

# Report of the Capital Budget Committee FY2018



## **FY2018 Capital Budget Committee**

### **Report to Belmont 2017 Annual Town Meeting**

#### **Introduction**

In the Capital Budget Committee (“CBC” or “this Committee”) Annual Town Meeting Report, the CBC deliberately repeats some of the material from its previous reports. This decision is motivated by two considerations. First, every year brings new Town Meeting Members. The Committee believes that some of them may benefit from the background provided. Second, some of this Committee’s recommendations and observations are a work in progress. Although each year we have more developments to report, this Committee believes that it is worthwhile to keep this material in the minds of Town Meeting Members. The report contains captions to assist readers in finding their way through the report.

The report touches on the following topics:

- Who Is the CBC and What Does It Do?
- What is the Difference between the Common Understanding of “Capital Asset” and the CBC Responsibility?
- Some General Remarks
- The Community Preservation Act and Its Interaction with the Capital Budget
- The Town’s Roads and Sidewalks
- Status of Large, Extraordinary Capital Projects
- Belmont High School Building Project
- Policy Adoptions
- Additional Classroom Space
- Financial Task Force Capital Budget Recommendations
- Major Capital Projects Working Group
- Privately Funded Capital Improvements
- Recommendations for FY2018 Capital Budget
- Enterprise Funds
- Five-Year Projection of Belmont’s Capital Needs

As discussed below, only the last three items are required by the Town’s by-laws to be reported to Town Meeting. The Committee believes, however, that the rest of the material is useful.

## **Who Is the CBC and What Does It Do?**

The Capital Budget Committee is established by Article 13 of the Town by-laws. There are seven members: three are appointed by the Moderator for terms of three years; the other four are the chairman (or a member appointed by the chairman) of the Board of Selectmen, the Warrant Committee, the Planning Board, and the School Committee, all of whom serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority. The members of the Committee who acted on the FY2018 Capital Budget recommendations are:

Susan Burgess-Cox (School Committee)  
Jennifer Fallon (Warrant Committee)  
M. Patricia Brusch (Moderator appointee)  
Raffi Manjikian (Planning Board)  
Sami Baghdady (Board of Selectmen until April 4, 2017)  
Mark Paolillo (Board of Selectmen as of April 5, 2017)  
Rebecca Vose (Moderator appointee)  
Anne Marie Mahoney (Moderator appointee)

Mrs. Mahoney serves as the Committee's chairman and Ms. Vose serves as its secretary. Glen Castro, Budget Analyst for the Town, serves as staff liaison to the Committee. Either David Kale, former Town Administrator, or Phyllis Marshall, Acting Town Administrator attended Committee meetings.

According to Article 13 of the Town's by-laws:

It shall be the duty of the Committee annually to prepare a capital report showing, for each six years hence following a list of those public improvements and non-recurring major equipment needs which, in its opinion, represent the most necessary enhancement projects or purchases to be undertaken by the Town during each such year. The report shall include the probable cost of each such improvement or purchase and the Committee's recommendations as to the method of financing them.

This spring the Committee has devoted its time to review and analyze the FY2018 capital requests from town departments and the schools. The Committee also received and discussed updates on major capital projects which this year included the high school, incinerator site, and library along with the efforts to address the police and DPW facilities.

While the CBC has long identified the above major projects as needing to be addressed, in 2015 the Financial Task Force sub-group on Capital Projects examined all outstanding capital needs in the Town with a goal of providing a comprehensive plan to deal with them. The efforts of the FTF built on the 2013 work of the CBC to develop criteria for assessing and prioritizing all the Town's potential capital projects, including the Concord Avenue campus and its component parts. Further, the Facilities Manager hired in calendar 2013 presented a refined and coordinated set of capital requests. The most significant development in prioritizing capital projects is the Massachusetts School Building Authority's 2016 decision to move forward with plans to renovate or rebuild Belmont High School. (More detail on these developments is presented

below.) Further action on the major capital projects is discussed in the section Major Capital Projects Working Group.

In an effort to streamline the Capital Budget process, the Committee requested that a preliminary or draft capital budget be formulated through the Town Administrator and then presented to the Capital Budget Committee in the same manner as the current operating budget is formulated each year by the Town Administrator and presented to the Board of Selectmen and then to the Warrant Committee. Items recommended by the School Department, are discussed by the financial sub-committee but not reviewed by the School Committee before coming to the Capital Budget Committee. Their requests, like the other facilities requests, come to the CBC through the Director of Facilities. Requests that are funded by the Town's enterprise funds are submitted directly to the Committee for recommendations to Town Meeting.

In preparing to recommend an annual Capital Budget, the Committee collects requests from Town departments (including the School Department) for capital expenditures to be made from enterprise funds, from state reimbursements, and from general tax. With respect to items to be paid from general tax, the Board of Selectmen proposes to the Warrant Committee and the Capital Budget Committee an amount to be spent in the Capital Budget. (The override vote in April 2015, which approved additional funding for the capital budget in FY16 and FY17, will be discussed in greater detail below.) After receiving requests from Town departments and [a] proposed general tax budget allocation[s] from the Board of Selectmen, the Committee, at its meetings, interviews representatives from those departments that have made requests. This year, however, was different from the last several years. The former Town Administrator presented the Capital Budget Committee, rather late in the budget season, with a list of requests that had already been vetted and balanced against the amount of available funds. This left the Committee with questions about items that may have been requested by department heads but did not appear on the list as well as items that may have been inappropriately pushed to the out years. Nonetheless, the individual members of this Committee reviewed copies of the departmental requests and developed individual questions regarding those requests. Those individual questions were then pooled and submitted to the departments in writing. Some of our discussion with department heads this year centered on what did not appear on the list and what they anticipated would appear in future years.

