

Capital Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes

Montague Town Hall, Upstairs Conference Room

One Avenue A, Turners Falls

2:30pm Wednesday, June 27, 2018

Attendees: Capital Improvement Committee (CIC) members Fred Bowman, Greg Garrison, Josh Lively, Bob Obear, and Steven Ellis. Montague DPW Superintendent Tom Bergeron and Building Inspector Chris Rice; Montague Energy Committee members Tim Van Egmond and Chris Mason; GMRSD CIC liaison Mike Langknecht, Superintendent Michael Sullivan, and Business Manager Joanne Blier; and Jonathan Parrot, of the MA DOER were also in attendance. Meeting called to order at 3:42 PM by Chairman Fred Bowman.

I. Review and approval of minutes

- Mr. Garrison moved to approve minutes of June 6, Mr. Lively seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

II. GMRSD Capital Project Updates

Conversation began with a review of several ongoing projects.

- Hillcrest electrical improvements: This is in live bidding at present and bid opening is pending. Expect to begin that work this summer/fall.
- Hillcrest stage: Accessibility and other improvements to the stage are complete.
- Admin building pillars: Installation of new pillars and repair of the front entry to the administration building has been delayed due to the building facilities team being down a man (1 of 2 staff) for much of the past year due to temporary disability. Building Inspector is confident in Facilities Manager Jim Huber's ability to oversee the project. Foundation work is in progress and arrangements for use of a crane are also in process.
- Sheffield hot water heaters: Installation is currently in process.
- Sheffield rooftop heating units: Installation of new rooftop units (RTUs) is scheduled for late summer. Receipt of a better quote allows replacement of three units rather than two.
- Building Management System at the middle/high school: Initial finding is that the quote for this project may come in lower than expected. This has not yet been formally bid.
- Intercoms: Installation of new intercom systems for Hillcrest and Sheffield is expected to be bid in July. Will be managed by the district's technology manager.
- Hillcrest security doors/entry way: Jim Huber was not present to discuss specifics of his approach to this project, which he intends to do with district staff. Building inspector will contact Mr. Huber to ensure the solution is ADA compliant.

III. GMRSD Future Capital Project Needs

Discussion focused on identifying future needs, which will be incorporated into the Town capital plan and likely also into the lease renewal agreement between the Town of Montague and the Gill-Montague Regional School District for the Hillcrest, Sheffield, and administration buildings. Top priorities include:

- Removing existing underground oil storage tanks from the Sheffield and Hillcrest elementary school sites.

One of these, nearer to Sheffield, is single wall plastic and is lower priority than the others, which are aging steel tanks from the 1950s. Expected cost of replacing all three with above ground tanks is about \$650,000. The district has considered a few options for replacement, including above and in-ground, and has a spare 10,000 gallon tank that it may be able to re-use. A question clouding how to handle this project has been whether it makes sense to “buy in” to oil as a heating source for the long term. There’s insufficient gas pressure—and a moratorium—at present to allow a conversation to gas.

Sheffield has a dual gas-oil system in place, the other buildings do not. Admin Building has a rebuilt boiler, while Hillcrests is believed to be an older unit and has not had major upgrades.

Discussion of this project was joined by Energy Committee member Chris Mason and state DOER coordinator, Jonathan Parrot. Mr. Mason is there to share information about biomass options. DOER would pay 50% of the cost of building a biomass boiler and boiler room. The state has large contracts for wood chips and subsidizes the cost to consumers, and also offers renewable energy credits that return revenue of \$15 per ton used. The net cost per ton of biomass fuel is in the vicinity of \$5,, 10% of actual cost. The waste from these systems is compostable and they are 75% efficient. Cooley Dickinson Hospital has used one for decades.

Conversation referenced the differences between this and other biomass projects proposed for the region in the past. This uses different and much cleaner fuel. There are some mechanical issues with augers getting jammed up and it would require more staff to operate and maintain the system. Incentives are abundant and it might make it a very cost efficient solution. The Forest Service would pay for feasibility and design, allowing the town to further consider the economics, reliability and suitability of such a system before investment.

While there is some hesitation relative to whether this would be the right solution for Montague, there was general agreement that it is worth leveraging state and federal resources to have free study of the issue. The Montague Energy Committee will work with the GMRSD and the Montague Planning Department to consider a possible DOER META grant submission this summer.

- Attending to the repointing of masonry at all three buildings, as necessary.
- Replacing the RTUs for the gym and auditorium at Sheffield Elementary School.
- Improvements to parking lots near the administration building, which are presently just re-purposed tennis courts, not intended for weights associated with vehicles.
- Need to address accessibility problems at the Administration Building to allow better utilization of those spaces, given concerns about possible overcrowding at Hillcrest in the coming years (though enrollment projections are flat, at present) and the need for an increased number of specialized spaces to serve student needs in Sheffield.
- Ability to lock down the Sheffield gym in case of emergency.

IV. Meeting adjournment

Mr. Ellis moved to adjourn at 4:00 pm and Mr. Lively seconded. Motion passed 5-0.