

MINUTES
CAPITAL OUTLAY COMMITTEE
January 23, 2020

The meeting of the Capital Outlay Committee was called to order in the Second Floor Meeting Room at Town Hall at 7:00 pm by Chair, Paul Linehan.

Members Present

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| Chair: | Paul Linehan |
| Board of Selectmen: | Emily Smith-Lee, William Heitin |
| School Committee: | Katie Curral-Dykeman; Fern Fergus |
| Finance Committee: | Ann Keitner, Anja Bernier |
| Town Administrator: | Frederic Turkington, Jr. |
| Finance Director: | Krishan Gupta |

Members Absent

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| Planning Board: | Rob Maidman, David Blazkowski |
| Finance Committee: | Gordon Gladstone |

Others Present

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| Civil Defense: | James Wright, Fire Chief; Michael Polimer |
| Police Department: | John Ford, Police Chief |

Administrative Items

Chair Paul Linehan asked the Capital Outlay Committee members to introduce themselves.

MOTION: (Heitin-Currul-Dykeman) To approve the regular session minutes of November 14, 2019.

VOTED: 4-0-2, November 14, 2019 minutes (Smith-Lee and Keitner abstained) **PASSES**

Before beginning deliberations, Mr. Linehan explained the Capital Outlay prevailing philosophy. This committee is fiscally conservative with borrowing with the understanding that all funds essentially come from the same pocket and reviews capital requests as carefully as possible. Debt reduction is the primary focus, and this is done by shifting capital expenses to direct purchase. Finance Director, Krishan Gupta provided a spreadsheet which outlines the five-year history of cash capital.

Mr. Turkington provide a brief history on the Town's debt. Until 2 years ago, a formula was used that represented debt as percent of the budget. Debt service has trended down by 3 percent over five years which helps the Town to afford projects like the high school.

With respect to short duration borrowing, Moody's and other rating agencies look at the percent of retired principal, using 10 years as a benchmark. Sharon is currently at 74.7 percent retired at the ten-year point. This illustrates Sharon's aggressive pay down policy which is viewed positively with credit rating companies. Last month, a similarly rated community secured 20-year bonds at a rate of 2.29 percent. It is expected that Sharon should secure a similar interest rate which would substantially bring down the cost of the high school.

Deliberations

Mr. Linehan explained that, as done in the past, he would go through the list of capital items presented by each department and take an omnibus vote on all items except those that are held for further discussion.

- Civil Defense generator \$11,000. Ms. Bernier explained that she wasn't here at that meeting and questioned whether this was the same item which was requested last year. It was advised that it is. This item will be held for further discussion as Ms. Bernier's opinion hasn't changed.
- Civil Defense additional funds for building.
- DPW roads sidewalks, large dump truck plow, small dump truck plow, and community center audio closet.
- IT Server. Mr. Turkington explained that the IT server has been approved by Sharon Standing Building Committee and will be funded as part of the Town Hall building project. This item was removed from consideration by the Capital Outlay Committee.
- IT Microsoft Outlook 365. Mr. Turkington explained that a proposal has been made to fund this item with previously unexpended capital funds plus cash. Mr. Linehan confirmed that this is a bondable item. Mr. Gupta indicated that it is.
- Recreation outdoor AED devices.
- Recreation pickup truck. Mr. Turkington explained that the department has agreed to purchase a three year off lease vehicle to save money.
- Ms. Keitner questioned the quote for the pickleball courts. When this item was originally presented, a quote was not presented. How many quotes were obtained? Mr. Turkington explained that they typically obtain only one quote. Recreation has since solicited additional quotes which has reduced the price to \$165,000 which is the amount which will be presented to the Community Preservation Committee.
- Police Department vehicles.
- Fire Department repeaters Mr. Turkington explained that Chief Wright has revised figures which reduces the request to \$200,000.
- Fire Department ice rescue snowmobile
- Fire Department rescue boat. Ms. Bernier would like this item to be held for further discussion.
- School Department district wide technology, Wi-Fi.
- School Department district wide renewal 1:1
- School Department district wide teacher laptops. Mr. Gupta advised that this item has been withdrawn from consideration by the School Department.