After interviewing department representatives,<sup>1</sup> the Capital Budget Committee proceeds to assemble a recommended budget for the next fiscal year. The Committee considers each item that has been requested and votes whether that item should be included in its recommended budget. The item is included if it receives a majority vote; unanimity is not required. The requests for capital funds from various departments are, at the request of the Committee, presented by each department in a priority order. This is particularly helpful when the Committee is confronted with requests that are technical and have implications only for the department making the request. When, however, the request is less technical and/or has implications for others outside the department making the request, the Committee often exercises its own sense of priority.

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<sup>1</sup> In some instances department heads withdraw, add or adjust specific requests as a result of new information that becomes available after budgets have been submitted and sometimes as a result of the interview process itself. This happened in a few instances for FY2018.

With the hiring of a new facilities manager, all building related requests for the entire town and school buildings, and beginning last year the library, have been combined. This year the Facilities Department requested items for Town /School Security Upgrades (Year 4), Chenery univent work, refurbishing the Chenery gym floor, and an HVAC van (more on this item below). Library requests are also described below.

### **What Is the Difference between the Common Understanding of “Capital Asset” and the CBC Responsibility?**

The definition of capital expenditure for which the Committee is responsible is *not* the common understanding of a capital asset – it is a narrower concept. The common understanding of a capital asset is some asset that can be used and enjoyed for an extended period of time, often taken as more than one year, or that can be used to produce another product. It is often thought of as anything that is not for immediate consumption. This is *not* the definition with which this Committee works.

Note the key words in the by-law responsibility quoted previously – “public improvements and non-recurring major equipment needs.” An example of the differences between the two concepts that is very relevant to the Town’s budgeting process is police cruisers. In common understanding, an automobile is a capital item but a police cruiser is a “recurring” item. (The average front-line cruiser is driven 25,000-30,000 miles in its first year. Cruisers must be replaced on a regular cycle.) In the view of the Committee, replacement of police cruisers belongs in the regular operating budget. As mentioned below, there are other items that should be considered part of the operating budget that have a tendency to find their way into the capital budget process.

In an effort to draw a “bright line” between what it would consider and not, more than twenty-five years ago a previous Capital Budget Committee established a \$10,000-per-item requirement for requests addressed to it. In 1985, it was the intent of the then Capital Budget Committee to raise that amount to \$12,500 but that did not happen.

Although the existing criteria for inclusion in the Town’s Capital Budget could be considered very outdated, the CBC’s review of the criteria recently produced no significant changes. The CBC communicates with the Town departments on a regular basis about what it expects to see in capital requests and what it will not entertain. The Committee ultimately decided that there were no comprehensive criteria that could adequately define what departments should consider capital requests and decided to leave the loose criteria of \$10,000 minimum and at least ten years of useful life, with the exception of technology. The Committee also recommended that the Town should consider establishing a technology fund for computer and other technological purchases. In addition to dealing with technology, the Committee will also explore a recommendation to the Town Administrator on handling the facility manager’s requests so that requested items qualify as capital. Finally, after reviewing requests for pavement work in parking lots and driveways, the CBC wonders if all pavement requests should go through the DPW.

Meanwhile, increasing pressure on the Town’s operating budget resulted in the virtual elimination of a line item (“Capital Outlay”) in departmental budgets under which the small or recurring capital items had been purchased. (This line item has now been restored, but for FY2018 the limited funds available do not militate in favor of adequate funding of many requests

under this category.) An even more insidious thing began to happen. Maintenance was not pursued. As noted below, the inevitable result of wear, tear, and simple weathering plus maintenance neglect is the seeming transmutation of a current expense item (maintenance) into a seeming capital expenditure (starting all over again). The current dismaying condition of the Town's streets, some of which have deteriorated so badly that they cannot be repaired but must be rebuilt – literally from the ground up – resulted (unsuccessfully, as noted below) in a targeted, separate funding proposal.

Confronted by increasing pressure from smaller or recurring requests, previous Capital Budget Committees, loathe to see necessary expenditures unmet, tried to accommodate small items and recurring items within previous Capital Budgets – often by turning a blind eye to the practice of aggregating separate items in order to meet the \$10,000 threshold. As noted below, the current Capital Budget Committee is making a vigorous effort to confine the Capital Budget to items that are truly “public improvements and non-recurring major equipment needs.” As also noted below, however, members of the Committee do not feel that small capital items and recurring capital items are inappropriate expenditures for the Town; indeed, members of the Committee feel that the smaller capital expenditures, recurring expenditures, and maintenance of capital assets are very important and should be funded annually under their own explicit headings in each department's operating budget. The members of the Committee feel, however, that the Capital Budget should be available to meet the needs of the Town that are truly “public improvements and non-recurring major equipment.” If at the end of the review process there is a small amount of money remaining in the capital budget allocation, the Committee has recommended funding maintenance or repairs that should have been included in the regular operating budgets of certain departments when those repairs relate to health and safety issues, e.g., abatement and replacement at the Library of cracked and chipped stairwell tiles that contain asbestos or the leaking gutters that cause ice to form on walking paths around the library. The Committee is recommending both repairs in the FY18 capital budget.

### **Some General Remarks**

There are some general topics, which the Committee wishes to emphasize to the Town Meeting. They are an envelope study and a coordinated approach.

In 1994, the Town commissioned a study of the roofs of major municipally owned buildings and embarked on a program to ensure that its buildings are weather tight above. (The roof program is further discussed below.) More recently, the School Department completed an envelope study of its buildings with the same objective.<sup>2</sup> (An envelope study is a study of the material enclosing the interior of a building, exterior walls, windows, doors and roof. These items enclose a building and are referred to as the building envelope.) The approach with respect to the non-School-Department assets of the Town is somewhat different. The facility audit has addressed this.

