

DATE: May 27, 2021  
TIME: 9:20 AM

**TOWN OF BELMONT  
JOINT MEETING OF THE  
CAPITAL BUDGET COMMITTEE  
AND THE SELECT BOARD  
MEETING BY AUDIO AND VISUAL REMOTE ACCESS AND BY TELEPHONE  
Thursday, April 29, 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, Amy Checkoway (SC), Roy Epstein (SB), Jenny Fallon (WC), Rebecca Vose and Susan Burgess Cox, Liaison to the Planning Board

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

The Select Board (SB) was called to order by Chair Adam Dash with all members present.

Chair Mahoney explained that the first part of the meeting would be with the Select Board to present the Committee's status report on capital projects and allocations for FY22 and prospectively. Then the CBC would take up the final vote on its FY22 recommendations to Town Meeting and other business.

**Presentation to Select Board**

Chair Mahoney began by offering general remarks about the challenges of capital budgeting for the Town posed by insufficient (1) funding and (2) manpower. Her points were as follows:

- CBC now responsible for meeting the capital needs of all Town Departments, Schools and Library
- Recent big-ticket projects include HS fire alarm system, fire stations' roof repairs, large fire vehicles, with increasing reliance on borrowing to pay for them
- This year progress has been hobbled by lack of manpower, vacant Facilities directorship and COVID
- Facilities is overloaded with a backlog of projects
- Some projects funded in prior fiscal years require more money to complete
- Projects that have pushed the capital budget "over the cliff" are the Chenery roof and roof top units, and the relentless needs of an aging Library building
- CBC has had conversations with Treasurer Carman about the Town's borrowing cap
- There needs to be a fundamental shift in how the Town views and treats capital including the staffing needed to manage projects and operate both new technology and new facilities once projects are complete

- Allocation to capital budget is roughly 2-3% of operating budget; in comparable towns, e.g., Concord, Arlington, that figure is 8-10%; Collins Center recommends 5-6%
- The Butler, Winn Brook and Burbank School buildings will need major investment soon as they are approaching the end of their useful lives

Ms. Fallon then reported on the work of the Long-Term Capital Planning Committee (LTCPC) and its interplay with the work of the CBC:

- Looking at the projects financed under the Town's borrowing cap, which is spending not within the control of the CBC, some of these projects roll off the books in four (4) years but the bulk will not be paid off for thirty (30) years
- Identified need for and has begun working on a comprehensive inventory of the Town's capital assets but the lack of manpower within Facilities means that this may take as long as two (2) years to complete
- The CBC keeps receiving shorter and shorter lists of capital requests from department heads who edit down their requests due to the fiscal reality of limited capital funds
- LTCPC will produce a robust 5-year plan of capital needs to present to the SB, Warrant Committee and Town Meeting and another plan looking at the Town's capital needs 25 years beyond
- It is crucial that we improve communication about these needs with Town Boards, Committees, Town Meeting to get everyone on the same page

Questions were asked by SB members and discussion ensued about the above.

Chair Dash asked Mr. Carman to weigh in. The Treasurer asked Chair Mahoney to add the Hockey Rink to the list of building projects that the Town needs to keep in its sights. His points were

- Belmont lacks a commercial base that could support more capital investment; Watertown is building its new high school under its borrowing cap due to the strength of its commercial base
- At the SB level, capital projects must be prioritized, and some let go; the operating costs of projects should be factored into its decisions; politics creates pressure for the choices made by the SB

More discussion ensued about the amount that should be allocated annually to capital, making and honoring a commitment to a certain level of capital spending, the borrowing cap and best way to keep the capital needs of the Town at the fore – regular agenda item for SB and quarterly meetings among the SB, Warrant, CBC, LTCPC and the SC.

Chair Mahoney reviewed the CBC recommendations for FY22, provided a history of the underground DPW tank project and its increased cost, and discussed the decision to defer to this Fall major maintenance projects at the Chenery, i.e., roof and roof-top units replacements and the cafeteria compressors. Reference was made to the Capital Stabilization Fund and the need to use it (and fund it) as was originally intended.

Mr. Paolillo observed that the Town has pursued a re-active approach to capital needs, rather than a pro-active one, and that needs to change. He suggested the SB meet after the May sessions

of Annual Town Meeting to consider making a commitment to an annual “capital spend” policy. Mr. Dash asked Ms. Garvin to investigate grant funding to assist with creating the capital inventory that the LTCPC has begun.

The Select Board adjourned its meeting at 8:51 a.m.

### **CBC Business – Final Vote on FY22 Recommendations**

The Committee heard updates from Chair Mahoney on some projects being recommended or deferred to a Fall Special Town Meeting.

