

Capital Improvement Committee
FY 19 Report to the Finance Committee
Recommendations related to FY20 Capital Article Requests

The Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) has been meeting frequently since January 1st, engaging in discussion with department heads to evaluate capital needs as outlined by Special Article Request submissions. The Special Article Request forms that were adopted and implemented last year continue to serve as the template for outlining and presenting the capital needs of each department. This year's report of recommendations has been further enhanced with the adoption of defined criteria/rationale for recommendations that support implementation of a new evaluation system.

This report first presents the CIC's evaluation criteria and approach, continues to present recommendations related to two projects considered as part of this cycle that have already been funded, and then presents recommendations for all other capital and building improvement projects submitted for consideration in the FY20 budget cycle.

I. Approach to Evaluation of Requested Articles

A. Defined Criteria/Rationale

Public Safety: Does the capital improvement rectify a safety concern or otherwise prevent a potential public safety issue?

example: Installing the new front porch/egress stairs at the senior center. The old porch egress had stairs with risers that were inches higher than what is allowed by building code, resulting in the potential of a dangerous fall.

Cost avoidance: Will the capital improvement save the town financially?

example: Replacing the controls at Denton Street pump station. New equipment can be monitored remotely resulting in less occasions of having to send crew out to check on system.

Service Interruption: Does the capital improvement prevent an interruption in services?

example: Replacing the building management system and components at TFHS. Without upgrading and replacing the hardware and software the school would be vulnerable to losing its ability to operate the equipment necessary to control classroom temperatures. The original equipment is obsolete and no longer supported by the service provider.

Other- Any other reason identified and relevant.

B. Grading System

Highly Recommend The committee strongly believes that the capital improvement should be funded and completed immediately. The special article request form submitted is complete and cost estimates appear reasonable. The rationale for the improvement meets one or more identified criteria.

Recommend: Given appropriate budget space, the committee believes that the capital improvement should be funded, although they may not be as urgent as projects graded.

Recommend with reservations: The committee would normally recommend the capital improvement, except the request form is incomplete, lacks a professional estimate, or doesn't address or account for the long term needs and concerns of the town.

Does not recommend: The committee does not recommend moving forward with the capital improvement as it was presented. This may be due to the nature or timing of the project, the quality of quote or other information submitted to support the article, or for other reasons.

II. Capital Improvement Articles

Summary of Submissions and Recommendations

The committee considered sixteen Special Article Requests this year, ten of which are true Capital Articles with costs estimated to be above \$25,000. Six articles are Non-Capital Requests related very directly to building maintenance that the committee elected to offer recommendations on with agreement from the Finance Committee. The first two of these Special Article Requests were previously approved by Special Town Meeting in February 2019.

A. Articles previously approved

Selectboard: Replace, repair and insulate Town Hall Annex and lower roof sections \$165,000

Replacement of Town Hall Annex roof as well as rear entry and mechanical room roofs. The Town Hall Annex roof is actively leaking, its roof drains are failing, and the entire soffit system is deteriorating. Likewise, the roof over the mechanical room is covered in moss. This is the roof where the AC condenser sits. The rear entry roof is newer and doesn't not require replacement, but its life can be extended with the use of walkway pads at strategic locations in order to reduce damage caused by falling snow and ice from the main roof. Both roofs being replaced will also receive an R-30 foam insulation upgrade.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Highly Recommended.***

Cost Avoidance. The Town Hall Annex roof currently has several active leaks, including one that drips onto a steel girder which supports a large section of the roof. If left unattended the leak will eventually compromise the structural steel and the girder would need replacement. The roof is in excess of 50 years in age and new leaks are reported as others are patched.

Public Safety: Open leaks into the building present a health risk for town employees who must navigate around the wet spots with electrical cords as well as manage the buildup of ice as the leaks refreeze at night in the cold months.

Article approved at Special Town Meeting on February 19th, 2019.

Selectboard: Replace and insulate Shea Theater upper (main) roof section. \$47,975

Replacement of the Shea Theater main roof with new membrane as well as adding an R-30 foam insulation upgrade, at a total cost of up to \$96,975. This article would add to the original appropriation of \$49,000 in order to facilitate the installation of a new rubber membrane instead of having a spray on coating applied. It became obvious that this was the better route after the town was unable to secure a warranty from a reputable company with the coating.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Highly Recommended***

Cost Avoidance: With the roof actively leaking, the town runs the risk of more damage to roof structure as well as the possibility of damage to the tenant's theater equipment.