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<sup>2</sup> The total estimate for work identified by the School Department envelope study was \$6.8 million, originally to be phased over five years. Many of the needs identified by the study might be classified for the operating budget rather than for the allocation to this Committee under the criteria discussed earlier in this report. Nevertheless, the figure indicates the magnitude of the task faced by the Town to protect its investment in capital assets. Much of this work has been completed. It is hoped that the entire project will wrap up over the next few fiscal years.

These studies form the basis of the extraordinary, large capital projects discussed below or for individual current capital budget requests.

The Committee applauds the Town for taking steps toward a coordinated approach to its capital needs and budgeting for those capital needs. Five years ago the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen entered into an agreement to create a single department that will deal with building and grounds maintenance and needs. At the time, the Library Trustees were not signatories to this agreement, however, they benefitted from input on their capital requests from the new director. The Library Trustees recently finalized an agreement to become part of the consolidated facilities department. In the fall of 2013 the Town hired a director for this consolidated facilities department. In FY13, in anticipation of the initial work that will be done by this department, the building managers of the Town and the School Department recommended a facility audit of all buildings that have not been renovated in the last twelve (12) years in order to assess their status and to enable this new department head to begin to prioritize projects. The amount appropriated was \$175,000. The completed audit continues to inform the capital requests for facilities for FY18. The Committee will work with the BOS to ensure that the Facilities Department is adequately funded in the operating budget to handle routine maintenance.

Issues of coordination include acquisition and reuse of replaced equipment. A spirit of cooperation has developed among the departments who now make an effort to offer “hand-me-down” vehicles and equipment to other departments. In the past, this Committee noted examples of this spirit involving vehicles and emergency generators. This year the Fire Department will replace Squad 1 with a refurbished truck from the DPW. Issues also arise regarding programs that have application to more than one Town operation. Recent examples include the proposals for building security, police and fire radio system, and a “reverse 911.”

### **Community Preservation Act and Its Interplay with the Capital Budget**

As has been reported previously herein, the Capital Budget Committee has long supported additional funding to address the Town’s capital budget needs. One relatively new source of funding for certain types of capital projects is the Community Preservation Act (CPA) adopted by the Town in 2011 after voters accepted the act in November 2010. Fiscal 2014 was the first year of funding of projects under the CPA. Eligible projects must fall into the categories of affordable housing, recreation/open space, and historic preservation. This Committee is again pleased to see the range of projects proposed by the CPA Committee for funding. Some, if not most, of these projects would not meet the criteria for funding in the capital budget, not because they lack merit but because the Town has long stopped supporting certain types of projects for lack of money. Further, the projects on which CPA money can be spent, though very worthy, for the most part may not be considered central to the core functions of town government. This year the CPA projects include funds to rebuild the Grove Street tennis courts, plan an accessible walking path around Grove Street playground, rebuild Pequossette playground and mitigate drainage there. These would most certainly be CBC requests were it not funded by the CPA. CPA funds may not always lessen the burden on the Town’s capital budget but will support worthy projects that enhance the quality of life in Belmont and preserve valuable public assets that would otherwise suffer neglect. It should also be noted that the Committee, which oversees these CPA projects requests that project sponsors, where applicable, engage in private fundraising to defray the cost of their project.

## **The Town's Roads and Sidewalks**

Although the maintenance (including rebuilding, if needed) of the network of streets in Town is (or should be) a recurring item, the funds for providing the Town with its streets have traditionally been included in the Capital Budget. As this Committee has observed previously, since much of the work on the Town's streets must be planned and contracted for in advance and actually accomplished in warm weather over more than one fiscal year, the pavement management program of the Town would greatly benefit from a stable and predictable budgeting atmosphere. An adequate pavement management program could easily use the Town's entire Capital Budget, but this Committee believes that some of the funds available to the Capital Budget should be available for the Town's many other capital needs. In an effort to address as many needs as feasible, this Committee regularly recommends about half its annual allocation (an amount based on the 2001 override) plus the targeted state aid ("Chapter 90") to roads, and the remainder to other capital requests. In order to make the available road funds as effective as possible, the Selectmen have instructed the Department of Community Development to expend funds only on the travel surface, omitting almost all curb and sidewalk work. In 2014 the Committee was able to use \$200,000 in one-time funds for sidewalks and in 2015, the override vote included \$200,000 for sidewalk repair. In the FY18 budget, that sidewalk figure has grown to \$210,000. (The Department includes curbs and handicap accessible sidewalks at intersections. The Trapelo Road/Belmont Street corridor included both sidewalks and curbs because that is a state – and state-funded – project.) Sidewalk and curb construction to enhance safety around schools has traditionally been funded. This year that includes safety improvements at the Burbank School.

The Committee included extensive discussions of the Town's streets and efforts to maintain them in its 2009 and 2010 reports to the Annual Town Meeting. The reader is referred to those reports for more detailed information.

## **Status of Large, Extraordinary Capital Projects**

Here is a summary of some of the large capital projects the Town is pursuing or faces – projects that cannot be undertaken within this Committee's annual allocations from general tax. This information will give the reader background on these projects. Some of these projects are now being addressed under a small subcommittee of the Capital Budget Committee – Major Capital Projects Working Group.

### *High School*

In January 2016 Belmont High School was invited to enter into the building process with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The Moderator appointed a Building Committee and work began to collaborate with MSBA on proceeding with a building project.

At this point the building committee is in the Feasibility Study phase of the process with the first steps being the hiring of an Owner's Project Manager and an architect. The project manager was chosen by Belmont and approved by MSBA. The firm is Daedalus Projects, Inc., and is the firm that assisted with project management on Chenery Middle School in 1996-97.

