

**Town of Belmont
Capital Budget Committee
Beech Street Center, Conference Room, Second Floor
Thursday Evening, February 3, 2011, 6:00 p.m.**

Mrs. Brusch called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m. Members of the Committee present at the time the meeting was called to order were: M. Patricia Brusch, Mark F. Clark, Jennifer Fallon, Anne Marie Mahoney and Rebecca Vose. Also present were Thomas Younger, Town Administrator; and Barbara Hagg, Town Accountant and staff liaison to the Committee. Mark Paolillo joined the meeting during discussion of the School Department's second priority request. Representatives of the School Department and the Building Services Department, identified below, participated in the meeting.

The Committee had the following material before it:

1. Agenda prepared by Mark Clark, Secretary.
2. Prior to the meeting, each member of this Committee had received from Ms. Hagg a copy of a revised summary of the departmental capital request that have been made for FY 2012.

Mrs. Brusch announced that a personal matter would prevent the attendance at this meeting of Maureen Connors, the Library Director, so that this Committee will not be reviewing Library requests during this meeting.

**School Department
(Item 3 on Agenda)**

The School Department was represented by Anthony DiCologero, the Department's recently appointed Director of Business, Finance & Operations, and Alfred Dominici, the Department's newly appointed Supervisor of Maintenance. (These positions were until recently held by Dr. Gerald Missal and Mr. Robert Martin, respectively.)

The first item to be discussed with the School Department was, in fact, the 13th item in the Department's priority list (request for funds for phase II of a three-phase project to replace network switching equipment). During the discussion of this item, it was established that the request did have town-wide implications, that it was the second phase of a project that had already begun and that the project had the endorsement of both the Town and School Department IT directors. The Committee concluded by consensus that it would be appropriate to present this as an item separate from the School Department's other requests.

This request precipitated a discussion of this Committee's use of the priority system currently in place for capital requests. Mrs. Brusch explained that this Committee appreciates the internal priority ranking given to each request by each department but

feels free, particularly when a request has implications for more than one department or has town-wide implications, to establish priorities of its own. Because both of the School Department's representatives are new to the deliberations of this Committee and one of the members of this Committee is also new to the process, this discussion of priorities was the first of several discussions in which this Committee explained its approach to matters generally, and also iterated concerns that this Committee has pointed out in the past.

Other, similar matters that arose during later discussion of School Department's requests included a discussion of the fact that this Committee's responsibility is not the full, ordinary definition of a capital item. Various members of this Committee explained that this Committee, under Article 13 of the Town By-laws, is concerned with "public improvements and non-recurring major equipment needs." The common understanding of a capital expense is much broader and includes expenses for items that are useful for more than one year or can be used to produce other items. In the case of the Town, many expenses, but particularly recurring purchases and major maintenance, fall within the common understanding of capital but outside the responsibility of this Committee. There is a line item in the Town's operating budget for capital expense which might cover some of the items that lie outside the preview of this Committee but those expenses are frequently unfunded in the operating budget and departments are motivated to try to get those expenses paid from the allocation to this Committee. This Committee tries very hard to use its allocation to fund "public improvements and non-recurring major equipment needs." This may mean that major maintenance and recurring equipment purchases go chronically unfunded. This Committee had dubbed such expenses "orphans" and is very concerned that they are worthy expenses that are going unfunded.

Several particular concerns of the Committee were expressed during the discussion with the School Department representatives. The Committee no longer views routine IT requests as within its purview. As one of the members of the Committee has remarked in the past, computers are the text books of the current era. On the other hand, the Committee is concerned that while it continues to entertain requests for IT infrastructure, the more routine aspects of the Town's IT are neglected or unfunded. The Committee continues to urge that renewal of the Town's IT and computer assets be incorporated within the annual operating budget.

