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Town of Swampscott
Capital Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday October 4th, 2022, 5:00 PM

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Richard Raymond (Chair) Kelley Begin, David Brodsky, Ryan Hale, Jeremiah Sullivan

OTHER TOWN OFFICIALS PRESENT

MaryEllen Fletcher, Select Board Member; Amy Sarro, Director of Administration & Finance; Gino Cresta, Asst. Town Administrator – Operations and Public Works Director; Graham Archer, Fire Chief; Max Kasper, Facilities Director; Patrick Luddy, Treasurer/Collector; Heidi Whear, Director of Aging Services; Jonathan Nichols; Public Library Director

5:00PM Meeting Called to Order

Lead Service Investigation – DPW (Special Town Meeting)

GC summarized the project, which includes an inventory of lead service pipes in town and pipes to homes. The project is to be funded by a DEP grant which is 100% Reimbursable. The grant opportunity is first-come, first-serve which is why this project is being considered for Special Town meeting.

RH commented he was surprised about the size of the appropriation for the project given that there are 5,000 connections.

GC felt the appropriation was high and the project may come under budget. There will be use of in-house labor to review record cards and engineering records for indications of lead piping in service. There will be a need to access some homes to determine if they have a lead service connection or a copper pipe.

KB asked if the grant was truly first-come, first-serve or if there was another compelling reason to move forward with the project for special town meeting.

GC responded that the grant is first-come, first serve, and due to limited funding availability it felt appropriate to request funding sooner rather than later.

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RH) this project was recommended for approval at special town meeting.

Rehabilitation of Abbott park – Community Development (Special Town Meeting)

\$100,000 was earmarked in FY2024 for the school department in last year's plans.

\$100,000 grant was approved from the state

RH asked for information regarding timing of the park rehabilitation and how it overlaps with the renovation of the school. MG commented that Abbott park is a community park and construction would be targeted to begin on July 1st of 2023, and be complete in time for the new school year to start in September.

RH asked if the construction would displace the park league program that the Recreation department runs. MG commented that the park league program could still safely be relocated to the large field at Abbott park while construction is underway, and the larger equipment would also remain available to use.

RH commented on access to the site; the design does not appear to accommodate more on-site parking but the rail trail will allow non-vehicular traffic to access the park.

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (RH) this project was recommended for approval at Special Town Meeting.

Design Services for Abbott Park – Community Development

MG summarized that the project would evaluate the corner area of Paradise and Norfolk to determine if the space can be used more efficiently.

Wayfinding Signage and Branding

MG summarized a request for \$50,000 in funding for wayfinding signage around town as well as brandin, which would all help direct residents to beaches, open spaces, businesses, etc. MG highlighted space such as the lookout section between Blythswood and White Court - a stone overlook to the ocean toward Nahant and Boston. There is not a lot of existing positive and inviting signage to direct traffic to points of interest such as this.

MG clarified that the funding would cover consulting costs to develop a plan for signage and branding.

JS asked for clarification on how the cost estimate arrived at \$50,000. He recalled that Pete Kane had submitted a similar proposal in the past.

MG stated she had contacted three vendors for quotes, and only received one quote back which was from Favermann Design company. The company has worked with other municipalities in the past and that is the basis of the cost estimate.

MG commented that she would check in with Pete Kane on any past projects that may have been proposed.

RH asked MG if she could find out from the vendor if there is training on how to apply the branding in practice to make sure that it is utilized fully by departments in town.

Service Enhancements (Desks & Furniture) - Library

JN summarized that current furniture arrangements do not address the needs of the library patrons. Service desks, reference desks, and children's room desks have failed which impact function of key service points.

JN highlighted one solution the library would like to implement is a Parental Pod; a built-in solution which allows a parent to be working on a computer with a child in a play area. Libraries in Boston and Newton have adopted these and have been successful/popular.

JS asked if there had been any more discussions at the library regarding a larger-scale renovation. JN commented that he would conservatively say that project is 5-10 years away; the design is not finalized, COVID has slowed the design process, and there is fundraising to be done in advance. JN further commented that this project would act as a stop-gap and allow the library to maintain functionality while they await a larger renovation project in the future.

RH asked if the project cost only covers materials fabricated by MassCOR per their quotes or if it covered installation and demolition costs as well. JN confirmed the cost estimate covers fabrication, delivery, and installation. Demolition is not included and would be coordinated with DPW, and Facilities. JN is comfortable using operating funds from the library budget to cover demolition as necessary. JN commented he was also comfortable supplementing up to a third of the project cost from the library's state aid, if necessary.

