

Capital Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes
Montague Town Hall, Downstairs Conference Room
One Avenue A, Turners Falls MA
February 19th, 2020

Attendees: Capital Improvements Committee members: Josh Lively, Greg Garrison, Steve Ellis, Fred Bowman. Energy Committee member Ariel Elan. Water Pollution Control Facility Representatives, Bob Trombley and Kevin Boissonnault.

Meeting called to order at 3pm.

I. Approve meeting minutes of February 5th and February 12th.

- Mr. Garrison moves to approve the meeting minutes of February 5th. Mr. Bowman seconds. Passes 4-0.
- Mr. Garrison moves to approve meeting minutes of February 12th. Mr. Bowman seconds. Passes 4-0.

II. Discussion of Water Pollution Control Facility Requests.

The committee briefly reviewed the full slate of original WPCF special article requests. Several are not yet ready for consideration, as current quotes are not in all cases available.

Pump and Blower upgrades. To be paid in part by \$135,000 in DEP Gap II grant funds. Reviewed quotes from three firms for engineering design. The WPCF would prefer to use DPC, which believes that the amount of funding requested is likely sufficient to cover the upgrades - but as of yet the design isn't complete. The requested amount for the special articles \$100,000 and the estimated annual electric savings is figured around 30%-40% of the current usage; which would amount to approximately \$20,000-\$40,000 per year in cost reduction.

The committee notices the potential for a 4-5 year payback and suggests to WPCF representatives update the request form to present this information to the public. The committee re-affirmed their preliminary vote to recommend \$100,000 for this pump and blower upgrade. The committee then briefly discussed and also reaffirmed its recommendation for \$40,000 for replacement of primary sludge pump #2, 15,439.53 to come from prior appropriation for the same purpose (article 19 of 5/7/16 ATM).

Disinfection System Upgrade. This project is a requirement of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Currently the WPCF utilizes large one ton pressurized chlorine tanks to disinfect and treat incoming waste water. Several acceptable options for upgrade are currently being considered. Reduction of tank size to 150 lb units is one option, as is upgrading the safety procedures of the current one ton tanks. Wright-Pierce engineers has been consulted and the firm does not believe that an engineering study is needed to complete the project. Current cost projections are in the \$250,000 range.

The committee discusses the large ticket price of combined special article requests. Members discuss the need to properly investigate and consider the range of available grants which could help offset costs. Even with the possibility of grant funding it is believed that debt exclusion will be the best option to achieve funding, once the articles/projects are more thoroughly investigated.

Montague Center Pump Station Upgrade. The committee wonders if the presented cost in the request accurately reflects the work scope. Representatives from the WPCF answer that this is the best estimate of cost based on past experience with other pump stations in town, though they did not include the same required improvements to the concrete structure. The project would not only replace the electrical controls but would also address the failing concrete in the wet well as well as create a bypass which would serve Montague Center in the event of a system failure. Total project cost is estimated at \$150,000.

Mr. Garrison poses that the committee make mention of the need to address several seemingly critical issues at the WPCF in their annual report to the Finance Committee, and share the idea that a three to five year strategy be developed which would address these needs. Suggests that at the moment the committee is not ready to recommend the majority of these articles without a thoughtful and well planned approach to realize their completion.

Mr. Ellis states that the committee needs to have a greater understanding of what other major improvements have to be considered outside of current requests.

Mr. Ellis moves to take no further action on requested WPCF articles, but to inform the Finance Committee that the CIC recognizes the necessity of the unaddressed capital articles submitted in this budget cycle. We urge further discussion of these and other WPCF capital needs, available sources of funding, and sewer billing practices to help the Town determine the best path forward. Mr. Garrison seconds. Passes 4-0.

III. Discussion of updates relative to any other requests.

No changes to any of the special article requests at this time that we are aware of.

IV. Confirm schedule for remaining interviews and upcoming milestones.

The Library is coming in to present on 2/26. It is believed that there is no need to bring in the DPW to discuss the discretionary fund but members acknowledged that it may be a tight year financially and this is an area that has been trimmed in the past.

The committee will vote on its final recommendations on 3/4 and discuss the CIC Report to the Finance Committee. Report draft is expected to be completed by 3/11.

V. Adjournment.

Mr. Garrison moves to adjourn. Mr. Bowman seconds. Passes 4-0.