The building committee is now in the process of hiring an architect, that process should be complete in early July. Once that is done the Building Committee, School Department, Owner's



Project Manager and Architect will all work with the MSBA to explore what grade configuration for BHS will be best for the education of Belmont's students. Heavy public input on this has already begun and will continue throughout the fall. A decision on the grade configuration along with an educational program is expected in late spring and will need to be approved by the MSBA before the building committee can move ahead with a Schematic Design for the preferred option. After that, and approval of MSBA, the Building Committee will request that the Board of Selectmen place a Debt Exclusion question on a town wide ballot. The most likely timeline for this is early 2019, but circumstances may change that time frame.

### *Memorial Library Building*

The Feasibility Study for the library took place this past year. Johnson Roberts Associates was chosen as the designer and the library trustees formed a Feasibility Study Committee. Several very well attended meetings were held to obtain public input, which was then incorporated into the study.

As requested, 3 options were fully explored: 1) renovation of the existing building, 2) renovation of the building with one or more additions, and 3) a new building on the current site. The architect explored the pros and cons of all three scenarios and presented a few design concepts for each situation. In the end it was determined that the most efficient and cost effective solution would be for a new building.

Renovation without addition did not even meet the program needs of the library, given that the renovated building must meet ADA and building codes. A completely new roof structure is essential in any case given current day load requirements. Renovation with additions would meet programmatic needs, but would result in a much larger building due to the necessity of keeping current structural elements in place to meet seismic code requirements. A new building would be close to the same cost as a building with additions, but would be smaller and would provide for more logical use of the building.

The cost of the new building would be around \$23M, which does not include the costs of relocation of the current staff and materials during construction. It is very difficult at this time to estimate relocation costs until it is known when the construction would take place and what might alternative locations be available, both within Belmont and with collaboration with neighboring towns.

The Capital Budget Committee will now use this information as the Major Capital Projects Working Group Prepares a report for the town with ideas on the solutions for and timing of the remaining capital projects in the town (Belmont High School, Police Station, DPW Facility, Library, Incinerator Site) along with funding ideas. It is anticipated that the library will rely on a heavy component of fundraising to help to fund this project.

### *Police Station*

In 2007-2008, a feasibility study was done of the Police Station currently located on Concord Avenue across from the Town Hall. The study explored a renovated facility on the current site and also explored a new facility located at either the current site or at the site of the Belmont

Public Library. For many reasons the best location was deemed to be at the existing library site. However, that site now will be needed for a new or renovated library; therefore it will not be available for a Police Station. Also, the construction of a new Electric Light Substation will make that area currently next to the Police Station available space for another project, something that was not contemplated in the previous study (the rest of the Building further away from the Station was explored but not the substation part). The Feasibility Study for the Police Station was updated in February 2016. This update includes the recommendation for a 30,000 gross square foot facility that could best be located at the incinerator site on Concord Avenue. The study concludes that “the total cost of developing the Police Station portion of the Incinerator Site is \$18,400,000.” Please see the section on Major Capital Projects Working Group for current work on the future of the Police Station.

#### *Department of Public Works Facility*

In 2006, a study was done of the needs of the DPW, which includes many departments, among them Cemetery, Water, Parks and Recreation, and Highway. The estimated cost of consolidating and replacing the buildings on site at the Town yard was nearly \$20M (in 2006 dollars). This estimate was updated as part of the facilities audit and is now \$28M. Please see the section on Major Capital Projects Working Group for current work on the future of the DPW.

#### *Other Projects*

There are other, less-well-defined projects that have received some consideration by this or other committees of the Town. They include the White field house and the Vigliolo skating rink as well as the future use of the incinerator site once it is capped. (In 2015 a group of ice hockey supporters began discussions with School administrators, the School Committee and the BOS about a private/public partnership to construct a new rink. The prospect of a new or renovated high school building has put those discussions on hold.) Also on the horizon are some updating needs at schools that have not been renovated in the past 20 years. These include the Daniel Butler School (renovated in 1979-80), and the Winn Brook and Burbank Schools (renovated in 1987-89). A study to explore the needs for these facilities is among the items covered in the facilities audit. Finally, future plans for a Community Path and affordable housing should also be part of the Town’s capital project planning.

### **Policy Adoptions**

#### *Policies Related to Debt Service and Funding of Multi-Year Projects*

In 2013, at the urging of the Town Treasurer the Committee developed and adopted a policy on the amount of the Town’s Capital Budget that will be spent on debt service. As the Town uses debt or lease/purchase arrangements to acquire large capital items, such a policy satisfies municipal bond rating agencies (e.g., Moody’s) of the fiscal soundness of the Town’s assumption of debt obligations.

This policy is as follows:

The Capital Projects Discretionary budget will set aside not more than 33% for debt service/lease purchase payments. The request must be greater than \$100,000 with a useful life of 10 years. The Treasurer will provide annually and update the Capital Budget Committee with an amortization schedule of payments. The Capital Budget Committee will review this policy annually by February 1 and

forward to the BOS, Warrant Committee, Town Accountant, and Treasurer an update on the review.

The Committee has endorsed a policy with respect to multi-year capital projects that it will not recommend funding the next year of such projects until substantial progress has been made.

### **Additional Classroom Space**

In response to continuing growth in enrollments at all levels of the school system, Superintendent Phelan formed a Space Study Task Force in the fall of 2015 to advise the School Committee of possible solutions to the burgeoning numbers. This committee (details found in the School Committee Report to Town Meeting) included the chairman of the Capital Budget Committee since expenditures to address growing enrollments would likely come from the Capital Budget. The Space Task Force met frequently throughout the fall and in January 2016, concurrent with the announcement of state funding of the Belmont High School project, agreed on several recommendations.

For the 2016-17 school year (FY17) six modular classrooms with necessary bathroom and administrative space were purchased and installed on the tennis courts at the Chenery Middle School. These classrooms will likely remain in place for up to ten years. The cost for purchase, set up, and furnishing these modular classrooms was \$1.4 million. Because this single expenditure would take more than the amount of money allocated to the CBC for discretionary spending in FY17 the Board of Selectmen and Capital Budget Committee agreed to recommend to Town Meeting that the full amount be taken from free cash. Town Meeting voted approval of this use of free cash last June.