Another of the Committee concerns is the Town's vehicle program, or lack of vehicle program. The Committee is concerned that the Town operate the number of vehicles that it should have yet no more than it should have. Finally, the Committee raised on separate occasions the issue of major maintenance and the large capital projects facing the Town. These concerns are most evident in the context of a possible phase II for renovation of the high school and possible relocation of the police station. (The latter was touched upon particularly when discussing the requests of the Building Services Department.) What expenses does it make sense to undertake now in the light of possible renovation or removal? What expenses must the Town undertake in view of the fact that no decision on renovation or removal has been made? What expenses will remain useful even after renovation or removal? In the course of this discussion, Mr. Paolillo asked

members of the Committee how the Town might go about arriving at a capital project program. He mentioned that the so-called mega group had begun meeting again but that the most recent meeting had not yielded usable results

Mr. DiCologero began discussion of the School Department's first priority by explaining the Green Repair Program sponsored by the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"). The MSBA found that it had some funds available that were not needed for its other programs. It is offering that money under a so-called Green Repair Program. The Program, however, comes with some restrictions. Any project authorized under the Program must be [completed/spent?] by December of 2011. Each applicant must form a committee to select an Owner's Project Manager ("OPM") and a design. Belmont has already assembled such a committee. The Commonwealth has established a list of acceptable OPM's and designers and has capped the OPM fee at \$15,000. The recipients of grants may decide not to go forward beyond the design phase. The expenses thus far, including the OPM fee, are eligible for reimbursement at the same rate (36.89%) as the reimbursement for the completed project. Mr. DiCologero emphasized that not all of the project that is being proposed by the School Department would be eligible for state reimbursement. He pointed particularly to the proposed removal of an oil tank.

Mrs. Bruschi pointed out that the Town's usual procedure would be to authorize an amount for the entire project at the spring Town Meeting. If the Department should later decide not to go forward with the project, the unused funds would be reappropriated for another purpose at a later town meeting (perhaps a fall town meeting). During discussion of this request, the Department pointed out that, although this request in its current form was precipitated by the Green Repair Program, work on the Butler School heating system was a part of its five-year projection, scheduled for 2013. The Department also pointed out that in order to meet the schedule of the MSBA, its schematic design for this project would have to be completed by March 3, 2011.

Reappropriation of unused capital funds resulted in a discussion of the fact that this Committee has, in the past, reviewed with each Department whether there are projects that have been completed but have resulted in funds that may be reverted and reappropriated. Mrs. Bruschi asked Ms. Hagg to prepare a list of previous capital appropriations so that this Committee can review the list and seek possible reversions.

With regard to the Department's second request (pick up truck with snow plow), members of this Committee pursued two lines of questions. First, why is the Department purchasing its own snow plow? Second, what is the truck used for when it is not plowing snow. (Mr. Paolillo joined the meeting during this discussion.) The representatives of the School Department pointed out that even though the Department of Public Works is responsible for major plowing of the school parking lots, the School Department must do

much snow plowing before the DPW is able to get to the parking lots. This includes plowing of access so that School Department personnel can clear fire lanes, walkways and, when school is not in session, sufficient parking and access for those staff members who are on hand. The vehicle also serves as one of the three vehicles for departmental maintenance personnel. In addition to the maintenance supervisor, the Department also has an electrician and a plumber, both of which use vehicles. This is one of the vehicles that are thus used. In fact, this vehicle works all day every day.

The truck currently used by the School Department has a rotting floor board and has been condemned by the Department of Public Works.

Discussion of this request included the question whether maintenance consolidation between the School Department and other town departments would have any impact on the need or use of this vehicle, and the fact that to date no hybrid vehicles of this capability are being offered by manufacturers. Ms. Fallon suggested that in the process of assembling annual budgets, each department that maintains and uses vehicles should send a representative to a meeting in which the Town's need and replacement of vehicles is coordinated.

The Department's third request, regarding the oil burner at the high school, was not precipitated by the availability of the Green Repair Program. In fact, it is not eligible for reimbursement under that program. Members of the Committee noted that the estimate for this request (\$100,000) seemed high in view of the fact that the estimate under request number 1 for three burners is only \$150,000. The representatives of the School Department indicated that they would investigate this apparent discrepancy. This request also engendered the first of several discussions regarding the relationship of the work requested by the School Department and the unresolved questions regarding phases I and II of the renovation proposed for the now 40-year old high school. (See also requests numbered 5, 7 and 8). Ms. Fallon pointed out that the Town can't wait for phase I or II to get some of these projects done. Also, this Committee has no idea at this point if the Town will ever get to phase II. This Committee wants to be sure that if the Town does undertake any high school renovation project that the work doesn't have to be redone if and when the Town reaches phase I or phase II.