- School Department district wide projectors.
- School Department district wide replacement cycle, 8-year-old switches.
- School Department district wide computer lab replacement.
- School Department district wide annual technology replacement, computers. Ms. Bernier asked what the difference is between these computers and the 1:1 Chromebooks. It was explained that this item includes annual district wide replacement of 10 percent of a variety of all technology unrelated to the 1:1 program.
- School Department elementary technology, iPad carts replacement.
- School Department district wide furniture.
- School Department district wide sped vans.
- School Department music arts instrument replacements. Mr. Linehan inquired whether there was an update on the grant offered by Ernie Boch, Jr. Mr. Gupta explained that this grant will be requested, and any funds received will offset what is borrowed.

Mr. Linehan listed the Water Department items with the understanding that the Capital Outlay Committee has no purview and will not vote these items. They are a large dump truck with plow - \$205,000; water main replacement - \$500,000, WMRA emergency water connection - \$150,000; and water meter replacement - \$1 million. Mr. Linehan confirmed that these items are expended with water fees.

MOTION: (Heitin-Bernier) To approve all items discussed except two held items, the Civil Defense generator and Fire Department rescue boat.

VOTED: 6-0-0 **PASSES**

Held Items

Civil Defense Generator

Mr. Polimer explained that the Town has 2 electrical systems, a single phase or residential system and a commercial, 3 phase system. Civil Defense is charged with emergency preparedness. Many buildings have stand-by generators, but they are known to fail. If they during a crisis, it can affect emergency communications. Civil Defense presently as two large 3 phase generators but they are too powerful for many smaller systems. This 12k watt generator can power all IT equipment in an emergency. Mr. Polimer feels this piece of equipment is a necessary piece of equipment for emergency preparedness. Mr. Linehan asked whether the generators are duty cycled when not in use. It was explained that because today's fuel contains ethanol, it is better not to. Ms. Bernier explained that her concern is not about the amount of the generator, rather about need. If the generator is not immediately necessary and the chance of it being used is so small, it makes it nice to have but not necessary.

It was explained that Civil Defense gradually tries to build resources over time. Their capital item list came about through a vetted process which was culled back. Want list is parsed out from year to year. Dpeartment

respects the fiscal position of the Town and puts forth only equipment of most urgent need. Ms. Smith-Lee commented this generator could keep some small critical infrastructure running.

MOTION: (Smith-Lee-Bernier) To approve the Civil Defense request for a 12,000-kW generator in the amount of \$11,000.

VOTED: 5-1-0 **PASSES**

Fire Department rescue boat

Chief Wright explained that Recreation provides an old skiff which is not designed for water rescue. This boat cannot carry adequate personnel in an emergency. If there are multiple victims, the present boat wouldn't be adequate in an emergency. The proposed equipment opens and folds down to slide a victim into the boat. If two boats collide, or there is a boat/kayak collision, this equipment would be critical. The current boat has capacity for 4 exclusively and would be still be used by recreation. The Town does have a jet ski with sled in back. Jet ski is designed for one person. The Department has put more than one person on it. If used, the victim gets transported and one EMS member stays behind. It was asked whether there has yet been an incident. There was one in 1987. A boat leaving the boat launch collided with a jet ski. The current boat has been used for 8 or 9 years. Was a similar boat proposed in the past? Chief Wright explained that about 10 years ago the Fire Department boat sustained damage which was when the jet ski was purchased. The Recreation Department obtained the present boat as a bequest from a resident. Similar equipment has been cut from capital plan in the past. Ms. Fergus confirmed that the Department does not have the correct equipment for the job. Chief Wright explained that most area communities with a large body of water do have a rescue boat. It was asked where this equipment would be housed. Discussions with the Recreation Department and Conservation Commission have centered around erecting a temporary facility at the beach. Chief Wright feels it would be a better option to house the jet ski at the beach to reach a victim quickly in emergency while awaiting the launch of the rescue boat. It is proposed that the rescue boat will be housed at Public Safety to deter vandalism. Chief Wright further explained that the rescue boat would always be ready; it would be hooked up to a vehicle and easily deployed. Although he would love to have permanent boat house, it is not likely.

MOTION: (Smith-Lee-Keitner) To approve the Fire Department request for a rescue boat in the amount of \$30,000.

VOTED: 6-0-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: (Heitin-Smith-Lee) To adjourn the meeting at 8:04 pm.

VOTED: 6-0-0 **PASSES**