Service interruption: If the roof is not replaced soon it is likely that the current leak will increase as the existing roof deteriorates. A major rain event could trigger a massive leak which would then result in a forced closure and emergency repair of the roof.

Article approved at Special Town Meeting on February 19th, 2019.

B. Articles/Recommendations for fiscal year 2019-2020

Selectboard: Restoration of lower section of Town Hall Front Awning. \$8,975

Restore 19th century metalwork that serves as awning for the Town Hall. The awning is made of copper, brass and decorative glass and is seriously damaged from years of exposure. At this point the awning can still be salvaged but should the town avoid the restoration, it will certainly deteriorate beyond repair. Town DPW to assist in removal and re-installation of lower skirt. The Town has finally found a local silversmith able and willing to repair the piece, but he is in his 60's and near retirement.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Highly Recommended***

Public Safety: As the brass and copper continues to curl as it deteriorates, the glass inserts loosen and fall onto the sidewalk below. Many members of the community use this entrance to Town Hall. Also, people walking their dogs run the risk of broken glass in paws.

Cost Avoidance: If the awning is left to rot in place then soon it will become dangerous and require removal and disposal. The cost of installing a modern awning would certainly cost more than restoration of the current awning.

Other: Historic Relevance: This awning is understood to have been salvaged from another historic town building and represents a unique and irreplaceable building feature.

DPW: Equipment Discretionary Account. \$100,000

Provide accessible funding for the DPW superintendent to fund purchases of and/or major repairs to DPW vehicles and equipment. Addresses unforeseen expenditures where timeline is of importance. Historically granted to DPW superintendent.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Highly Recommended***

Service Interruption: Should a vehicle or large piece of equipment fail (without this appropriation) it is quite possible that said equipment could remain out of service, while the Town identifies a method to appropriate funding to repair or replace.

Sewer: Engineer Study of Compost Facility. \$25,500

Provide a cost and location to build a composting facility that can handle all sludge produced by Montague WPCF. Plus, a feasibility study to see if composting all sludge is a more cost effective way of sludge management.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade. **Highly Recommended***

Cost Avoidance: Sludge disposal accounts for nearly 30% of the Operation and Maintenance budget of the WPCF. Composting could drastically reduce the cost of sludge disposal, resulting in the stabilization of sewer rates to users.

Sewer: Airport Industrial Park Pump Station Upgrade. \$55,000

Upgrade Airport Industrial Park pump station, located near the Tech School, components, which are original to the 30ish year old pump station. Replace the control panel and level sensors in the wet well. New upgrade to be based on upgrades to pump stations completed at Denton Street and Lake Pleasant pump stations. Upgraded system can be monitored and controlled remotely.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Highly Recommended***

Cost Avoidance: The Tech School pump station handles the most caustic water of all the pumps stations in town. This is due to having to handle the industrial park sewer water. The station puts out more errant alarms than any other pump station in town. Replacing the components would allow for remote operation of the station and reduce the number of instances where a crew must be sent to check on the pump station.

Sewer: Millers Falls I&I Assessment. \$50,000

Contract an engineering firm to assess inflow and infiltration in the village of Millers Falls. About 65% of the water entering the Millers sewer is from an unknown source or sources. In 2018 approximately 13 million gallons of water were pumped to Millers Falls and 35 million gallons were treated by Erving WWTP.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade. **Highly Recommended***

Cost Avoidance: The additional 20 million gallons of water being treated by the waste water treatment plan in Erving could result in additional costs/fines as a result of the overages

Other-Environmental: It is widely believed that the source of the excessive water entering the sewer system will turn out to be the many numerous underground springs that exist under the village of Millers Falls. In essence this means that 20 million gallons of clean water is being combined with sewer water and treated by the plant in Erving yearly.

Library: Montague Center Library Moisture remediation. \$22,050

Address the persistent moisture issues at the library. Moisture and mold have destroyed many books and artifacts and if left unchecked will inevitably compromise structural aspects of the building. The moisture issue stems mainly from an uncovered dirt floor basement and leaky duct system that allow the exchange of unconditioned and conditioned air. Some mold has developed in the backup bathroom and hallway and this will be remediated as well. Installation of a vapor barrier and duct and air sealing comprise the majority of the mitigation process.

