

Natick Finance Committee, Capital Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes for Sep 12, 2023
School Committee Meeting Room & Virtual

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The minutes below were approved during the subcommittee's meeting on September 21, 2023
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Members present

[Garth Gayle](#)

Cody Jacobs

Toby Metcalf

Betty Yobaccio

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Jacobs welcomed new member, Garth Gayle, to the subcommittee.

Announcements

None.

Public comment

Article 7 – Capital Equipment & Improvement

Jon Marshall, Deputy Town Administrator of Operations presented along with Bill Spratt, the Executive Director of the Department of Public Works and Facilities.

Mr. Marshall presented the capital requests for Fall of 2023.

Mr. Marshall began by describing some changes to some of the requests, many of which were being deferred to other times or reduced.

Mr. Marshall explained that in general, they are looking for what projects are available and ready for action right now. They also look to free cash first before considering borrowing although they must wait until free cash is certified to draw from that source.

Mr. Marshall then went through the projects individually to explain the town's need for each request.

For the parks and field restoration, Mr. Marshall explained that these funds, which are recurring, make these spaces safer and better for users including things like replacing irrigation systems.

The historical document preservation project is about 75% completed. The idea is to preserve

and restore documents but also digitize vital records held by the Town.

The school switch replacement is going to take a number of years starting with a piece of it this year. The switches are due for replacements and upgrades related to security.

The building HVAC upgrades appropriation is for systems that need to be phased out and replaced. This appropriation is for an engineering study for Brown and Lilja's boilers as well as furnace replacement at the LNFR garage.

The roof design and replacement funding is similarly a recurring thing that is used to plan for and replace roofs. The two roofs being replaced are the salt shed and the memorial beach building.

Replacement of the booster pump station called "Captain Tom" is an appropriation because of significant water damage that is impacting the system.

There is another appropriation for design work for a pump station for connecting the water system to the MWRA.

There is a funding replacement request for taser replacement. The current model is being discontinued and the manufacturer is no longer making replacement parts so we need new ones.

The five year roadway pavement project is partially funded by chapter 90 funding from the state but the remaining appropriations have come from capital, and is usually in the amount of 2.5 million dollars like this request is. Mr. Marshall explained that it isn't just a matter of providing more money to do more roads but that there is a time element to it and a design element. Additionally they like to look at the infrastructure under the roads before completing this type of work.

Committee Questions

Mr. Gayle asked whether there was a lease versus own analysis before they go out and purchase things. Mr. Marshall answered that the town has looked at lease versus purchase over the years. He didn't want to generalize because it depends on the item but generally speaking with bigger items they tend to put a lot of miles on vehicles and that made a lease not very attractive. That said, they do revisit it every few years to see if it might make sense.

Mr. Spratt explained that they do actually lease certain things like police motorcycles. But that in general, because of the longevity they get from their vehicles, it often costs less to buy than to lease.

Mr. Gayle asked about for the firewall replacement project whether that was part of the school's technical security package by whoever manages the network. Mr. Marshall answered that we purchase certain segments of the IT infrastructure on the town or the school side and that this is one of those things we purchase.

Mr. Gayle asked if there were two different IT management teams. Mr. Marshall explained that they do have one for schools and one for town and that within the school side, there are some subgroups given the needs of students versus employees etc.

Members of the Public

Jerry Pierce asked if the minimum cost of a capital item was 10,000 dollars, and Mr. Marshall confirmed that it was.

[Member Richard Pope entered the meeting at approximately 6:45 p.m.]

Motions

Mr. Jacobs moved, seconded by Mr. Metcalf that the subcommittee recommend that the full Finance Committee recommend favorable action on the capital items requested but without making a recommendation as to the source of the funding for each item.

The motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

Committee Discussion (for items not on the agenda)

None.

Adjourn

Ms. Yobaccio moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Gayle. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously (5-0-0). The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.