

Comprehensive Capital Budget Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, January 20, 2023

Location – Remote Meeting on Zoom

Members present: Pat Bruschi, Aaron Pikcilingis, Adam Dash, Larry Link, Catherine Bowen, Melinda Huang, Claus Becker, Chris Doyle, Susan Burgess-Cox

Members absent: Claus Becker

Other attendees: Jennifer Hewitt, Belmont Assistant Town Administrator; Chief David DeStefano, Belmont Fire Chief; Andrew Tobio, Belmont Fire Assistant Chief; James MacIsaac, Belmont Police Chief

[Chair Chris Doyle called meeting to order at 7:34am]

Andrew Tobio joined the meeting at 7:45am

Chris Doyle left the meeting at 9:03am

Agenda

1. Minutes

a. Minutes of 12/14/2022

- i. Approved as amended
- ii. Larry - yes
- iii. Chris - yes
- iv. Aaron - yes
- v. Melinda - yes
- vi. Kate - yes
- vii. Susan - yes
- viii. Adam - yes

2. Departmental Reviews: Police, Fire, Other

a. Fire Chief DeStefano reviewed the requests from Fire (responses outlined in *Fire Capital Budget Responses- Jan 2023.docx*)

- i. Ambulance - \$80k setaside for 5 years for a total cost of \$400k
 1. We have an ambulance on order, expecting spring delivery
 2. They review this cost and the \$400k is very close, so we may need to review the costs on a regular basis to ensure we aren't short
 3. A. Pikcilingis asks whether we could carve out a setaside from the ambulance operating surplus (~\$1m/year) and dedicating that toward the purchase of replacement vehicles
 - a. J. Hewitt - we have a forecast for the overall operating budget that includes these fees that flow to capital
 - b. P. Brush - Notes history of this setaside is based on this premise

- ii. Cardiac monitor replacement
 - 1. Have done a similar annual allotment for a 5-year cycle
 - a. This year J. Hewitt asked that we shift to a single ask every 5 years
- iii. Replacing staff vehicles
 - 1. Nothing in FY24
 - 2. FY25 replaces a 2015 Ford pickup from training and
 - 3. FY26 replaces shift commander vehicle
 - 4. FY27 replaces '13 Ford Interceptor
 - 5. C. Doyle asks about hybrid/electric vehicles
 - a. Some of the vehicles we're ordering are hybrids
 - b. Would like to consider/evaluate Ford electric pickups, provided we can support it with infrastructure (charging)
 - i. This might cause the request to increase somewhat
- iv. Pumper truck - \$860k
 - 1. Purchased in ~2007 or 2008
 - a. Some capital funding used to support this purchase
 - b. Not the normal vehicle so it doesn't meet the department's needs -- 1000 gallon reserve, 207" wheelbase
 - 2. New vehicle has a shorter wheelbase and a larger tank (1500 gallons)
 - 3. Chief DeStefano reviewed pictures sent to committee members in [file name] of the old truck versus one like the one they plan to purchase, highlighting the limitations of the old truck vs. the design of the proposed truck
 - 4. There is a ~22-month wait for a custom vehicle, but there are options for more standard builds that have a shorter lead time and are similar to the setup of the 2021 truck we have. Other nearby communities have these builds and we would review those before purchase
 - 5. Aaron asks about where proceeds end up (back at capital) The proceeds of sale would be either part of a trade-in or potentially a sale.
 - 6. C. Doyle asks what happens if this request isn't approved or we phase funding over multiple years. Would this work?
 - a. Chief DeStefano - argues for funding this
 - i. Already put off a year to support purchase of air packs
 - ii. Repairs costs are increasing in our current front-line pumper, but running it as a front-line vehicle (vs. reserve) will make it difficult to use in reserve, upsetting the fleet program
 - iii. C. Doyle asks for repair costs (this is included in the initial request for 12 calendar months - \$47k)

repairs, which is an unusually high number.
Normally ~\$15k a year).

iv. Chief DeStefano will provide more details about the normal repair costs

- b. J. Hewitt requests an overview of the fire fleet - *this is included in the fleet assessment sent to committee members*
- c. C. Bowen asks about the replacement schedule for large apparatus:
 - i. Rescue - 5 years
 - ii. Engines - 10 years
 - iii. Ladder trucks - 15 years
- v. Ladder truck - FY2029 - \$1.6m (projected cost for year of purchase)
 - 1. Chief DeStefano acknowledges that this is a large purchase for which should start planning
 - 2. L. Link asks whether municipalities pooling their requests could help provide cost savings
 - a. Chief DeStefano - our dealer (Greenwood Motors) only represents E1, a manufacturer of fire vehicles
 - i. Our longstanding relationship has helped us to reduce lead times
 - b. P. Brusch asks about whether this is on a state bid list (it is), so these are competitively billed
 - 3. A. Pikilingis asks about changing building heights
 - a. Yes - we have sufficient ladder (110') and the proposed truck would be sufficient for a ~10 storey building
 - i. Horizontal reach is an important
 - 4. A. Pikilingis asks about electric fire trucks (for the future)
 - a. Chief DeStefano - This is on his long-range radar
 - i. Current costs are about double than for a diesel, but this is likely to change
 - ii. We will watch LA and other cities' experiences with electric trucks to understand how well they work and what the impacts are for maintenance costs
 - b. C. Bowen notes that lower-mileage vehicles (<5k miles a year) is the "tipping point" for seeing real benefits of shifting toward electric
 - 5. C. Doyle asks about current costs so we can do our own inflation projections for broader plan
 - a. ~\$1.1m is the current cost for the type of truck we would purchase
 - 6. C. Bowen asks about what drives repair costs on apparatus
 - a. Chief DeStefano notes that many of the
- b. Police requests - Police Chief J. MacIsaac provided an overview of his requests

