

**MINUTES
TOWN OF BELMONT
CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING BY AUDIO AND VISUAL REMOTE ACCESS AND BY TELEPHONE
Thursday, March 18, 2021
8:00 AM**

**RECEIVED
TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA**

DATE: March 25, 2021
TIME: 2:44 PM

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), Jenny Fallon (WC), Rebecca Vose and Susan Burgess Cox, Liaison to the Planning Board

Absent: Amy Checkoway (SC)

Also Present: Jon Marshall, Assistant Town Administrator; Floyd Carman, Town Treasurer

Updates on Projects

The meeting began with updates on various new and ongoing projects.

- 1.) Boilers at Elementary schools.
 - A.) The Winn Brook work will be paid for from previously allocated capital funds and operating funds for energy efficiency upgrades.
 - B.) Mr. Marshall will determine the amount of capital funds previously allocated for the Burbank and Butler boiler work and report back to the CBC.
- 2.) The final amount of funds necessary to complete the Police Station is closer to \$40K.
- 3.) The cost of rehabing the DPW truck that will be handed down to Facilities will be roughly half of the funds (\$7,500) allocated previously.
- 4.) It remains to be determined how many of the four (4) Chenery cafeteria compressors, need to be replaced.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Fallon moved: That the minutes of March 11, 2021, be approved as written.

Mrs. Brusch seconded.

Ms. Mahoney called the Roll with Members Brusch, Caputo, Fallon, Mahoney and Vose voting in favor.

The motion carried 5-0.

Chair's Report on Meeting with By-law Review Committee (BLRC)

Chair Mahoney met with the BLRC to discuss the proposed change to the composition of the Capital Budget Committee. The proposal will substitute a representative of the Planning Board with a moderator-appointed member. The wording of the change is supported by the BLRC.

Update on Long-Term Capital Planning Committee (LTCPC)

Ms. Fallon reported that this committee continues to focus on, among other things, getting a better handle on combining the functions of the Capital Budget Committee with those of the LTCPC.

Discussion of CBC Borrowing Policy with Town Treasurer Carman

Committee members asked Mr. Carman about whether the current wording of the CBC's Borrowing Policy should be revised or re-voted as written. Ms. Fallon expressed particular interest in understanding which bonded projects fall within CBC borrowing and are subject to the borrowing cap articulated in the policy and which do not. These questions prompted a wide-ranging discussion in which the following points were made or raised:

Mr. Carman suggested that the distinction between projects that fall within the CBC cap and those that do not requires a conversation between this committee and the Select Board.

The upcoming Override Vote campaign has not emphasized the Town's serious capital budget needs, which have been grossly underfunded for years.

Members of the Select Board and Warrant Committee do not understand the pressing capital needs of the Town and that, when many bonded capital projects are completely paid for, the annual amount that paid for the bond interest returns to the operating budget. Instead, this amount should be treated as increased bonded capacity for capital projects.

It was noted that, at least in the case of the High School Fire Alarm bond, there is an agreement to roll that debt over to pay for the DPW/Fire Station project.

The point was made that in some instances some borrowing should roll-over, not roll-off. For example, once the current bond for the fire pumper is paid-off, that money should roll-over to pay for the next large piece of fire equipment. These are large ticket items that need replacement on a regular, anticipated basis.

It is imperative that we broaden the discussion about capital needs in Town with the Select Board and Warrant. This committee should meet twice yearly (October and April) with the Select Board to discuss the capital budget and to brief the SB on pressing concerns and ongoing or new projects.

Once the result of the Override Election is known and Town Meeting preparation is well in hand, the CBC, SB, Warrant and School Committee should gather for an in-depth discussion of the serious capital needs of the Town. The LTCPC has a significant role to play in identifying and assessing the relative urgency of capital projects. This conversation will take on even greater importance should the Override fail.

The use of funds to pay for capital needs is a Select Board decision. The chair of the SB should be making the pitch to Town Meeting about the projects recommended by the CBC.

The Town should develop a “mission critical” list of capital projects and that should guide decisions about capital expenditures and borrowing.

Next Meetings

March 25 Spread sheet of capital requests to be reviewed

April 8 Post-Override assessment of capital project priorities

Concluding Matters

Resident Pargoli asked a question about how the cost of the Chenery roof will affect taxes. Members explained that the roof whatever its final cost is determined to be will be paid for by a borrowing and not have a direct effect on taxes.

The CBC moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Vose, Secretary