During discussion of this issue, it was pointed out that Mr. DiCologero's predecessor, Dr. Gerald Missal, had developed a schedule of major maintenance that would have to be undertaken in order to keep the building operating until phases I and II are reached, yet would not be useless if phases I and II are undertaken. Mr. DiCologero said that he would look into that set of issues.

Mr. DiCologero pointed out that the Department's fourth request (air duct cleaning) is too large to be maintenance. Mrs. Bruschi, however, pointed out that this sort of work is considered by the Capital Budget Committee to be inappropriate for its budget and thus an "orphan." Mr. Paolillo was nevertheless concerned that some way be found to initiate this project, and asked whether it could be undertaken on a school-by-school basis. Mr. DiCologero said he would consider the matter.

The fifth request (heating units at the high school field house) would have been a part of phase I. The discussion of coordinating current projects with the possibility that phases I and II might eventually be undertaken continued.

Request number 6 (carpeting at Winn Brook) is, in the Committee's view, clearly an "orphan".

The seventh request (interior high school fire doors) is another of the projects that would be included in phase I of the high school projects. The doors are coming off the hinges and must be replaced. They cannot wait for phase I. Yet, standing alone they are an "orphan." The discussion of how to coordinate current maintenance projects with the possibility of phase I and phase II continued.

With regard to the Department's eighth request (the second year of the univent project), Mrs. Bruschi indicated that the Committee has been inclined to continue a project once begun. This request also requires coordination with the possibility that comprehensive work on the high school will eventually be authorized and funded.

The Committee had no further questions concerning the Department's ninth request (ceiling tiles).

With regard to the Department's tenth request (new main exterior doors at Burbank and Butler), it was noted that this is a security issue.

While discussing the eleventh request (phase II of the envelope project), Ms. Fallon observed that she hopes that the envelope project can be treated like the roof project. The Committee should allocate a fixed sum (perhaps \$200,000) to the project on a regular basis. This year, the envelope project will consist of more pointing at the high school. Next year, the project would move on to the pointing at the Butler School.

The Department's twelfth and fourteenth requests were discussed together. Mr. Dominici suggested that the stairway at Burbank might be pulled out altogether and graded over, and that the stairway at the White Field House might be replaced with another material, maybe wood. Messrs. DiCologero and Dominici said they would investigate those ideas and report back.

Mrs. Mahoney pointed out that, because she lives near Harris Field, she is aware of how much it is used. She commented that it is often used by groups in their 20's or 30's who seem to be part of organized teams and leagues and may not be from Belmont. She asked whether the Town is deriving or might derive revenue from these groups.

Building Services Department
(Item 4 on Agenda)

The Building Services Department was represented by Wm. Kevin Looney, its Director. In response to questions from members of the Committee, Mr. Looney began by addressing some confusion created by the written request that the Building Services Department had submitted. He explained that the submission had been prepared by personnel not previously involved in this task. The item for FY2011 (Town Hall stained glass windows) should not have appeared. Mr. Looney, however, took the occasion of this explanation to report that he had been able to make arrangements for restoration of stained glass that will be more favorable to the Town than the program originally presented to this Committee. Likewise, the reference to attic insulation is an error. The attic insulation has been authorized and undertaken. The next step in the Energy Conservation Program at Town Hall will be to address doors and windows.

Mr. Looney then addressed the Department's request for funds for FY2012 to point the exterior of the current police station. Although substantial damage (nearly \$5,000 last year) is being sustained from water penetrating the bricks, Mr. Looney estimated that the police station would remain usable for the next three to five years even if nothing is done. Mr. Clark asked whether the three-to-five years could be extended by pointing only the side of building through which the current damage is principally sustained. After discussion, the Committee began to focus on a seven-year life for the current police station. By then, the Town should have decided what it might do regarding a police station. Mr. Looney agreed that he would investigate whether pointing one side could be done, how much it might cost and how long it might extend the usable life of the current building. He will report back to the Committee.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at about 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark F. Clark