JS asked if this was a project recommended for Fall Town Meeting. Patrick confirmed it was not. RH asked JN if he felt the project was emergent and would benefit from being accelerated. JN commented that the children's desk needs to be checked out, but that the overall project could wait for annual town meeting. He was going to circle back with MK regarding the condition of the children's desk.

Electric Van for Medical Rides – Senior Center

Have two vans; oldest one is 2008 and is in ok condition. Ideal would be to have a smaller minivan with a ramp. There are 12-passenger vans; never take more than three people at a time on medical rides. 2019 survey needs assessment; 18% of our senior population misses doctors appointments because of transportation issues. Is working on the operating budget to find funds for additional van drivers. Meeting with Asst. Town Administrator tomorrow to discuss converting fleet to electric.

Current estimate is \$40,000 – might be low.

JS commented HW should meet with Gino to discuss fleet/determine if cost is appropriate for the vehicle

Center for Active Living – Senior Center

HW highlighted statistics on the aging population in town. The senior center is increasing staff and working on multigenerational programming. 208 new members joined in 2021; another 188 members joined in 2022 indicating continued growth.

HW discussed some challenges the senior center facility faces ie. Parking limitations exist at the facility shared with the high school. Currently can accommodate lunch for up to 24 patrons until new stove is installed. Chairs and tables can be lined up in the hallways and are stackable

allowing the room to be converted to a gymnasium space. A durable medical equipment exchange program is very popular and requires storage space. HW summarized that the building is extremely well-utilized.

HW walked through statistics of senior centers in several other communities referencing Sq feet per person; Swampscott was at 1.28 which was the lowest amongst the sample. HW commented that the total aging population is 5,000. HW referenced Harvard's Longitudinal Study on Aging which states senior people are 3x as happy when they interact with the younger generation

HW summarized the idea of a Senior Center for Active Living as a solution under Hadley Re-Use Committee report – Scenario 2 contemplating senior affordable housing in main building, and public space in first floor of addition.

HW cited figures from other communities where \$455 per sqft was spent to construct a new facility. HW commented that the location of Hadley would allow access via foot to post office, the library, parks, and downtown for seniors if it were used in this manner.

RH asked if HW had data on whether whole families are likely to move to another city or town if an elder needs to move to an assisted living facility, and such a facility is not available in Swampscott, or vice-versa. RH also asked if multi-generational programming attracts these families to town.

HW commented she has not seen data, but that she sees more and more elders moving in with their family in town as opposed to the family moving out of town to be close to family.

JS commented that he was the CIC representative on the Hadley Re-Use committee and he highlighted that a certain amount of square feet is necessary to make affordable housing. He recommended that HW bring up these recommendations with the committee when it is reconstituted.

Elevator Modifications – Facilities

MK summarized the request which stems from state building code changes. The code changes require upgrades to elevators in public buildings. The town is allowed to operate elevators through the end of the year without enforcement action. There are very few vendors that perform this type of work; the quote MK received from our elevator maintenance contractor has an escalation clause, i.e. the longer the project is deferred, the higher the cost will be.

MK does not like the approach of the vendor and is having conversations with other vendors seeking fairer pricing. The request funds the quote received from Delta Beckwith, with hopes that we will be able to negotiate a better deal and that the project would come in under budget. MK is confident that he will obtain pricing that is better than the existing quote.

JS asked for clarification that the project addresses all elevators in the town's building. MK confirmed the appropriation would cover elevators in all town and school buildings.

MK asked the committee if the appropriation can be amended/reduced should project costs come in under budget.

JS confirmed that if the project comes in under budget the difference could be rescinded. AS commented that the appropriation could be reduced on the town meeting floor when the finance committee makes their motion if pricing is known prior to Town Meeting.

Town Hall Garage Repairs – Facilities

MK summarized an incident that occurred where a piece of equipment breached the concrete floor in the garage at town hall. Repairs are needed to all bays of the garage, even though only one bay was breached because each bay has the same structural deficiency. No one was seriously injured in the incident and a comprehensive repair to the garage will prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

Mk commented that there is a pending Insurance claim outstanding for the damage to the garage. The insurance company has released a small amount of funds, which only cover project costs up to this point. It is expected that the insurance company will release additional funds, however it is also expected that the insurance company will not fund repairs to the entire garage since it was only breached in one bay.

