freeley and Dr. Botelho began their presentation with an overview of the status of prior allocations. They stated that most projects are ongoing including the generator at Heights Elementary. They have begun the purchase order and contract process with a vendor. The rooftop units are also in process with one school pending.

There will be a small return of funds of roughly \$2,600 for replacement of computer technology, firewall replacement, snow removal equipment and network hub switches as these items were able to be procured for less than originally requested. Projects will continue to be evaluated for possible turn back of funds.

Dr. Botelho provided an update on the Heights parking lot project. He explained that last spring, the Finance Committee recommended that the schools hire an OPM to manage the project as a condition of approval. This slowed the progress of the project. Approvals have been sought and received from the Conservation Commission and Department of Environmental Protection and an RFQ for an OPM was developed and solicited in July. The PMA for the High School agreed to consider this project and ultimately take it on. Since then, the schools have been able to get the project up and moving. Bids will be solicited in December, and it is hoped that construction will begin with the queuing lanes in the spring of 2022, parking lot construction at the end of the school year in

June, and an anticipated completion date of August 2022. Mr. Kopacz indicated that the queuing lane and overall plan for the parking lot design have been approved by all parties.

Dr. Botelho continued with a summary of the capital requests for FY2023. He explained that the total for technology is in the amount of \$657,000; facilities is \$486,000; and transportation is \$71,750 for a sum of \$1,214,750.

The technology request involves replacing or purchasing wireless access points to improve wireless computing, Chromebooks to support the 1:1 program for the Middle and High Schools, teacher device replacement, projectors, classroom desktop computers, classroom audio systems, iPad replacement, Elementary Chromebooks and three robots for the Middle School Tech and Engineering program.

Mr. Linehan asked about whether a decision has been made to remain with Chromebooks for the foreseeable future. Dr. Botelho stated that this is the current plan, but schools will take up a more comprehensive technology review later this year about future needs. Ms. Bernier explained that during the last budget cycle, there was a discussion about teachers using MacBooks and there being communication issues between student and teacher. Drs. Dussault and Burke stated that teachers need the MacBooks to access curricula particularly math, art, and music where higher-powered devices are necessary.

When asked, Dr. Botelho indicated that approximately 50 projectors will be replaced at the cost indicated and their life expectancy is anywhere between six and ten years.

It was explained that the audio devices are intended to improve audibility in the classrooms for hearing impaired. Presently, the equipment used encompasses a variety of manufacturers and it has been found that some systems work better than others. They are hoping to replace with consistent devices to provide opportunities for all to hear in the classroom, no matter where seated or which classroom attending.

Since this is a significant investment in technology, concerns were raised about damage and security. Dr. Burke also mentioned that due to COVID, there are more devices going home with students. There is a maintenance plan offered for devices. This is the first year that financial responsibility was not placed on students and families because of COVID for the purpose of equity. There will be return to the \$35 maintenance fee soon.

Ms. Freeley began the presentation for the summary of facilities and transportation requests. She stated that the district is undergoing a facilities assessment. Until the results of that assessment are fully understood, the department felt it would be prudent to make only a conservative capital request this year focusing on regular standard requests or items of critical need.

This year's requests include requests for HVAC equipment, a maintenance truck, snow removal equipment, portable radios, furniture, and playground rehabilitation. The Committee had questions about the shade canopy as they approved a similar request for a shade canopy at a different facility, the early childhood center at the middle school. It was explained that this canopy was not the same. Other questions involved plans for prolonging the life of the canopies.

Ms. Keitner explained that there is Cottage PTO has a reserve fund specifically for playground equipment. She asked whether anyone has reached out to the Cottage PTO to help defray costs. Mr. Kopacz stated that he did have a conversation with Kevin Madden and Lisa. It was agreed that the PTO would provide funds as a donation. Mr. Kopacz will provide further information about how the PTO funds would be disbursed.

A request was submitted last year for snow removal equipment last year as well. The request this year is the same. This equipment is for doing sidewalks on school grounds, not on streets surrounding schools, reducing injury and helping to get snow cleared more quickly. This year's equipment would be used at Heights Elementary. Mr. Kopacz is trying to standardize equipment for efficiency.

Regarding the HVAC system, Mr. Kopacz stated that fans and motors require replacement, and the cost of the many small parts adds up. A contractor will be hired to complete this work.

Regarding the portable radios, it was explained that the radios are inventoried and signed for by the assigned individuals. The devices are mostly assigned. It was further explained that the radios can be used to reach public safety personnel.

In 2009, 16 vans were purchased. There are four currently that are not in service. Two others are being phased out due to age and mechanical condition.

Ms. Bernier asked whether schools had considered purchasing door stoppers for student and staff safety. These devices keep doors from being opened from the hallway and seemed to be a cost-effective means of safety. Mr. Kopacz said he would investigate it if Ms. Bernier could provide him with the information.

Dr. Botelho concluded with a summary of the current five-year capital plan. The Committee thanked Dr. Botelho, Dr. Dussault, Dr. Burke, Ms. Freeley, and Mr. Kopacz for their presentation and time tonight.

MOTION: (Bernier - Keitner) To adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm.

VOTED: 9-0-0 **PASSES**

Roll call vote: Smith-Lee, Switekowski, Shain, Dominique, Bernier, Wang, Keitner, Maidman, and Blaszkowski voting in favor of approval.