Capital Improvements Committee grade. Highly Recommended

Public Safety: The transfer of moisture laden air into the library has led to complaints of poor air quality and from staff and patrons alike. The active mold in the bathroom and hallway present a public safety hazard by their existence in the public space.

Cost Avoidance: Two main trunks of supply ducting are rotting in place along the east and west wall. The ducts in question are constructed of un-galvanized tin nailed to floor joists as to use the bay between joists for a air passage. The tin sheet metal has rotted in several locations and as a result the warm air from the furnace blows onto the dirt floor of the crawlspace instead of into the registers. Hard to calculate exactly how much of energy is wasted via these leaks but conservative estimates are 15-20%.

GMRSD: Ford F-250 \$35,344 (Montague's share of \$40,000 expense)

Replace the district's plow truck with a new model equipped with a new plow. The current plow truck is currently unable to pass state vehicle inspection and no longer goes into reverse. The gas tank strapps have rotted and the brake lines are deteriorating. Repair costs likely in the high thousands without the body/frame rust. New truck to be equipped with heavy duty suspension to handle the districts sand spreader. Montague share is 88.36% with Gill paying the remainder based on proportional share of total school enrollment.

Capital Improvements Committee grade: Highly Recommended

Service Interruption: The district is currently down to one plow truck that is equipped onto a one-ton dump truck. When a snow event happens, the district must request assistance from

the Town DPW to clear the lots and ways of snow and apply sand/salt. This effectively takes a DPW off the town roads for hours each snow event.

GMRSD: Sheffield/Administrative Building Column Replacement. \$21,755

Complete the installation of the Sheffield/Administration Building columns that were purchased in 2017. Brick landing to be repointed in conjunction with column replacement and facade to be replaced where rotted. Painting of front entrance is included in project scope. New aluminum railings are to be installed as well.

Capital Improvements Committee grade: Highly Recommended

Public Safety: The front entrance to the Administration building is no longer usable by the public and is cordoned off. This eliminates an emergency egress and also presents a danger to people unfamiliar with the building who may attempt to exit the building through this egress.

Other- Aesthetic Value: Caution tape stretched across rotten wooden columns with the replacement columns lying on the ground next to the entrance for years is not a pleasing image. This is the administrative building for the entire district and this defunct entrance sends the wrong message to visitors of the school.

GMRSD: TFHS Sidewalks \$76,670 (Montague's share of \$82,000 expense)

Replace front sidewalks in front of the Turners Falls High School. The project will replace all of the deteriorated sidewalks along front of building. Seventeen years of plowing with a metal plow blade have caused significant damage to the front sidewalks. Granite curbs to be installed in affected locations and salt guard and salt guard schedule to be implemented moving forward. Montague share is 93.5% with Gill paying the remainder based on proportional share of middle and high school enrollment.

Capital Improvements Committee grade. Recommended

Public Safety: The deteriorated sidewalks are currently a tripping hazard as well as running the risk for ADA non-compliance.

Town Clerk: Tabulators for Elections. \$50,000

Replace the ballot boxes in all seven precincts with new optical scanners. The ballot boxes, while quaint, have proved problematic over the last several years. The counting mechanisms are not functioning properly and some of the lock mechanisms are failing. Long elections are forcing poll workers to stay until 2-3AM hand counting votes. An extra tabulator is also planned on being purchased as a backup.

Capital Improvements Committee grade: Recommended

Cost Avoidance: The Town Clerk estimates that she will be able to downsize her poll workers from 6-9 people per precinct down to 1-2 while also cutting the amount of time spent tabulating. At a cost of \$12 per hour per worker multiplied out, it is a considerable savings.

Other-Maintaining Election Integrity: With the counting mechanisms failing in some machines and the lock mechanisms failing as well, the Town risks jeopardizing the integrity of our election process.

Library: Millers Falls Library Moisture Remediation. \$20,000

Address the moisture and structural issues at the library. The basement is very damp. Exposed window wells allow storm water to enter the basement where that water then pools and needs to be pumped out. Water also enters the basement through the front and side masonry joints where the mortar has severely disintegrated. Filling in the window wells along with repointing the masonry is advised. The structural support beams under the front of the store need permanent columns installed along with some minor repairs to the beams themselves.