Additional classroom space was required at the high school and the Burbank for the 2016-17 school year. Three classrooms were created in modulares already set up behind the high school. The modulares were left over from prior school building projects. Two spaces at the Burbank were outfitted as classrooms.

The Space Study Task Force continued to meet throughout 2016 and 2017 to plan the next step in addressing the continuing growth in enrollments at all levels. Symmes, Mani, McKee Associates was contracted to analyze the needs and spaces at the elementary schools to determine which schools could accept modular classrooms and how they might be configured. The Task Force supports a plan to add four modular classrooms to the Burbank or Butler School for the fall of 2018. Additional parking, bus and car drop-off renovations will be required and could become a Capital request. A Special Town Meeting in the fall, 2017, will determine how to fund this project.

The CBC includes this somewhat lengthy explanation of plans for additional system wide classroom space because we believe, in consultation with Superintendent Phelan, that if enrollments continue to grow, rather than peak, more classrooms will be needed in the not too distant future. The CBC anticipates that these future requests to fund modulares and/or to outfit additional classrooms may become more and more difficult to include in our limited budget allocation.

## **Financial Task Force Capital Budget Recommendations**

In the late fall of 2013, the Board of Selectmen formed a Financial Task Force with broad representation from elected and appointed committees and boards as well as citizens with financial expertise. The purpose of the task force was “to develop a multi-year Financial and Capital Investment Plan; to critically review various programmatic topics for both Town and School Departments; to understand current and future expenditure and revenue issues to support quality municipal and educational services and capital improvements.” The FTF and the various sub-groups met monthly through January 2015 - culminating in the Selectmen’s decision in February 2015 to place a \$4.5 million override on the annual Town election ballot in April, which passed.

For FY17 the CBC received an additional \$120,000, which was used in combination with the FY16 \$120,000 to provide a combined borrowing capability of \$1.0 million to replace the Belmont High School fire alarm system in the summer of 2016. The additional yearly infusion of \$200,000 for sidewalks and \$300,000 for roads, plus 2.5% each year, is reflected in this year’s budget.

The Capital Projects sub-group of the FTF focused on forming a plan for monitoring, prioritizing, addressing and funding all outstanding capital projects. (See FTF report to 2015 Annual Town Meeting for further details.) The plan recognized that major Capital projects such as the Wellington School, Harris Track and Field, Belmont Center Reconstruction, the Belmont Municipal Light Department Substation, and Underwood Pool either have been completed in the past few years or were currently under construction. This leaves Belmont High School, the Library, the Police Station, the DPW facility, the incinerator site and the skating rink/White Field House to be addressed. (See FTF report for detail.) Based on the criteria of need, certain site, updated plan, and current cost estimate the sub-group recommended that the remaining projects be done in the following priority order: Belmont High School, incinerator site, DPW, Library and Police Station.

In January 2016, the Massachusetts School Building Authority accepted Belmont’s application for funding renovation/construction of Belmont High School. Additionally, the Board of Library Trustees, in light of the BHS project’s going forward, have agreed to skip the next Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners grant round for construction/renovation of the Belmont Public Library. See the sections below for detail on the future of the library. Private donors are currently exploring the funding of skating rink and field house replacement. This leaves the DPW facility and the Police Station unaddressed.

Finally, the CBC continues to request a predictable annual allocation of \$3.0 million for capital requests from the department heads.

## **Major Capital Projects Working Group (MCPWG)**

Belmont has diligently addressed numerous of the capital projects identified in 2000 as being in need of repair, renovation or replacement. In 2017 four major projects remain – Belmont High School, the DPW facility, the Police Station and the Library. Lesser projects such as the incinerator site and the rink/field house are also still outstanding.

Since 2012 the Capital Budget Committee and later the Capital Projects sub-group of the Financial Task Force have offered tools and analysis for prioritizing these projects. However, to date, a comprehensive plan to make them a reality has not been adopted. The magnitude of the high school project and the lack of a suitable site for the police station have been stumbling blocks as has a decision on the location of a library.

In January of 2016 the Belmont High School project received approval for funding from the MSBA. This automatically made the high school the first of these big four projects to go forward. Also, in 2016 the Board of Library Trustees partnered with the Capital Budget Committee to do a feasibility study for a future library at its present location. That study is complete and recommends a new building on the existing site. Understandably, the Trustees are anxious to move forward with this project.

The Police Station and DPW are left without a constituency to advocate for them and no clear path forward. In the opinion of many people on the CBC, WC, and BOS those two facilities are in worse shape and more immediate need than either the library or the high school. Our town employees work in the police and DPW facilities under deplorable conditions, which must be addressed in the very near future. Also, the incinerator site needs to be capped and then can become a site for numerous potential Town uses. What is the path forward?

Three members of the Capital Budget Committee: Mark Paolillo from the BOS, Pat Brusch from the Permanent Building Committee and Anne Marie Mahoney, from the CBC began to meet informally in the summer and fall to form the path forward. By January it was clear that this small subgroup of the CBC needed the expertise of the Town Administrator as well as the Town Treasurer along with two members of the Warrant Committee – Roy Epstein and Jennifer Fallon. This group has been taking tours of the four facilities and meeting with the incinerator site consultants to gather information on conditions, uses and future needs of these facilities. Consequently, this sub-group requested the BOS to name them as an official Town committee, which they did in February 2017.

The charge to the WCPWG is:

To analyze these capital projects which still need to be addressed – Belmont High School, Library, DPW, Police Station, incinerator site –in order to define a sound plan for building, sequencing and possible financing which will lead to a successful and timely completion of these projects. The MCPWG will develop recommendations in concert with the Belmont High School Building Project process. It is understood that the BHS project process is underway under the direction of the Belmont High School Building Committee (BHSBC). The BHSBC is required to adhere to Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) timelines.

