

MINUTES
CAPITAL OUTLAY COMMITTEE
November 6, 2023

Members Present

Chair:	William Heitin
Select Board:	Hanna Switekowski, Emily E. Smith-Lee, Kiana Pierre-Louis
Finance Committee:	Anja Bernier, Jada Wang, Keith Morris
Planning Board:	Rob Maidman, David Blaszkowsky
School Committee:	Adam Shain, Wenxiao Tiano
Town Administrator:	Frederic Turkington, Jr.
Finance Director:	Krishan Gupta

Members Absent

School Committee:	Prisnel Dominique, Alternate
Planning Board:	Shannon McLaughlin, Alternate

Others Present

Fire Department:	Michael Madden, Fire Chief
Police Department:	Steve Coffey, Police Chief Brad Fitzhenry, Deputy Police Chief

Administrative Items

Mr. Heitin called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and asked the members to introduce themselves. He then proceeded to call for a vote on the minutes of the February 2, 2023 decision meeting.

MOTION: To approve the regular session minutes of February 2, 2023.
(Bernier -Switekowski)

VOTED: 8-0-0 **PASSES**

Fire Department – Chief Michael Madden

Chief Madden provided an update on the status of previous capital requests and purchases.

With respect to the fiscal 2025 capital request, Chief Madden discussed the condition of the department's fire engines, noting that the 1992 engine is 31 years old and lacks current safety features. Additionally, the 2010 Pierce engine has structural damage and significant repair costs. Chief Madden proposed replacing both engines due to cost increases and longer lead times for new engines. He highlighted the plan to acquire two new engines, considering the 36 to 40-month build time and a 33% cost increase since 2021. The estimated cost for the two engines is \$2.3 million, driven by EPA requirements for engine upgrades in 2027 and 2030, which would incur additional costs if delayed.

The discussion also addressed concerns about the significant cost increase over time and the potential impact of delaying the purchase. Chief Madden explained that delaying the purchase could lead to long delays in obtaining new fire trucks due to supply chain issues and shortages, potentially affecting the ability to provide firefighting services effectively.

There were questions and considerations raised regarding the timing of the purchase, potential changes in the fire department's staffing levels, and the impact of delayed procurement on future costs. The Chief provided insights into the utilization of quick response vehicles, staffing considerations, and the impact of delayed procurement on the department's operations.

Furthermore, the availability of grant money was emphasized. Chief Madden mentioned the possibility of applying for an AFG grant to help fund the replacement of the older engine, with potential reductions in cost through grant funding and the use of environmentally friendly equipment.

The Chief thanked the Committee for their consideration.

Police Department – Chief Steve Coffey

Chief Coffey explained that the radio repeaters for cruisers that were requested last year did not perform as hoped so the purchase was abandoned. Mr. Gupta advised that the funds would be either turned over or reallocated.

The police department is requesting three vehicles this year, two hybrid cruisers and a Chevy Tahoe for the supervisor's vehicle. The hybrids have faced difficulties, especially with longer wait times for orders. There were also discussions about the possibility of switching to fully electric vehicles, considering the trend observed in other police departments. The department is evaluating options and discussing with the Department of Public Works about potential charging stations at the Public Safety Building. The consideration of electric vehicles aligns with the town's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2050, and it was mentioned that grants through the Green Communities Act could support the installation of charging stations. The department is being mindful of the overall impact of these decisions in achieving the town's environmental goals.

The Chief thanked the Committee for their consideration.

Mr. Turkington reminded the Committee that the next meeting would be Monday, November 13 at 7pm to hear about the requests by the Recreation and Public Works departments. Seeing nothing further to come before the Committee, the chair called for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: To adjourn at 7:35 pm.
(Shain - Bernier)

VOTED: 8-0-0 **PASSES**