

Capital Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes

First Floor Conference Room - Town Hall

One Avenue A, Turners Falls MA 01376

Wednesday, April 5, 2017

Meeting opened at Town Hall at 3:00 PM. Attendees included Capital Improvement Committee (CIC) members Fred Bowman, Don Valley, Greg Garrison, Bob Obear, and Town Administrator Steven Ellis. Also in attendance was GMRSD liaison Mike Langknecht and consultant Joe Markarian of the FRCOG. Note that Mr. Obear arrived at 3:15.

Review and approval of minutes

- Mr. Garrison moved to approve the minutes of the CIC's April 5, 2017 meeting without revision. Mr. Valley seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Introductions, comings and goings

- Thanked outgoing CIC member Don Valley for the tremendous insight and dedication he brought to the board. Regret was expressed at his decision to find something better to do with his time.
- Noted the Mike Langknecht is attending as a liaison from the Gill Montague Regional School Committee. As such he is a non-voting participant in the meeting, but is very much welcome.
- Welcomed Bob Obear, local developer and member of the Montague Planning Board to his new role as a member of the CIC.
- Joe Markarian introduced to the group. Joe brings decades of experience as a municipal finance expert at the division of local services and is assisting the town now as a Franklin Regional Council of Governments expert consultant with support for a local technical assistance grant. Joe is working to support adoption of best practices by local municipalities and his work in Montague will center on budget and capital improvement planning processes. He notes that our budget processes appear to be in very good shape and he is looking forward to assisting the CIC with its process and planning.

Capital Improvements Committee – Discussion of past and possible future practice

- **\$30,000 for roof repair at Carnegie Library.** Linda Hickman provided an overview of the project and responded to questions regarding the scope of this project in the context of past improvements made to the roof. She explained that the roof membrane on the outer ledge sections on the left and right of the building. A low quality membrane was apparently used in these areas and it's completely broken down. As a result, water is getting in and under the roofing and migrating through the wooden soffits and their decorative features. The roof improvement is the easier part of this project to predict from a cost standpoint, as it is not entirely clear how much work needs to be done to repair the soffits. We have a firm quote that is under \$30,000 and includes a contingency for the soffit work being more rather than less substantial.

Don Valley noted that the building has roof drains that actually flow through the interior of the building and evacuate through a drain that is under flooring in the basement. While not recently investigated, it does not appear that this is a problem at the moment. Nonetheless, this should be considered in plans for future repair and renovation. Final note made that Reade Roofing is currently patching the roof of the Montague Center Library.

- **\$45,000 for a design study of Montague's library buildings.** Linda Hickman explained that the library operates in three buildings, in Turners Falls, Millers Falls, and Montague Center. Each of these buildings is old and presents substantial issues. The MA Board of Library Commissioners

suggested to her that a full inventory of what is needed should be developed, along with a recommended schedule for renovation/repair.

Linda based her request on an estimate from an architect who specializes in Carnegie building renovations. The budget she describes would be expected to cover his or another architect's costs to examine all three buildings, inventory critical needs, develop a recommended schedule or repair with cost estimates, and provide initial drawings to support grant applications. This work would inform Linda's decisions re: maintenance and repair of these building in the coming years, and even perhaps whether to continue to invest in a building. She noted that the Library Building Authority may revise its grant programs to better reflect the needs of smaller communities and also discussed the challenge of leveraging Mass Historic grant programs that may have too many strings in their requirements.

Mr. Valley moved to recommend the Library Commission's request for \$30,000 to repair the Carnegie Library roof to the Finance Committee. Mr. Garrison seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Valley moved to recommend the Library Commission's request for \$45,000 for a design study encompassing Montague's three library buildings to the Finance Committee. Mr. Garrison seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

GMRSD Additional Capital Project Expense

- **\$22,850 to increase Article 8 of the 9/29/16 Special Town Meeting**, which appropriated \$60,000 to restructuring the stage at Hillcrest Elementary School. This project was previously considered and approved by Town Meeting, but will require additional appropriation to ensure the stage is accessible and to ensure the accessibility ramp is not placed at the front of the stage. GMRSD intends to fund this through unspent monies from previous appropriations associated with the Sheffield boiler and a school security project.

The committee took this matter under advisement.

Cemetery Commission

- **\$65,000 for road construction to create access to Dry Hill Cemetery.** The cost estimated for this improvement was derived from previous estimates developed in 2007, though the scope of the project is not entirely aligned. The committee feels the basis for cost is too unclear for approval at this time. The committee would like more specifics relative to the cost and the final condition of access that would result from the project.

Mr. Garrison moved to recommend the Cemetery Commission's request for \$65,000 to improve vehicular access to the Dry Hill Cemetery to the Finance Committee. Mr. Valley seconded. Motion failed 0-4.

Department of Public Works

- **Re-consideration of DPW discretionary account recommendation.** In light of the unexpected need to replace a snow plow this winter, which depleted the balance in the discretionary account and required a reserve fund transfer, the committee is to consider whether to increase its previous recommendation to the finance committee from \$75,000 to \$100,000 for the DPW discretionary account. This would align with a recent finance committee vote.

Mr. Valley moved to support the Finance Commission's recommendation for \$100,000 for the FY18 DPW discretionary account. Mr. Garrison seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

- **Discussion/implications of Highway Building Facility community forum.** The forum was a helpful event that brought out many good questions and informative discussion. Of interest was the fact that comparisons of projects across communities often fail to account for the difference in scope of DPW operations from one community to the next, which may lead to misunderstanding of the reasonableness of project costs.

It is not clear yet whether the need to cap the burn dump will in fact require the proposed project to move to another site or if a less drastic change is possible. The project will likely be on the fall STM agenda, allowing time to work on the questions surrounding the burn dump capping requirements as well as whether all DPW assets will be kept at this single site or some satellite sites will be renovated and maintained as part of the project.

Unanticipated Topics

The Town Moderator has appointed Bob Obear as a new member of the CIC. He has been sworn in and will be invited to our next meeting.

Next meeting date is to be determined.

Mr. Valley moved to adjourn and it was seconded by Mr. Garrison. Motion passed 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30pm