- DPW Fuel Tanks – funded from 3 sources – Capital Budget, Enterprise Funds and Belmont Municipal Light. This last will be made in the form of a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes)
- Chase Building Management System upgrades – removed
- Library A/C and Fire Alarm System upgrades deferred until we have more information; some projects may be considered in the Fall
- Police SQL server is now a solid estimate
- FF&E for the Police Station – removed
- Total of discretionary capital recommendations is \$1,957,682
- Roughly \$255K will be available in turn-backs for Fall STM appropriation

The projects that the Committee in its straw poll identified for recommendation are as follows:

#### *Accounting:*

Tyler Content Manual SE

#### *COA:*

Belderbus Replacement

#### *Facilities:*

Building Envelope Work (Butler)

Boiler Replacement (Burbank & Butler)

DPW Fuel Tank Replacement

Exterior Work at Wellington

Fire Station #2 Roof Repair

#### *Fire Department:*

Replace Shift Commander’s Response Vehicle

Ambulance Replacement

Cardiac Monitor Replacement

Portable Radio Replacement

#### *Information Technology:*

## Phone Infrastructure Upgrade

### *Police:*

Livescan Fingerprint System Replacement  
File and SQL Server Replacement  
Dispatch Radio Computers Replacement

### *Schools:*

SAN Storage Replacement

### *Public Works:*

10' Material Spreader (#74) Replacement  
19,000 GVW Dump Truck (#106) (Parks) Replacement  
Toro 10' Riding Mower (Parks) Replacement

At the conclusion of the updates and discussion that followed, the Chair asked for a motion to approve the CBC's FY22 capital budget recommendations.

*Ms. Fallon moved:* That the Capital Budget Committee approve discretionary capital recommendations in the amount of \$1,957,682, for the above-enumerated capital projects.

Mrs. Brusch seconded.

Chair Mahoney called the Roll with all members voting in favor.

The motion carried 6-0.

## **Votes on Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds**

Committee members then took up the capital request funded by Enterprise Funds. The Sewer requests are

1 Ton Pick-up Truck (#4) Replacement  
1 Ton 4WD Pick-up Truck (#7) Replacement  
40,000 GVW Dump Truck (#18) Replacement  
Fuel Tank Replacement at DPW Yard (Sewer Portion)

*Ms. Fallon moved:* That the Capital Budget Committee approve the Sewer Enterprise Fund in the amount of \$864,250, for the above-enumerated projects.

Mrs. Brusch seconded.

Chair Mahoney called the Roll with all members voting in favor.

The motion carried 6-0.

The Water Enterprise request is

Fuel Tank Replacement at DPW Yard (Water Portion)

*Mr. Epstein moved:* That the Capital Budget Committee approve the Water Enterprise Fund in the amount of \$150,000.

Mrs. Brusch seconded.

Chair Mahoney called the Roll with all members voting in favor.

The motion carried 6-0.

### **Vote Pavement Management Funds**

*Mr. Epstein moved:* That the Capital Budget Committee approve the amount of \$2,042,460, for pavement management.

Mrs. Brusch seconded.

Chair Mahoney called the Roll with all members voting in favor.

The motion carried 6-0.

### **Vote on Sidewalk Repair Funds**

*Mr. Epstein moved:* That the Capital Budget Committee approve the amount of \$230,000, for pavement management.

Mrs. Brusch seconded.

Chair Mahoney called the Roll with all members voting in favor.

The motion carried 6-0.

### **Vote on Article 4 of Annual Town Meeting Warrant**

This is the article that will change the membership of the CBC, eliminating a Planning Board appointee and adding a fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) Moderator-appointee.

*Ms. Fallon moved:* That the Capital Budget Committee approve Article 4 of the 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant.

Mrs. Brusch seconded.

Chair Mahoney called the Roll with all members voting in favor.

The motion carried 6-0.

**Next Meeting** May 27, 2021

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mrs. Brusch moved: That the minutes of April 15, 2021, be approved.

Ms. Fallon seconded.

Chair Mahoney called the Roll with all members voting in favor.

The motion carried 5-0.

### **Residents Questions and Comments**

Resident Pargoli asked through the years how many capital projects have failed? Chair Mahoney explained that many of the projects under discussion have not failed but are the result of systems being at the end of their useful lives, e.g., Chenery roof and roof-top units. Resident Pargoli expressed frustration with the HVAC failure at the Wellington School, which is a very new building.

Resident Ananian Sarno posed questions about the DPW Tank project estimate and bidding process. She questioned whether the project needed to go through design and site plan with the Planning Board. And she wondered what the process is for taking something out of a Town Meeting Warrant Article. The Chair answered the questions she could, explaining that one would amend an article, but that if money for a particular capital project is removed, that amount must be allocated somewhere else in the capital budget.

The CBC moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Vose, Secretary