Members of the MCPWG appointed by the Board of Selectmen:

Mark Paolillo	Board of Selectmen
Anne Marie Mahoney	Chairwoman, Capital Budget Committee
M. Patricia Brusch	Chairwoman, Permanent Building Committee; Member, CBC and BHS Building Committee
Roy Epstein	Chairman, Warrant Committee
Jennifer Fallon	Member, WC and CBC, and Library Feasibility Study

Phyllis Marshall  
Floyd Carman

Interim Town Administrator  
Town Treasurer

The Working Group has been meeting on an aggressive schedule to form both short and long term solutions to the needs of the DPW and Police Station in particular. It is the goal of the MCPWG to give an interim report to the Town Meeting at the June, financial session and to give a final report, with recommendations, to a Special Town Meeting in the Fall, 2017.

### **Privately Funded Capital Improvements**

Each year “private” groups such as the Soccer Association, Little League and Parents of ... groups provide much needed improvements and upgrades to our fields and recreational facilities. Without their generous support in donating irrigation systems for Winn Brook field sprucing up the White Field House, and raising funds to replace playground equipment at the Winn Brook and Butler as examples, this much needed work would fall to the Capital Budget or become a request for CPA funds. In summer 2015 private donations funded the replacement of the varsity basketball court floor at the high school. Recently, a group of ice hockey supporters expressed interest in a private/public partnership to replace the Viglirolo Rink; as the high school project proceeds and the plans for that campus become clear, we eagerly await such a partnership’s becoming reality.

Last year the Capital Budget Committee worked with donors to form a creative solution to funding the Press Box at the Harris Field. This final piece of the original 2001 renovation of the field was finally approved for construction. Because the Capital Budget does not have \$240,000 to fund the Press Box the following cumulative funding solution was offered: \$40,000 remaining from the 2001 Harris Field Building Committee; \$125,000 of unused Capital money from the 2014 Harris Field replacement project; \$75,000 pledged by the Belmont Boosters and other donors. This project should be in place by the 2017 football season.

The community spirit shown in each of these partnerships is much appreciated by the department heads and the Committee and should be recognized by the citizens of the Town.

### **Recommendations for FY2018 Capital Budget**

For FY2018, the Committee received requests for \$3.2 million in capital expenditures. This does not include requests that will be covered in separate Warrant articles for water and sewer equipment and projects funded by enterprise funds, which are generated from user fees. Nor does it include Chapter 90 funds. The total available funding for the Capital Budget for FY2018 is the same amount. The funds for discretionary spending are \$1,366,600; Pavement Management funds are \$1.64 million as a result of the 2001 and 2015 overrides; Chapter 90 money is estimated to be \$535,089 for a total Pavement Management budget of \$2.17 million; sidewalk repair is \$210,000 In contrast, for FY2017, the Committee initially received requests for more than \$6.2 million dollars in capital expenditures and had roughly \$1.4 million in discretionary funds to meet those needs.

Traditionally, the amount requested for projects that this Committee believes are appropriate and important is far less than the available funds. Because we were presented with a balanced budget

and little true understanding of what the department heads requested or need immediately verses in the future, we cannot quantify what our deficit is for FY2018.

Overall, the CBC is usually presented with a large amount of requests and limited funds with which to address only the most pressing requests each year. As reported to past Town Meetings, the Committee believes that the Town's allocation to the Capital Budget each year should be at least \$3.0 million (exclusive of money devoted to roads) and that that amount should increase each year by the same 2½% allowed to other aspects of the Town's general tax budget. One positive aspect of capital funding is that both the 2001 and the 2015 overrides, plus the 2½% annual growth has boosted the Pavement Management Program to close to the maximum level that the departments can manage in a construction season. While our roads and sidewalks are still in desperate condition in many areas of town, we are spending all we can reasonably spend in a season without tying the town up in road closure knots. However, a study of the five-year chart at the end of this report indicates that, even with an increased allocation for the Capital Budget, some years will present a challenge. Without increased allocations, further creative financing is inevitable. In addition, the Committee has gone on record as strongly supporting the efforts of the Warrant Committee to establish a system whereby the condition of the Town's large capital assets can be assessed, indexed, and tracked from year to year.

Article 15 in the warrant will contain the Committee's FY2018 recommendations. In addition to the annual Capital allocation, this Committee routinely recommends reallocation of funds previously appropriated for capital projects that are now complete.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

*Police Network Switches:* This replaces existing hardware that is beyond its useful life and that form the backbone of the in-house network connecting all the Department's computerized resources.

*Police Net Clock System:* The manufacturer no longer supports the existing system. The Net Clock synchronizes all times to GPS for the Department's computer network, radio system and fire box receiving system.

*Fire Staff vehicles #1 and #2:* These are used by the Chief and Assistant Chief and both are 11 years old. They are used for 10 years and then passed along to the Fire Prevention Division. These are not hybrid vehicles due to the higher expense of such vehicles.

*Fire Squad 1 Replacement:* This vehicle is 18 years old and its replacement is a used DPW truck that is being replaced with a new purchase. The Fire Department uses this vehicle to snow plow around its two buildings. The cost is to refurbish the used DPW vehicle for use as a snowplow. This refurbished vehicle should last another five to eight years.

*Fire Trucks:* The CBC approved the replacement of the 1999 ladder truck and the 1988 pumper truck in 2013. In a plan formulated by the Town Treasurer, these trucks along with a School Department SUV were combined into a short-term bond issue. Orders for the fire vehicles were placed and the two new trucks were delivered in winter of 2015. Fiscal 2018 is the fourth year of the bond payment.

*Ambulance and Cardiac Monitor Replacement:* This is the final year of the Fire Department's five-year program to fund a replacement for the cardiac monitor in the

ambulance. Each year the Committee sets aside \$7000 for this monitor, which costs \$35,000. The new monitor will be purchased this year off the State Bid List.

