

Comprehensive Capital Budget Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, June 23, 2023

Location – Remote Meeting on Zoom

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TOWN CLERK
BELMONT, MA

DATE: September 22, 2023
TIME: 8:44 AM

Members present: Pat Brusch, Aaron Pikilingis, Jung Yueh, Roy Epstein, Larry Link, Melinda Huang, Claus Becker, Chris Doyle

Nonvoting members present: Jennifer Hewitt, Belmont Assistant Town Administrator

Members absent: Melinda Huang, Susan Burgess-Cox

[Chair Chris Doyle called meeting to order at 7:32am]

Agenda

1. Minutes
 - a. 2023-05-26
 - i. Motion: Pat
 - ii. Second: Susan
 - iii. Vote: Passes 6-0 with 2 abstentions (C. Becker, J. Yueh)
2. Review of FY23 processes and output
 - a. L. Link notes that we need better systems to ensure our committee receives information about surprises (like the White Fieldhouse)
 - b. A. Pikilingis asks if the two assessments will require management from this group AND whether we know the timeline for those reports as they will inform our work in the fall
 - i. L. Link has asked for a copy of the previous sidewalk assessment
 1. J. Marcotte has shared a copy that we can review
 - ii. J. Marcotte will manage the sidewalk assessment process
 - iii. D. Blazon will manage the building assessment process
 1. J. Hewitt notes that a similar assessment in Lexington took them over a year to process and understand because it contained a lot
 2. The timeline for completing the assessment may be slower, as will the time required to process the findings
 3. P. Brusch notes that we have previously conducted building assessments and can help find the associated paperwork (e.g., RFPs and reports).
3. Preliminary plan for FY24
 - a. P. Brusch suggests we focus in the fall on longer-term planning work
 - i. Further suggests that we should involve ourselves in the planning for the override and advocate to include capital investments
 - b. C. Doyle suggests requesting some of the recurring costs in our long-term plan

- i. J. Hewitt isn't sure that the forms we used should include longer-term items
 - 1. For this year, she would like to give staff more time to work on the forms over the summer, using basically the same form with minor updates
 - a. Reinforcing the need to fill out the "replacement frequency" information for requested items
 - 2. J. Hewitt provided an overview of the form components
 - 3. C. Doyle suggests that the instructions include an explanation as to why we need information about the *replacement cycle* / *expected life* information
 - 4. Discussion: the connections between the project request forms and the project/request ranking process and scorecard we used
 - a. **J. Hewitt will share the project request form with committee members**
 - b. C. Doyle suggests that we maintain the current structure of the forms but improve instructions so that more/better information is included when requesters fill them out
 - c. S. Burgess-Cox suggests that we review our ranking rubric and measures for next year
 - d. J. Hewitt will provide more context (our prioritization measures) to requesters
 - e. P. Brusch explains that things like "industry standard" is not a sufficient description of the source for a cost estimate. We should expect/demand more information about the basis for the request amounts. We need to know where the figure came from.
- ii. We could achieve this more informally through interviews, but it could be helpful if we gathered information about the "typical life cycle" replacement for items (e.g. vehicles)
- iii. J. Yueh suggests that the Superintendent should attend -- or identify a designee to attend -- at least some of our meetings
 - 1. **J. Yueh will start connecting with Dr. Geiser to begin coordinating in the context of a committee liaison update**
- c. A. Pikilingis suggests that we dig into, in a future meeting, the difference between things like police cruisers and things like ambulances and why they are treated differently (operational budget vs. capital budget)
- d. L. Link asks about how well our projections on capital replacement schedules align with reality
 - i. This could be connected to a vehicle inventory
 - ii. We do not have a comprehensive vehicle inventory tha includes info on vehicles (age, repair costs, time out of service, total house, current use, etc.) -- we used to have this

1. C. Doyle asks whether we should have a couple people who focus on this type of information
2. J. Hewitt explains that Norma Massarotti has been very active on this topic in the recent past and that our current insurer provides a fleet management software package as part of our contract. This now includes basic information on our currently-insured vehicles, but it's a strain on staff resources to capture all the related data
- iii. R. Epstein notes that the DPW has a sensible process in place for managing their vehicles and suggests that we connect with Mike Santoro before an impending shift in his role
 1. J. Hewitt: The town has asked him to give a 6-month notice and he has not yet given notice
- iv. C. Doyle asks about an operational definition of "vehicles" and J. Hewitt explains that it's anything with wheels that go on a road
- v. Next step: C. Doyle suggests that one or two committee members dedicate some time to investigating this topic
 1. C. Becker can look into this information
- e. L. Link asks about debt roll-offs
 1. C. Doyle suggests this is in process and the appropriate items that roll off will flow as available within-levy debt that we can use
- f. First meeting of FY24 we'll have some new members and one order of business will be to elect officers
- g. J. Hewitt provided a budget timeline overview:
 - i. Next step is to get the budget forms to departments as soon as possible.
 1. The forms will be "due" in mid-September
 2. They will then undergo an internal review
 3. The requests will come to our committee around late October
 - ii. The budget summits will start in late September
 - iii. Fall Town Meeting will likely happen in late October
 - iv. C. Doyle: We have some topics to cover before we start discussing/processing requests, so we can start meeting as a committee in September
 - v. J. Yueh asks if we need to build a "yes override" and a "no override" budget
 1. J. Hewitt suggests that foregoing some capital funding may need to be cut if the override fails, perhaps requiring a shift in our prioritization (which could be handled via a shift in the weights applied in our ranking tool)
- h. J. Hewitt provided updates on two key facilities:
 - i. White Fieldhouse
 1. We know we need to take the fieldhouse down at some point
 2. But fall sports need the space, so it's unclear if the demolition will happen in conjunction, but the "lay-down" space required for the rink project might need to use that footprint

ii. Fuel Tanks

1. The project was awarded and the funding was encumbered
2. Ordered the tanks themselves. They are custom tanks and there will be considerable lag, delaying construction until we actually receive the tanks. Current estimate: this is about a year out. The savings on the tanks will return to ARPA, so one suggestion is to apply that funding to the White Fieldhouse.
 - a. C. Doyle notes that the funding came from Capital and requests that this committee be able to at least review

4. Meeting dates

- a. Tentatively plan not to meet over the summer and pick things up in early September
 - b. Important for a representative from this committee to attend
 - c. **J. Hewitt suggests will assemble a vehicle/equipment inventory from the software package from our insurer**
 - d. **C. Doyle will connect with S. Burgess-Cox to discuss potential meetings and will send out dates to the group**
5. Updates from other committees
- a. Not discussed.
6. Public comment
- a. No members of the public present.
7. Vote to approve minutes from today as this is the last minute of the year
- a. *[Vote details not recorded other than vote to approve succeeded]*

[Meeting adjourned at 9:04am]

Motion: P. Brusch

Second: C. Becker

Accepted via unanimous consent

Scheduled Upcoming meetings:

None scheduled

Minutes prepared by Aaron Pikilingis