

Capital Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting Conducted Via Zoom

February 24, 2021

Attendees: Capital Improvements Committee members: Steve Ellis, Fred Bowman, Bob Obear, Greg Garrison.

Mr. Obear served in the role of chair in Mr. Lively's absence.

1. Approve Meeting Minutes

None prepared.

2. Discuss Requests for Special Accounts to Support Capital Project Needs, Execution and Planning

a Unsafe/Unhealthy Buildings (\$25,000)

Reviewed request description and received comments. Mr. Obear views this as a good resource given that the Town owns distressed properties that can have urgent capital needs. Mr. Ellis comments that the expenses in this area can be more than what Community Development Discretionary receipts can account for. We had to spend \$32,500 on emergency Strathmore Mill roof repairs in spring 2020 – if we hadn't had money remaining in a capital article for that purpose, it would have been an issue. Mr. Garrison concurs and sees value in not drawing such funds from Reserve Accounts that are better suited to supporting the operating budget. The intent would be to ensure a minimum balance of \$25,000 in this account through annual appropriation, as necessary.

Mr. Obear moves to recommend the special article request for \$25,000 to fund unexpected repairs or needs related to unsafe/unhealthy buildings or property, including those in town ownership or, in certain instances, abandoned properties. Said account to be utilized with the approval of the Selectboard. Mr. Garrison seconds. Roll Call Vote, motion passes 4-0.

b Unexpected Engineering and Survey Services (\$25,000)

Reviewed request description and received comments. Mr. Garrison feels this request also makes sense. Every time we run into a problem or opportunity we need this support. Mr. Bowman concurs. Mr. Ellis offered some examples where that has been the case and project might have been improved through availability of this funding. Noted that the Town does not have an engineer on staff to fall back on. The intent would be to ensure a minimum balance of \$25,000 in this account through annual appropriation, as necessary.

Mr. Obear moves to recommend the special article request for \$25,000 to fund unexpected or unplanned needs for engineering, survey and related services to allow timely response to issues and opportunities that rely on such support. Said account to be utilized with the approval of the Selectboard. Mr. Bowman seconds. Roll Call Vote, motion passes 4-0.

c Bid/Project Overrun (\$25,000)

Reviewed request description and received comments. Mr. Ellis offered explanation that there are times when bids may come in higher than anticipated, consuming the allotted project contingency. In some cases, a project can be re-bid, but a short construction season does not always allow for this. Likewise, there can be discoveries during engineering or construction that increase the cost marginally, to a point that procurement rules allow, but remaining contingency does not. In these cases, this fund would help ensure needed projects can proceed.

It was discussed that there should be limits on this. Mr. Garrison liked the proposed limits that it be used only on expenses for projects approved by Town Meeting and that the amount used could not exceed 10% of the value of the Town Meeting appropriation. The intent would be to ensure a minimum balance of \$25,000 in this account through annual appropriation, as necessary.

Mr. Obear moves to recommend the special article request for \$25,000 to create a fund to account for circumstances when a Town Meeting appropriation is inadequate due to higher than expected bids or issues encountered during engineering or construction. The amount to be applied may not exceed 10% of the Town Meeting appropriation for the project or \$25,000, whichever is lower. Said account to be utilized with the approval of the Selectboard. Mr. Garrison seconds. Roll Call Vote, motion passes 4-0.

d Building Assessment and Capital Plan Study (\$50,000)

Reviewed request description and received comments. Mr. Garrison expressed his belief that this is something the Town needs. We need to have an understanding of major expenses so they can be considered and planned for. Mr. Obear and Mr. Bowman concurred. Reviewed cost of previously completed school building assessments and library assessments and feeling is that cost for most town structures will bid at up to \$5,000 per structure.

Several structures remain to be assessed, including Town Hall, the Council on Aging, the WPCF Building (process system would need to be separate), Police Department, Unity Park Fieldhouse, Colle Building, Shea Theater and Central Street School; and possibly the airport HQ and other buildings. Any balance may be applied to support for a consultant to assist in discussions with building occupants and development of the formal report. This project would not encompass roads and bridges. State does bridge inspections, FRCOG Is doing culvert assessment, DPW reviews roads and sidewalks. Assumption is buildings component will cost in vicinity of \$40,000 when bid.

Mr. Obear moves to recommend the special article request for \$50,000 to fund capital plan development, included Town building assessments and support for the development of capital planning document. Mr. Garrison seconds. Roll Call Vote, motion passes 4-0.

3. Discuss Any Matters of Relevance to Feb 25 Special Town Meeting

Mr. Ellis shared that the Selectboard and Finance Committee met on Monday, February 22 to revisit their recommendations relative to the proposed Airport Commission purchase of Pioneer Aviation in order to assess whether new information regarding the Airport's cost of borrowing would affect their recommendations. While they did not vote, both boards' members reaffirmed their favorable recommendations while acknowledging the opportunities and risks they saw in the proposal.

4. Hear Any Capital Project Updates

None.

5. Set Meeting Schedule

Meet March 3rd at 3pm to consider any requested articles for which recommendations have not been made. Meet the following week to review draft report to Finance Committee. Meeting time and date changed from usual to accommodate member schedule. Thursday, March 11 at 3:30pm.

6. 7. Adjournment.

Mr. Ellis moves to adjourn. Mr. Garrison seconds. Roll call vote passes 4-0.