

Long-Term Capital Planning Committee

Minutes for Wednesday March 31st, 2021 meeting.

Opening

A meeting of the Policy Subcommittee of the Long-Term Capital Planning Committee was called to order on March 31st at 08:03 o'clock as a virtual meeting.

Present

- Jenny Fallon
- Chris Doyle
- Adam Dash
- Stephen Pinkerton
- Mike Crowley
- Floyd Carman
- Anne Marie Mahoney
- Melinda Huang
- Claus Becker (note taker)
- Phil Thayer (observer)
- David Blazon (observer, Director of Facilities)
- Jay Marcotte (non-voting liaison and Director of Public Works)
- Jon Marshall (Town employee)

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DATE: February 22, 2022
TIME: 9:38 AM

Approval of agenda

The agenda was approved by all members of the committee.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from March 10th and March 16th were approved with minor edits.

Introduction to David Blazon

The new Director of Facilities, David Blazon, was introduced and welcomed to Belmont.

Capital Budget Committee plans to meet with the Select Board to discuss policy with regard to non-excluded borrowing

New borrowing policy would require by-law change. Could take place in autumn of 2021.

Continued discussion of capital project intake procedures and potential reconfiguration of the committee overseeing capital planning and budgeting

Agreement to recommend annual process:

- In autumn, exploration of potential projects and candidates for investment,
- Over winter, prioritization of projects, development of one year budget and longer-range plan(s) and
- In spring, seek approval from Selectboard and Town Meeting
- Over summer, review past process cycle and make changes to improve as needed.

There may be three distinct plans;

1. Long range, 30 – 50 years horizon, with lower resolution, significant use of placeholders, and goal of capturing large investments like replacement of school buildings
2. A five-year plan which captures estimates for near-term consequences of decisions made, with some use of placeholders. Such a plan is created today by the Capital Budget Committee, but does not receive much attention
3. A one-year detailed, accounting-oriented plan, like Capital Budget Committee today

The committee agrees that all plans should describe both expenditures and sources of funds.

Committee discussed which of these plans should be presented for approval and which should be made available as for information. The one-year plan must by law go to TM. Committee members considered whether it would be better to have the Selectboard vote to adopt the 5-year and possibly also the long-range plan than to have TM vote on it.

Floyd Carman suggested that the committee work with local press to get the five-year plan published to make it more visible.

The committee discussed if two committees (covering the one-year vs the longer horizon plans) would be better than a single committee handling both. Given the potential for confusion during hand-off, the limited pool of volunteers to serve on committees and the burden to town staff required to support committees, meeting attendees did not think two committees would be superior to one.

C Doyle suggested we could follow Needham's example, as it appears to be a well-run one-committee town.

Committee discussed if fleet operation and technology should be split out from long-term planning, due to short lifespan. Also, discussion of whether existing parks and recreation areas belong in the long-term scope or should be considered maintenance. Usually covered by Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds today but was capital budget item before the CPA was introduced.

Jay Marcotte pointed out that long-term plans are not new; we are in year 26 of the 30-year plan for water mains.

There was agreement to try to speak with representatives from other towns that have a one-committee or a two-committee setup, and then to compare.

Also, agreement to seek input from Selectboard as soon as we have consensus on this committee on a policy for project intake, prioritization, and planning.

Next steps

Welcome and bring up to speed the new select board rep after election on April 7, unless Adam Dash remains.

Claus Becker to send out prioritization spread sheet, which is intended to help the committee understand how prioritization could work in practice.

Chris Doyle to find and interview people in Needham and another town to learn about one- and two-committee approaches.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 09:08 by unanimous agreement.