Similarly, each year the Committee sets aside money for the purchase of a new ambulance. Since a new ambulance was purchased in FY17, this is year one of the five-year program and the set aside is not \$65,000 to reflect the increased cost of a new ambulance.

*Spill Response Trailer:* Past events like the Burbank oil leak and other contamination of Clay Pit Pond have shown that the Department needs this particular resource for quick response and mitigation of a negative environmental impact on our water.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES

*Town Wide Security:* This provides funds for installing additional security cameras in Town and School buildings. This is year four of a six-year program.

*HVAC Tech Van:* This is a utility van to be used by the department's new HVAC technician, a newly created position. An in-house technician to handle the Town and School's HVAC needs will provide significant cost savings to the Facilities' operating budget over time.

*System-Wide Unit Ventilators:* Similar to the multi-year work that was done at the high school, this is Phase I of work to be done at Chenery as part of a school-wide multi-year project.

*Refinish Chenery Gym Floor:* The floor is 20 years old. The painted surface and court lines are in need of refurbishing.

*Butler Cafeteria Floor Replacement:* This project will strip and replace the existing floor, including the asbestos layer, and will include installation of a moisture mitigation material.

*Systemwide Building Envelope:* This is year eight of a multi-year project of on-going upkeep of the exterior of our town-owned buildings.



## LIBRARY

*Upgrade Light Fixtures:* This is Phase I of a two-year project to improve lighting in stairwells, restrooms, hallways, etc. The existing lighting is outdated and not energy efficient.

*Crack, Fill and Seal Parking Lot:* The existing pavement is in poor condition and the curbing non-existent in several areas. Restriping is included in the cost estimate. It is the intention of the Committee to request that all such driveway and parking lot refurbishment requests go through the DPW in the future.

*Replace Gutters:* The building's gutters have holes, which causes hazardous, icy conditions on the ground in winter.

*Abatement and Replacement of Stairwell Tiling:* Some existing asbestos tiles in the stairwells are cracked and chipped and for safety purposes will be replaced with new vinyl tiles.

*Quiet Study Room Buildout:* There appears to be an acute need for small, quiet study rooms for patrons to do work or meet with others without disturbing other patrons. The Committee has partially funded this request with the expectation that the remaining funds will come from the library.

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

*Snowfighter Conversion:* This will replace the 1998 snowfighter (#34) with the conversion of an existing 2010 dump truck. The DPW's program of converting dump trucks into snowfighters has saved nearly \$1M over 20 years in vehicle acquisition expense.

*Sidewalks:* This will pay for sidewalk repair in Town and is funded by the 2015 override.

*Replace Truck (#103):* This is a 2005 Chevy Silverado Pick-up Truck in heavy use by the Parks Department. The old one will be traded-in.

## SCHOOLS

*Chromebooks and Carts:* This supplies 150 Chromebooks and 5 Storage Carts to the Chenery for use in state-mandated online standardized testing. These devices will also be used to increase classroom technology capacity and as a new purchase it is viewed as establishing a platform.

*Upgrade Network Wiring:* This project replaces existing wiring at Chenery that is almost 20 years old. The new wiring will have greater capacity and will improve system speed and reliability.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

*Fiber Network Assessment, Mapping and Testing:* This is the first phase in updating the Town and School's fiber network. The project is related to the disposition of the Old Light

Building where one of the two main hubs for the network is located. It will assess future networks needs in towns in view of future building projects.

*Upgrade Speed of Town Network Hubs:* This replaces the Prince Street switchgear that services several buildings (Butler, Senior Center, Highway and Water Departments and Fire Headquarters). The existing equipment, which is at the end of its useful life, is not nearly robust enough for the network it serves.

## COUNCIL ON AGING

*COA Medi-Van Replacement:* This van will replace the current van, which has 115,000 miles on it and escalating repair costs. The COA will participate in a Department of Transportation 80/20 grant program, which allows the Town to purchase a \$56,200 van for the 20% cost of \$11,240.

## OFFICE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

*Pavement Management:* This continues the yearly infusion of money into the Town's Pavement Management program, which is discussed in greater detail in the narrative of the report. The Director of Community Development will report at Town Meeting on the specific streets to be paved with the FY 2018 funds. Of particular note is the project for pedestrian safety upgrades at the Burbank School, which will include the installation of a pair of pedestrian push-button school crossing LED lights to enhance safety for people crossing School Street to and from the Burbank.

## ENTERPRISE FUNDS

The Director of Community Development who is responsible for the management of these programs reports annually to the Committee on the status of these undertakings and funding mechanisms. They are described here but are not part of the annual capital budget allocation.

*Water Main Replacement Program:* This is the continuation of the 30-year project to replace all the unlined cast iron pipe in the town's water distribution system (approximately 40% of the system) to ensure a continued reliable supply of clean water. The project was originally approved by Town Meeting in 1995.

*Water Main Bond Repayment:* The Water Main Replacement Program (described above) is funded in part by taking advantage of no-interest loans from the MWRA through the Local Pipeline Assistance Program (LPAP). This is an integral part of the capital finance plan for the upgrade of the Town's water system.

*Replace Emergency Service Van (#80):* This van is dispatched to respond to all levels of emergency situations in the Water Division. The retired van will be traded-in.

*Sewer and Drain Repair:* This funds the Town's ongoing program to repair infrastructure and alleviate flooding.

*Sewer Permit Compliance:* This will pay for consulting services to ensure compliance with new federal storm water permitting requirements that go into effect July 1, 2017.

*Sewer and Drain Investigation, Evaluation and Repair:* This project will address potential problem areas where sewer lines could leak into water lines. The State DEP will provide a loan at a very low interest rate to defray the cost of the work.

