

Town of Longmeadow, Massachusetts
Capital Planning Committee
Minutes of the meeting of November 16, 2006

Members attending: Mark Gold, Steven Gelling, Nicholas Katsoulis, Ned Steiger, Roger Wojcik.

Suresh Samant, Finance Committee Liaison

Members Absent: None

In the Gallery: Ms Robin Crosbie, Town Manager; Ms. Jahn Hart, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Paul Santaniello, member Select Board; Mr. Adrian Phaneuf, Facilities Director

The minutes of the November 9th meeting were approved as written.

Subject One

The first order of business was to hear from the Town Manager a status report on all capital project activity in town. As background, all members also received a set of information which included a summary of all capital projects on the books, regardless of whether or not they were within the purvey of the Committee, a summary of the status of each open project approved by the Select Board over the past three years, a list of new requests for capital with specific information on each, and a separate list of security requests for the public schools. The Town Manager made the point that the town is working on a lot more projects than the ones approved by the Capital Planning Committee. The Town Manager also described Adrian Phaneuf's current responsibilities as including both capital projects and town maintenance, with the emphasis in the last six weeks being on the school security project.

The Committee requested that expected completion dates for each project be added to summary notes so that the public can be informed and project planning and future project definition can be improved.

The Town Manager noted that the capital available for Capital Planning Committee projects in 2007 will be reduced to \$327,000 if the proposed funding for the school security project is approved by the voters at the November 28 town meeting, and the amount in the capital account for 2008 will be \$630,000. Many of the proposed projects, even if approved will not be acted upon until 2008. She also noted that in some cases taking on any more building projects is really beyond the town's ability to handle given it's current scope, the exceptions being the proposed Greenwood Adult Center ADA related project and the high school pool room heating coil.

The Committee expressed its continuing concern regards the town's inability to spend money for projects as opposed to purchases.

The Committee also expressed a concern that if the town buys equipment in "bulk", such as four snow plows in two years (for an approximate total cost of \$500,000), that it shorts

other legitimate capital needs in these two years, and that it can expect more of the same problem in the future when the next bulk purchase is needed.

The Committee raised the question about returning to available funds monies from that project to refurbish the bathrooms in the high school. \$58019 remains in this project account and it was reported that only a couple of bathrooms remain to be done. Returning excess funds to the capital stabilization account frees it for other uses.

The Town Manager suggested a five year planning approach to project work including reprioritizing all of these projects. (Note: This five year planning approach is already used by Chief Madison and was suggested by the Committee last year.)

The Committee also expressed an interest in funding those projects where in effect a 'dollar' spend now could save several dollars spent in the future, and it asked the Town Manager to identify such candidate projects. The Town Manager suggested that prioritizing all projects and securing technical assistance to prepare project specifications could move the projects along.

Subject Two

Yesterday the members received from the Town Manager material which describes a School Security Project that has been reviewed and approved by the School Committee and the Select Board. This proposed project will be the subject of a special town meeting within the fall town meeting on November 28.

Mr. Gold reminded the visitors that this Committee is advisory to the Select Board and, given that the Select Board and the School Committee have already voted to recommend the appropriation of the school security project to next weeks town meeting, asked why the Select Board is coming to it after the fact. Namely "What is the Select Board looking for us to do". Comment was made that support of this project by the Committee could influence its passage.

Extensive discussion of the pros and cons of providing the requested \$383617 as a lump sum, knowing that project definition is not complete, vs supporting a smaller project to fully define the necessary security facilities plus provide modest funds to initiate the purchase of long term or extremely urgent items. A smaller project would then define the complete job in time for the April town meeting consideration. Other subjects covered in the discussion included the need for staffing to support the security system, card access for teachers vs all building users such as the students, the value of proceeding with a phased project versus one large do-it-all now package, the need for Glenbrook window replacement and the risk of defining security procedures around the available security equipment vs providing defining the proper security procedures and then providing the needed security equipment.

Mr. Gelling moved that the Committee endorse the warrant item for the special town meeting to appropriate \$383,617 for the purpose of addressing critical safety needs in the school system. The motion was seconded. The Committee approved the motion by a vote of three to two.

Subject Three

The question was raised about the business of reviewing every project proposal for 2008 with the requisitioning departments. It was agreed that these reviews should be done selectively.

Subject Four

Mr. Gold noted that the next Committee meeting will be December 5 at 7pm in the Police Department Community Room. The agenda will include identifying those projects which need close review.

Submitted,

Roger B Wojcik, Secretary

November 30, 2006