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**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING BY AUDIO AND VISUAL REMOTE ACCESS AND BY TELEPHONE
Thursday, March 4, 2021
8:00 AM**

Call to Order

A regular meeting of the Capital Budget Committee (CBC) was called to order at 8:02 a.m. by Chair Anne Marie Mahoney.

Members Present by Audio and Video Remote Access: Chair Mahoney, M. Patricia Brusch, Tom Caputo (SB), Kate Bowen for Amy Checkoway (SC), Jenny Fallon (WC), Rebecca Vose and Susan Burgess Cox, Liaison to the Planning Committee

Also Present: Jon Marshall, Assistant Town Administrator; Peter Struzziero, Library Director; Kathleen Keohane, President, Board of Library Trustees; Jay Marcotte, Director of DPW and Acting Director of Facilities; Dana Gillis, HVAC Technician, Facilities

Library FY22 Requests

Mr. Struzziero presented the Library's requests, which are the same as FY21's. The first is \$171,600 to upgrade the Fire Alarm System. As he has previously explained, the current system is now obsolete and out of code. It is hard to find replacement parts for it. A new system would have a life expectancy of twenty (20) years. The second is \$52,000 for making targeted repairs to A/C units to extend their useful lives for at least another five (5) years. Thousands of dollars are spent in repairing these units annually, which are essential for use of the library in the summer.

As part of his presentation, Mr. Struzziero chronicled myriad problems some recent, some long-standing, with the Library's physical plant. These include heat system breakdowns in offices, inadequacy of the electrical service for the building, the proclivity of the elevator to break-down and most concerning the continuing failure of the water circulation heat pump for the entire building and its back-up. He reminded the CBC that the building was built in 1964.

The Committee discussed with Mr. Struzziero and Ms. Keohane the timing of a debt exclusion for a new Library considering the override on this year's ballot. The success or failure of that measure may have implications for the voter's appetite for a new Library. Mrs. Brusch believed some voters would happily agree to a new Library building but will not support the operating override. Mr. Caputo agreed with Mrs. Brusch that we should not give up on pushing for a new Library, although he acknowledged that it is difficult to contemplate a timeline for it until we know the results of the April override vote.

Ms. Fallon asked the Library representatives to scrub the 5-year projection of capital needs to identify those projects that are critical to keeping the building open. This list will guide decisions about the cost-effectiveness of investing in the existing building versus the construction of a new Library sooner rather than later.

Ms. Keohane shared news from the state grant program for library construction run by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The projects approved in the last round of financing will not be completed for years so no new grant round is anticipated until 2035 or later.

Update on Chenery Roof Replacement

Mr. Marcotte with Mr. Gillis appeared before the Committee with an update on the condition and replacement costs of the CMS roof, which was twenty-three (23) years old last summer. Mr. Marcotte has learned that the roof has a history of leaks. This raises the prospect that water has seeped into the walls and ceilings and mold could be growing in the insulation. Also, during a recent inspection of the roof, Mr. Gillis identified problems with the roof-top HVAC units that will need to be addressed. To replace the rubber membrane roof, the units must be removed and put back, so it might make sense to replace them at the same time.

Mr. Marcotte asked Daedalus Projects, Inc. (now CHA Consulting) to develop a cost estimate for the entire roof job. The figure came back at \$4M. Using a cost-per-unit estimate, replacing the roof-top units could cost as much as another \$4M. Total cost could be as high as \$8M. This prompted Committee members to discuss funding the work by floating a bond. The annual cost of a bond this size would consume the entire discretionary capital budget of the Town. Members also talked about adding the elevator to the bond for the roof, and potentially any other major maintenance work needed at Chenery to protect the Town's investment in this building.

Chair Mahoney suggested that the CBC take some time to think more about the proper scope of the CMS work and bring an article to a town meeting this Fall. This will allow time to obtain an expert estimate and recommendation in writing before bringing forth a warrant article.

The CBC discussed the need for a complete capital inventory. The new Facilities Director is beginning March 22, according to Mr. Marcotte, news that was greeted with enthusiasm by members and most especially Mr. Marcotte.

Phil Thayer, a Belmont resident, asked about alternatives to a whole roof replacement, such as patching. Mr. Marcotte and knowledgeable committee members explained that patching is likely not a viable solution. Mr. Caputo would like Daedalus to provide an alternative to replacing all the roof units on the Chenery roof.

Update on DPW/BPD Funding

Chair Mahoney reported that the cost of FF&E for the Police Department has come down \$20,000 since her last report.

Next Meetings

March 11 Dave Petto, IT Director, and Elizabeth Dionne from the CPA Committee

March 18 Floyd Carman, Town Treasurer

Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of February 25, 2021 were deferred until the next meeting on March 11.

Borrowing Policy, Etc.

Members discussed 1) the CBC's borrowing policy adopted at the request of Town Treasurer Carman that relates to the discretionary capital budget and 2) the borrowing cap for the Town. Both borrowing policies should be brought to the Select Board and the Warrant Committee for deeper analysis and policy reconciliation. The Capital Stabilization Fund (CSF) that has never been funded was talked about. If funded, the CSF could be used to address problems at the Library.

Chair Mahoney would like the CBC to meet with the Schools to encourage that department to pay closer attention to maintenance and repair needs of school buildings. The Facilities Department has responsibility for these needs, but it relies to some degree on issue spotting by the people who occupy and work in the schools.

The CBC moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Vose, Secretary