



CAPITAL MEETING
Select Board and Finance Committee Joint Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Saturday, February 4, 2023
8:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.
Albert J Sargent Memorial Library & Hybrid
427 Massachusetts Ave, Boxborough, MA 01719

APPROVED: 2/27/23

PRESENT: Diana Lipari, Chair; Wesley Fowlks, Member; Les Fox, Clerk; and John Markiewicz, Member
PRESENT: Maria Neyland, Chair; Priya Sundaram, Vice Chair; Becky Neville, Member; Antony Newton, Member; Gary Kushner, Clerk; and Keshava Srivastava, Member

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Mike Johns; Rajon Hudson, Assistant Town Administrator; Kelley Price, Administrative Assistant; Ed Kukkula, DPW Director; Police Chief Szewczyk; and Kirby Dolak, BXBTV

The documents discussed herein have been included with the file copy of the agenda packet for the above referenced date and are hereby incorporated by reference.

1. Call the Meeting to Order Noting the Time & Presence of the Quorum

At 8:30 AM, Chair Neyland called the Finance Committee meeting to order. Chair Lipari called Select Board meeting to order, via ZOOM pursuant to the procedures noted.

NEW BUSINESS

Joint Meeting of the Select Board & Finance Committee to Discuss the Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Capital Budget for Annual Town Meeting

Capital Saturday Introduction

Town Administrator Johns gave introductions and his plans for the upcoming year. He noted that the Town continues to discuss the creation of a Capital Committee. He displayed the Town's Free Cash position, approximately \$2.7M, and proposed use, approximately \$1M. This is up for discussion during the meeting. He noted that the projected revenues for next year are approximately \$28.5M, the operating budget is estimated at \$26.5M, and there is approximately \$2M in excess levy capacity. Regarding ARPA funds, he explained that \$375,000 of which are earmarked for the School District and \$900,000 is earmarked for projects actively in use.

In response to a question from Member Markiewicz, Chair Neyland stated that the Free Cash amount has been increasing over the past years.

DPW

The groups discussed the proposal for a new backhoe. This would cost approximately \$150,000. The current backhoe is 17 years old and approximately \$18,000 worth of repairs have been made on it in the last couple of years. The right side of the current cab is completely rotted. The approximate trade-in value for the existing vehicle is \$22,000. There is no approximate lead time for the new equipment. The groups discussed funding this through Free Cash or bonding.

The group discussed road restriping. Roads should be restriped approximately every five years, depending on condition of the road. There was discussion regarding creation of a DPW road maintenance revolving fund in a future year.

A Tree Health survey, costing approximately \$3,000, was discussed. The survey is recommended every two to three years as a best way to reduce risk and liability by creating a written systematic procedure for locating and evaluating potentially risky trees. The groups agreed to place this item in the operating budget.

A leaf vacuum, costing approximately \$12,000, was proposed. This vacuum will cut down on leaf removal times on Town properties.

A chlorine system for the Hager well was discussed, at an estimated cost of \$20,000. Due to past coliform hits, MassDEP is requiring the Town to install a chlorine drip system. The system installed was temporary, and MassDEP is requiring a permanent system.

There is an additional proposal to remove two 4,000-gallon underground fuel storage tanks and replace them with two 4,000 gallon above ground tanks. The current tanks are over 40 years old. The cost for this project is approximately \$180,000.

Public Safety – Police

The FY24 capital budget highlights include four warrant articles originally submitted, but since reduced to two. Only items absolutely necessary for the safety and welfare of the Town and personnel were submitted. Two capital plan items were pushed forward to FY25, firearms and dispatch counter/console. The two proposed warrant article are for bulletproof vests (\$25,000), and body camera storage (\$7,425). There is an additional warrant article request for \$57,000 for a fleet police vehicle. The groups discussed the number of current fleet vehicles and potentially reducing this to around ten. The groups discussed the possibility of this new vehicle being a hybrid or electric vehicle.

Public Safety – Fire

The groups discussed the pumper truck replacement for the 1984 Hose Wagon 65. The existing vehicle will likely be traded-in or sold. At the May 2022 Annual Town Meeting, a warrant article for \$20,00 to provide matching funds, if a FEMA grant was awarded, was passed. In December 2022, the Town was notified it was not selected for the grant but was encouraged to reapply. The grant cycle is now open again, however the truck is now estimated to cost \$560,000, for which a 20% match would be \$28,000. Two placeholders are in the warrant, one for an \$8,000 incremental match funding, and the other for an \$8,000 incremental match funding and a dull equipment purchase of \$540,000, depending on the grant award. While waiting for this funding and purchase, the Town is utilizing aid from other towns when needed.

Chair Neyland noted that, per the way the previous warrant article was worded, the originally approved \$20,000 will go back into Free Cash, if it is not used this year. Thus, the new warrant article will need to be for \$28,000. The groups agreed to fund the \$8,000 additional match funding through Free Cash.

The next replacement vehicle discussed was Car 2, 2013 Chevy Tahoe. This is a mobile command vehicle, designated to officers on duty or on call. This vehicle has served the Town for ten years. This car is proposed to be replaced with a 2023 Chevy Tahoe. The new vehicle will cost approximately \$45,000, with an additional \$35,000 needed for equipment. A hybrid vehicle would be considered, but the cost will be different.

The last item discussed was firefighter PPE. There was a discussion regarding creating a fund for this equipment and funding it with Free Cash to begin and then backfill it from taxation.

The groups discussed funding a few new positions for the Department through Free Cash. The new Tahoe was also discussed to be funded through Free Cash. The groups discussed how to determine which items are funded through Free Cash versus taxation.

All Other Capital Items

Assistant Town Administrator Hudson reviewed the current capital item requests for Town Hall. These include an evaluation of a conversion of the Steele farmhouse/barn to museums and museum to Town offices for \$10,000; records conservation at a cost of \$30,000; a survey of the Summer Road Rec Comm property at a cost of \$10,000; and the Sargent Road BAN payment at \$225,000. The proposed funding source for all items is Free Cash. Additional capital requests include potential IT strategy implementation and hardware at a cost of \$150,000; a Town website update at a cost of \$20,000; the water line extension IMA engineering, legal, consulting administration project at a cost of \$50,000; and the Assessor cyclical revaluation project at a cost of \$30,000.

The groups discussed hiring an additional part-time employee to update the website.

Assistant Town Administrator Hudson reviewed the proposed warrant articles for FY24 including the Fire CBA; OPEB; an administrative assistant position for 19.5 hours; to amend the Personnel Administration plan and COLA for non-union, non-contract employees; and to authorize the Select Board to renegotiate land for the cell tower lease. It was noted that the Personnel Administration Plan and COLA item is already in the budget and should be removed or zeroed out.

There was discussion regarding potentially requesting additional ARPA funds from the School District for Blanchard.

Chair Neyland noted that there are three major items to consider for Free Cash, including the proposed backhoe, fuel tanks, and Library roof. This would equate to approximately \$1.37M. The groups reviewed the items funded through Free Cash John Deere backhoe, fuel tanks, leaf vacuum, chlorine system, tree health survey, bulletproof vests, matching grant for the pumper truck, Fire command vehicle, Fire PPE, Jeanne Kangas Steele Farm conversion, record conversion, Sargent Road, \$37,000 for the IT strategy

project, assessor taxation, waterline extension, website, survey for Rec Comm, prior year's bills, and audio-visual equipment. Taxation items are projected to cost \$289,000.

Meeting Adjournment

The Finance Committee and Select Board adjourned their meetings at 12:38p.m.