*Replace Dump Truck (#9):* This replaces a 2008 19,000 GVW Dump Truck in daily use by the Highway Division for the sanitary sewer maintenance program. The old truck will be traded-in.

*Replace Dump Truck (#18):* This replaces a 2003 37,000 GVW Dump Truck in use nearly daily by the Highway Division for the sanitary sewer maintenance program.

*Smart Meter Replacement Program (Phase II):* This is upgrades an Advanced Meter Infrastructure system and allows for instant consumption reads, leak detection and efficiencies in billing and customer access to their accounts.

The Committee's recommendations for FY2018 are set forth in the motions that correspond to Article 12 in the warrant. Water and sewer rates have been set appropriately to finance the expenditures recommended under Article 12. Chapter 90 Highway Funds from the State are covered in Article 14.

### **Five-Year Projection of Belmont's Capital Needs**

It is the responsibility of the Capital Budget Committee to present to the Town Meeting, in addition to the items to be funded in the upcoming fiscal year, a list of the expected projects for the following five years. (The available data, however, is often not precisely five years: the implications of some entries go beyond five years and, in a few instances, only four years projections are available. FY2018, dealt with above, is sometimes taken as year one.) In the past, it has been the practice of the Capital Budget Committee to compile this five-year list from requests from department heads and to present it largely unaltered.<sup>3</sup> For this year, we will continue with this practice. In particular, we have not deleted items that are to us not within our mandate (see second section, above). The appearance of an item in the chart should not be taken as a decision on our part that an item is properly within this Committee's jurisdiction. We might later screen out some items as more appropriate for the operating budget. This chart is a raw document for planning purposes only. The items in the chart have not been "vetted" either by the Town Administrator or the Capital Budget Committee. The chart is attached to this report.

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<sup>3</sup> Some changes have been made, however, for editorial consistency. Another change is that the requests for FY2018 that could not be recommended have been added to the appropriate year (usually FY2019). The later change is somewhat arbitrary because many of these requests will in fact be modified before the departments make them (or substitute requests) again. This is because it often seemingly puts two years of a multi-year project into one year and because of "work arounds" that departments may have devised in the meantime. These workarounds may involve grants, gifts, funds diverted from operations, help from other departments, different approaches to the underlying problem, combination with other projects, and so forth. The Committee, however, believes it is best to keep these matters in mind.

One will note in the chart that there are items requested for buildings that may receive major renovation or replacement in the future. We are uncertain of the timing of any of these projects, and so have included repairs that have been identified in the year that it appears such a need will occur. It is expected that any expenditures of a capital nature will be carefully thought out in terms of the expected future of the facility. However, the buildings do have to function, and be safe and comfortable, for as long as they are being used.

This Committee asked that departments submit costs estimated for the year matching the effective date of the request, thus requiring an adjustment for the economy in future years. Some departments tried to comply with this request; others did not. Moreover, unmet capital requests from the past that we have tried to carry forward are shown at the values originally submitted (without adjustment). Finally, most of the capital items are subject to a bidding process before they are actually purchased. Therefore, these cost values should be treated as only roughly comparable orders of magnitude.

Several town departments make use of the Town antenna. This item is presented under the Police Department because that department has agreed to carry this item lest it be overlooked. The over-all expense is not an item entirely for the Police budget. Moreover, the over-all expense and phasing for this project have not yet been determined. The amount and phasing shown are very preliminary police estimates. The ultimate disposition of the police station building will have an impact on that antenna, which will be a future capital expense.

Because the Pavement Management Program must be executed on a seasonal basis, the Committee has not attempted to cast the full planning for roads by the Community Development Department in this fiscal year chart form. The Committee has met in past years with the Director of Community Development, has reviewed his planning and is satisfied that the Pavement Program will make good use of any funds that this Committee is able to allocate to that Program for the indefinite future. A more extensive discussion of the roads situation is available in the previously cited reports of the Belmont Pavement Management Committee.

This chart contains some expenditures for sewer and water enterprise funds. The Director of Community Development is responsible for some of those projects in his capacity as Town Engineer. (As a general matter, the Director of Community Development is responsible for sewer capital projects and those items are in the Community Development Department budget; the Director of the Public Works Department is responsible for water capital expenditures and those items are in the DPW budget. The Committee has been assured that planning for water and sewer projects is coordinated between the departments.) Some water and sewer projects are funded or to be funded from the proceeds of borrowing previously authorized or which the Town Engineer hopes will be authorized. The debt service for that borrowing will be included in the operating budgets of the enterprise funds.

The Parks Division and the Cemetery Division have been combined but are still carried separately for budgeting purposes.

The request by non-school Town Technology for Phase I of a multi-year project to relocate fiber optic hubs (see 2014), and related requests in subsequent years, anticipates the disposition of the current main library and the former Municipal Light Department headquarters on Concord Avenue. These buildings house the two main hubs for the Town's fiber network, without which the Town's computer, telephone, security and radio systems would not work. Any sale or

reconstruction of these buildings will require moving the hubs, a multi-year process that needs to start no fewer than three years before sale or reconstruction.

As the five-year chart demonstrates, it is doubtful that the Town can fund all worthy capital requests in coming years from the current, annual allocation to the capital budget. The Committee recommended financing some acquisitions (lease/purchasing of Police and Fire equipment) in previous years. Last year the override vote allowed the Town to move ahead with two projects deemed of vital importance and urgency through the Committee's increased borrowing capability. Among other possible financing approaches the Committee may consider in future are so-called BANS (bond anticipation notes), leasing, capital outlay exclusions, and debt exclusions. It is very likely that the Committee will make further recommendations in this regard in coming years.

Anne Marie Mahoney, Chairman  
Rebecca Vose, Secretary  
M. Patricia Brusch  
Susan Burgess-Cox  
Jennifer Fallon  
Raffi Manjikian  
Mark Paolillo