

Town of Longmeadow, Massachusetts
Capital Planning Committee

Minutes of the meeting of December 5, 2006

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

Members absent: Nicholas Katsoulis

Also Suresh Samant, Finance Committee Liaison

In the gallery: Mr. Ernest Welker

The minutes of the November 16th meeting were accepted as written.

Subject One

The Committee discussed its concern that recent actions by the Select Board to recommend approval of capital projects to the Town without consulting Capital Planning appear to be circumventing the Committee's traditional review-and-advise role. The Committee agreed that the Chair would draft a letter to the Select Board expressing this concern and suggesting remedial action; this draft will be reviewed by the Committee before issue.

Subject Two

The Committee agreed to complete an internal review of the manual which established the Capital Improvement Program and the Capital Planning Committee in 1991 to determine its relevance to the Committee's current duties and responsibilities and to discuss its findings and recommendations with the Select Board.

Subject Three

In recognition that last year's and this year's capital plan proposed by the Town Manager draws heavily on the capital reserves of three town departments, the Committee agreed to seek council on the matter of guidelines for use of the Water Department, the Sewer Department and the Ambulance reserve funds. It agreed to review this issue with the Finance Committee and the Audit Committee. Specifically needed is guidance on the matter of minimum balances that should be kept in each fund for future emergencies and guidance regards the types of projects and equipment that are appropriate expenditures for each fund. The Committee has discussed this matter with the Select Board, without resolution.

Subject Four

The Committee discussed the Town Managers proposed capital plan for 2008 with the concerns being that the current list comes to us filtered and prioritized. In addition the Town Manager has proposed funding a number of capital projects for which there is no apparent project engineering capability to do project work. Discussed was its role as

advisors to the Select Board and as part of the check and balance system for town capital needs. It was suggested that the Committee urge that all proposed capital projects, including those on earlier annual capital plans, be listed on the Town Managers current annual project list.

Subject Five

Regards the matter of funding the current annual proposed capital plan...

The Committee discussed the matter of returning to the Capital Stabilization Fund monies not spent on the specific projects approved by the Town's voters.

[Editors note: Within the last month the Select Board elected to close out ten projects having unexpended or idle appropriations totaling \$41,000+ and to transfer these monies to the proposed School Security Project. This action may provide solid guidance from the Select board regards the role that Capital Planning should take on other "idle" project capital.]

The Committee discussed the matter of routinely recalling appropriated project money if no project activity has occurred in the recent past, or proposing that current "new" priority projects without current year funding (i.e. projects that fall below the line") be paid for with money from "old" projects that have not been implemented.

Recognizing that, again this year, the requested capital projects totaling \$1,700,000+ grossly overwhelm the \$327,000 of available capital stabilization funds, Mark Gold will review with the Finance Director the dollar amount that might be available from future capital income to help fund current capital needs.

Other Matters

The Committee discussed the matter of expanding its review of the capital plan projects beyond listening to the Town Managers summary review of same. It agreed to do its further research selectively.

Mr. Gold noted that the next Committee meeting will be Thursday, December 14 at 7pm in the Police Department Community Room. The agenda will include reviewing those proposed projects proposed by the DPW for 2008. Robin Crosbie, Town Manager; Adrian Phaneuf, Facilities Director and Mike Wrabel, DPW Director will be invited.

The meeting was adjourned at about 9:00pm.

Submitted,

Roger B Wojcik, Secretary

December 11, 2006