Capital Improvements Committee grade. Recommended

Cost Avoidance: Left untreated the leaking masonry will crumble and fail resulting in expensive renovation costs. The leaks also travel along the sill band and given time the sill will rot and need repair. Recently thirty-two feet of rotten sill cost \$10,000 to repair without the added costs of prevailing wage. Without installation of proper support columns in basement the beams will continue to sag and buckle which could result in issues with doors, windows and even roofing systems.

Public Safety: Left unattended the beams under the floor will continue to deteriorate and sag. Over time this will denigrate the structure and be a potential safety hazard for all who walk through the library front door

Library: Carnegie Library Dangerous Door Repair/Renovation and Door Weatherization. \$10,000

Repair, restore and refinish front entry doors at Carnegie Library, and improve safety of interior vestibule swinging doors. The library's exterior entry doors are weathered to the point where they require removal and restoration, to ensure they remain in good repair and to eliminate issues associated with swelling of now unfinished wood, which has caused the doors to jam shut and/or not lock/unlock properly. New weather stripping is to be added when these doors are re-installed. Project will also convert the interior vestibule doors to swing in one direction only. These doors are a known hazard, as their quick and heavy swings have potential to injure library patrons. Installation of modern, one-way hinge mechanisms is advised.

Capital Improvements Committee grade. Recommended

Public Safety: The swing of the interior doors has injured library goers before, including children. Luckily no one has been seriously injured from the heavy doors yet.

Cost Avoidance: Leaving the exterior doors to the elements without refinishing for many more years will result in the inability to repair them at all. Instead they will need total replacement. The size, age and construction detail of the doors would indicate an expensive replacement cost.

GMRSD: Hillcrest Facade and Masonry Improvements. \$20,000-\$25,000

Repair several critical areas of facade at the Hillcrest School. Many of the outside corners are cracking and other areas are deteriorating. Along with the masonry repair there are also issues with the window sills rotting, allowing carpenter bees to create homes inside them. Some areas around the widows will also need recalling and painting as well.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Not Recommended***

While the project is certainly necessary to maintain the integrity of the brickwork facade as well as to keep insects and moisture from penetrating the building envelope, the committee received insufficient information to recommend the project at this time. Without a written estimate and lacking a coherent plan denoting which areas would receive repair as well as how extensive the repairs would be the committee couldn't, in good faith, recommend the project as it was presented. The district requested quotes from local sources but had not received one as a basis for submission in time for this budget cycle.

GMRSD: Hillcrest Electrical - Upgrade/Amperage. \$41,200

This project would increase amperage to a distributing electrical panel, allowing the addition of new circuits to feed air conditioners to be installed into each classroom. The current 100 amp panels do not poses the capacity to handle the load which would be drawn when all air conditioning units are running. The school recently completed an upgrade of the 600 amp disconnect and it was assumed at that time the new upgrade would allow window ac units to be installed. However, a key sub-panel was not properly labeled and this turned out not to be the case. Along with the upgraded service the project also includes installation of dedicated 20 amp circuits and air conditioner outlets for each classroom.

*Capital Improvements Committee grade: **Not Recommended***

Public Safety: The teachers at Hillcrest have purported to measure classroom temperatures that are excessive and, in some instances, higher than what Massachusetts requires by law. The maximum allowable temperature in classrooms is seventy eight degrees. This issue may be common to schools throughout the district and across the commonwealth but is taken seriously by the committee.

Although the committee would've likely ranked this Capital Article Request with a higher grade, we were unable to due to the lack of quality and clarity of the quote received.

To complicate matters further, the Montague Energy Committee is currently contacting firms to conduct a study of alternative heating and cooling sources for the both Sheffield and Hillcrest, paid for a state META grant. This study will likely consider the feasibility studies for heat exchangers that would heat and cool the classrooms from a cost and technical feasibility standpoint. Note that if the electrical upgrade proposed were to take place then the heat exchangers would likely be able to utilize these circuits for power but may not be installed in a fashion wholly consistent with the needs of a new system. Including this electrical upgrade as part of completer and more coherent plan for this building is recommended.