The cost estimate is conservative and it is anticipated that actual costs will be less.

MEF commented that she was unclear on the total project cost, and would like to know how much funding insurance will contribute to the repairs and if the recreation revolving fund would contribute any funds to the repair.

AS commented that recreation revolving funds cannot be applied to a repair of a town building, such as the carriage house.

MK highlighted some cost estimates by component for the project: Removal of Equipment - \$20,000; Removal of Product - \$2,000; Structural Engineering - \$5,000; Repair of Garage \$70,000 approximately (unknown, must be bid out)

On **MOTION** (JS) and **SECONDED** (KB), favorable action on Elevator Modifications and Town Hall Garage Repairs is recommended to town meeting.

Replacement of Cascade System – Fire Department

GA explained that the cascade system refills self-contained breathing apparatus equipment that is used in the fire departments public safety responses. The existing system is 27 years old and was out of service for an extended period of time during the past, and is currently out of service. Parts are scarce and expensive due to system age.

GA estimates the replacement cost to be \$83,000 and expects a replacement unit to last twenty years.

JS commented on the low Collins Center method score for this project. Graham responded that he tried not to be hyperbolic with his scoring. While the cascade system is out of service, the department can rely on neighboring communities to fill the SCBA, such as Lynn.

Removal of Municipal Fire Alarm System – Fire Department

GA explained that legacy wired alarm boxes exist on old buildings, street corners etc. There is a brass wheel with cogs in the system, which taps out morse code to the fire station. A member of the fire department decodes the message and initiates response. There are many miles of copper wire around town associated with the connection of this system. If a telephone pole is compromised, the department may lose a dozen boxes at a time.

GA explains the department has been in the process of upgrading these systems. This request is for phase 3 of the project which funds removal of the copper wire around town. The fire department has already upgraded equipment at the station to receive wireless signals and has begun the process of notifying businesses of the transition to wireless systems.

Replacement of Ladder Truck – Fire Department

GA summarized the current state of the town's ladder truck. The truck is increasingly unreliable and experiences frequent breakdowns, some of which are significant. Breakdowns, regardless of severity, render equipment inoperable when needed. The truck is currently awaiting a series of repairs. The existing ladder truck's original manufacturer has gone out of business, so the parts for the trucks are hard to find and increasingly expensive.

Ladder Trucks typically have a useful life of appx. twenty years.

The purchase of a new ladder truck requires 24-30 months lead time with current supply chain conditions. This has worsened since the truck was originally added to the plan (lead time use to be 8-10 months). GA anticipates six companies would bid on this project.

RH asked for data on calls that required the ladder truck in the past year and number of instances where aid was required from a neighboring community due to the inoperable ladder truck. GA commented that he was able to borrow a ladder truck from Malden while the town's ladder truck was out of service for extensive repairs. GA further commented that although the fire department does not need its ladder truck to respond to every call, it does need to be always available and operable in the event it is needed for a response. GA stated the ladder truck typically responds to calls such as lock outs, carbon monoxide and others.

JS asked GA if he had a sense of what the recent ladder truck repair costs have been. GA commented that the cost varies a lot depending on the type of repair. For example, the ladder truck has an aerial platform with corrosion issues in the bucket. The repair to the bucket cost \$30,000. There are smaller but more frequent hydraulic, pneumatic, and electronic issues that have had to be addressed.

JS asked GA if there was a market to buy a surplus truck from a neighboring community, such as Malden, that would cover the departments needs for ten or so years. GA commented that ten-years of use would be a stretch for a decommissioned truck, however he has not done a ton of research on used vehicles. The Malden vehicle is not perfect and does have some rotted compartments etc. There is a better used-market for engine trucks than ladder trucks.

RH asked GA if he had an inventory of the fire departments assets with their age and condition that could be shared with the CIC. GA commented he does not have a comprehensive plan for equipment replacement that could be shared at this time but would like to develop one.

JS asked for follow-up conversation on the ladder truck since it comes up often and wants to avoid a situation where the ladder truck fails without a plan in place.

DB asked GA to provide information about regionalization opportunities.

RH asked if a report could be obtained to determine whether the town needed a ladder truck or if it could rely on mutual aid for this type of response.

Meeting Adjourned 8:00 pm



True Attest,

Patrick Luddy

Treasurer/Collector

Approved by vote of the Capital Improvement Committee 9/12/2023