

MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS WORKING GROUP
Selectmen's Meeting Room, Belmont Town Hall
MINUTES OF October 13, 2017

2017 OCT 24 PM 2: 21

Members Present:

Pat Bruschi, Floyd Carman, Phyllis Marshall, Anne Marie Mahoney, Roy Epstein, Jenny Fallon

Members Absent:

Mark Paolillo

Others in Attendance:

Mr. Peter Struzziero, Library Director; Ms. Mary Stearns, Library Trustee; Ellen Schreiber, Fundraising for Library; Senior Planner Jeffrey Wheeler; Budget Analyst Glen Castro; Assistant Police Chief MacIsaac; Police Chief McLaughlin; Jay Marcotte, DPW Director

The meeting was called to order at 8:38 a.m.

Chair Mahoney reviewed some of the meeting materials and noted that the agenda is very full. She reviewed some of the upcoming events, e.g., the public meeting on October 19, Special Town Meeting (STM) on November 13, potential tours of the DPW and Police Station, etc.

Discussion with Library Trustees

Mr. Peter Struzziero, Library Director, Ms. Mary Stearns, Library Trustee, and Ellen Schreiber, Fundraising for Library, approached the table.

Mr. Struzziero began by stating that the Library's Warrant Article is currently being written. The dollar amount that will be requested is between \$250-\$300,000 for the schematic design. He said he is hoping for a shared cost for the schematic design between the Library Trustees and the Kendall Fund.

Ms. Marshall explained the language on the warrant article, specifically, the appropriation request. The warrant appropriations, she said, are still in draft form. The Library's warrant article number was discussed by the MCPWG. Mr. Epstein expressed concern that the number seems very low, given the overall cost of the project. Ms. Bruschi raised some points about the potential costs of the schematic design, architect fees, percentages, and the various study fees, etc. Ultimately she said that the \$300,000 request was probably an appropriate amount.

The timing of the schematic design was then discussed. Ms. Schreiber provided a very broad overview concerning the timing on the fundraising initiative. The 150th Anniversary of the Library will be a place to start fundraising, and private large-gift fundraising will begin as well. She said potential large donors have not yet been cultivated. A goal number (for fundraising) has not yet been set, but the research has begun (in Concord, Lexington, etc.).

The group discussed a potential time frame for the debt exclusion and how this time frame is tied into fundraising. Ms. Brusch noted that there are large donors out there who did not contribute to the Senior Center because they were waiting for the Library. Mr. Carman noted that a certain kind of account will need to be set up, as donors will want a tax ID number for donation “write-offs”. He also stressed that the date of the debt exclusion will be very important.

The MCPWG discussed their upcoming report to Town Meeting (TM), noting that it must make broad recommendations for the timeframes of several pending projects, e.g., Police, BHS, DPW, Library, etc. Ms. Schreiber stated her case for having the Library debt exclusion sooner, rather than in 2024.

Preliminary Budget Overview for Police and DPW

Ms. Marshall reviewed a handout entitled *Preliminary Project Budget*. The numbers, while preliminary estimates, help flesh out the fiscal scope of the short-term projects. The contingency estimates were discussed (owners and construction) – Ms. Brusch suggested that they both be 10%. Ms. Marshall will increase the Owner Contingency to 10%.

MCPWG members asked various questions about the preliminary budget overviews. They discussed the scope of the short-term projects and the related costs. It was agreed that the schematic design, as it evolves, will help to better define the budget numbers.

TM Member Tours of Police and DPW

Chair Mahoney asked if dates could be set for the tours. The DPW windows were briefly discussed. The MCPWG discussed how to set up the tours. The group agreed that a walk-through is much more effective than a video. Chair Mahoney noted that Mr. Steve Rosales is doing video of both the Police Station and the DPW to show on cable. Mr. Epstein wants to show short clips at the LWV Warrant Discussion Night as well. Mr. Carman suggested that the date be set for Saturday, November 4. Chair Mahoney agreed and set the time for the tours to be in the morning from 9-12. The Police Station may have additional evening tours as well. Asst. Police Chief MacIsaac will arrange the Police Station tours.

Funding Proposals for the STM Warrant Articles – Mr. Carman

Mr. Carman stated that the Board of Selectmen will need to decide the funding source. The three projects under consideration are: Burbank modular units, Library schematic design, and DPW/Police Station short-term schematic designs.

Mr. Carman offered his thoughts on financing the modulars and the DPS/Police Station short-term schematic designs:

- *Modulars:* Because the need for the school modulars has arisen solely due to growth in enrollment, the modulars should be funded from the Stabilization Fund reserve for FY2019; the out years will require ongoing conversation.
- *DPW:* A \$1.6M investment in the DPW facility now can extend its life for 10 or more years, and reduce some of the poor working conditions there that leave the Town open to some criticism. (A new facility, in contrast, would cost an estimated \$20M or so.) The short-term project could be funded from Cushing Square funds and some Capital Budget money, avoiding the need for financing.
- *Police Station:* A \$2.7M investment in the current Police Station now can extend its life for 10 or more years. (A new facility would cost an estimated \$25M or so.) The short-term project would not only address some sub-optimal working conditions, it would also update the current prisoner-handling facilities, which are far from basic criminal justice standards and increase the Town's liability. The first financing for the Police Station project would be needed in early 2019, so payments would begin in 2020. It is unclear how this should be financed, or how its debt service should be paid for in the coming years.

He noted also, as context, that there will likely need to be an operating override at some point in the near future.

The group discussed Mr. Carman's comments. Chair Mahoney noted that it is not even clear if the Police Station short-term plan can be executed. Mr. Carman noted that the Town will face some difficult fiscal decisions over the coming years; he has discussed these challenges with the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Epstein agreed that, while this is a sober conversation, laying it all out in this manner is the right thing to do. TM needs to understand the pressing needs of these buildings (Police/DPW), he said – they must understand the dire condition of the buildings in order to support them.

Ms. Marshall suggested funding the schematic designs (DPW/Police) out of the Kendall fund.

Mr. Epstein stated that some members of the WC asked about reimbursing the Kendall fund. Mr. Carman stated that Kendall fund money has long been earmarked for schematic designs. The group agreed that it would not make sense to increase the debt service to reimburse the Kendall Fund.

Minutes

The following sets of minutes were postponed until the next meeting (on October 20th).

September 15, 2017

September 22, 2017

September 28, 2017

September 29, 2017

The meeting ended at 10:34 a.m.

Next meetings:

Thursday, October 19, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. (Public Meeting)

Friday, October 20, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. in Room 4 of Town Hall

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Gibalerio,
Minutes Recorder