- i. Replace update server
 - 1. Police have their own network, separate from the town's, but the police IT manager consults with Dave Petto from town IT for each of their network purchases
- ii. Replace 75 portable radios
 - 1. Prices for all radio equipment are going up
 - 2. Could this be phased over a longer period -- possibly over 3 (vs. 2) years
- iii. Fiber multiplexes
 - 1. Runs from tower on upper concord ave (near cemetery)
 - 2. Connects all town radios so they will work even if wires are down
- iv. Townwide radio replacement
 - 1. This replaces the radios in dispatch areas across town
- v. Record management -- system that logs all records for arrests, fire calls, etc.
- vi. Replace domain controllers - authenticates users on the networks
- vii. Replace call logging - records all 911, etc. calls
- viii. Replace tasers
 - 1. Currently have 10 tasers from 2020 (donation from Liz and Graham Allison), which are shared among officers
 - a. ~\$86k for equipment purchase
 - b. ~\$24k has covered 5 years of training, support, etc.
 - 2. The pricing doesn't allow us to purchase a few a year, which would make it easier to build this into the operating budget
 - 3. The current tasers will no longer be supported past 2025 (we pay \$16k annual support subscription, which tracks usage, activation, etc.) -- currently covered by the donation, as is training
 - 4. At least 10 would be a help (to replace current supply), but 25 would be preferred
 - a. To allow all patrol officers to carry one
 - b. C. Bowen - how often are they used?
 - i. Chief MacIsaac provided an overview of levels of intervention for "use of force continuum" police (from hands to firearms), describes the ways in which police can use tasers as a tool for deescalation
 - c. A. Pikcilingis - would increasing to 25 incur extra subscription - yes, and this cost is included in the capital request
 - i. J. Hewitt would prefer to build the training & subscription costs into operating budget rather than the capital request
 - 5. Discussion of Expiration

- a. C. Doyle - can we purchase extensions for some units to phase this purchase?
 - i. Chief MacIsaac has asked the rep and they do not offer anything like this
 - ix. Replace network switches
 - x. Replace sidearms
 - 1. They have reached their end of useful life
 - 2. There is a buyback component, the details of which will be clearer about a year out from the purchase
 - xi. Discussion: Consolidating IT services across town Departments.
 - 1. J. Hewitt notes four distinct areas of IT
 - a. Town infrastructure
 - b. School infrastructure
 - c. (Minuteman) Library Network
 - d. Police
 - i. Previously required to be separate by the state, but now technology allows for sufficient firewalling that allows for consolidation
 - 2. S. Burgess-Cox asks about whether the town could establish an IT Budget, rather than having those requests coming to Capital
 - 3. Chief MacIsaac notes the single point of failure in one staff member who manages all the police IT systems
 - 4. M. Huang asks whether consolidating the IT requests across departments would enable us to get better pricing
 - a. J. Hewitt highlights some of the challenges and costs of this broader process of IT consolidation
 - b. C. Doyle clarifies that there may be a consolidated procurement approach that may potentially realize savings without getting into the complex consolidation
 - c. J. Hewitt notes that all purchases are through a statewide system where these savings have already been realized for small purchases
 - c. C. Doyle asks about vehicle purchases
 - i. Chief MacIsaac - vehicle purchases are made out of the operating budget
- 3. Scheduling upcoming meetings
 - a. Next several Fridays
 - b. J. Hewitt: Operating budget will be released soon and we need to figure out our next steps for the interplay between operating and capital
 - i. Also confirms that the school doesn't have any additional capital requests
 - c. C. Doyle and S. Burgess-Cox
- 4. Funding Updates
 - a. S. Burgess-Cox and J. Hewitt provided an update on the capital budget contributions

- i. J. Hewitt: the needs on the operating side are so great, so she has been focused on protecting the *existing* funds set aside. The TA focus has been on operating.
 - ii. L. Link: Requests we revisit the idea of borrowing from the Kenall Fund (with a commitment to return). Is there a way to borrow from this fund?
 - 1. Discussion
 - a. It could be replenished from the credits earned on the Photo-voltaic cells (if we get a grant for this)
 - b. J. Hewitt: There will be competition in Town if we get these grant funds (we will know more about the regulations this Spring and how getting those funds would flow into the budgets)
 - i. Kendall is considered part of the Town's reserve balances
 - iii. Discussion: energy efficiency, potential funding sources for capital. It's hard to account for savings the same way we account for revenue
 - 1. C. Bowen: is there a way to get savings to flow to capital?
 - 2. J. Hewitt: she will connect with appropriate committees (specific to BHS PV array and potential grant funds)
 - iv. A. Pikcilingis: Question about the purpose/function of the stabilization fund -- would we plan to use all funds every year, or is the intent to leave funds in there for unexpected expenses?
 - 1. J. Hewitt -- it's nice to have funds available, and would be a place to hold earmarked funds like the ambulance \$80k/year, but potentially available if there is an emergency. **It's up to this committee to design a strategy around how this is used.**
 - 2. Eventual goal is to shift use of free cash to one-time expenses (like capital, or the capital stabilization fund)
 - 3. Other considerations around short-term bonds for things like a ladder truck (e.g. a 5-year bond) within levy
 - 4. Further discussion planned on this strategy plan
5. Public Comment
- a. No members of the public present

[Meeting adjourned at 9:30am]

Moved: C. Bowen

Second: P. Brusch

Accepted by unanimous consent

Upcoming meetings:

- Friday 2023/01/27 at 7:30am; Friday 2023/02/03 at 7:30am

Minutes prepared by Aaron Pikcilingis