

**Capital Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**Montague Town Hall, Downstairs Conference Room**  
**One Avenue A, Turners Falls MA**  
**November 4th, 2020**

Attendees: Capital Improvements Committee members: Steve Ellis, Fred Bowman, Josh Lively,  
Greg Garrison. Energy Committee member Ariel Elan

Meeting called to order at 3pm.

**1. Approve minutes of September 23rd meeting.**

Minutes not available

**2. Review Capital Article Submissions/Other known Concerns and discuss plan for initial meetings with department heads.**

So far the committee has received five formal Capital Article Request submissions from department heads with the expectation of some number more to follow. Bryan Camden of the Turners Falls Municipal Airport is going to present to the group later in the month to discuss a major capital acquisition -- the purchase of the Pioneer Aviation property, which abuts the airport. We also anticipate receiving requests from the GMRSD, which will submit them in the first week of December. Notably, four of the five requests submitted to date were requested for consideration at the assumed Special Town Meeting to take place this winter.

The following four requests for the STM were discussed in depth and a number of questions and concerns from the committee were highlighted.

**A. WPCF Chlorination Conversion Request (\$215,000)**

CIC would like more information regarding specific timeline of install relative to the commencement of the chlorination season. Also questions and concerns regarding any requirements for certification of the WPCF staff to perform the conversion were raised. The CIC also wanted to see calculations relative to the cost of liquid chlorine relative to the current gas chlorine system. It is noted that the WPCF is under an administrative order from the EPA to

either overhaul the system or convert it and while cost efficiency remains a concern, it is not the primary motivation for conversion.

**B. WPCF Dewatering Press Request (\$260,000 outright purchase - or lease option)**

CIC members discussed the prospective press project at length and developed a list of questions to be forwarded to the superintendent. Questions involving estimates for cost avoidance were raised as well as the process for reselling the still workable press currently in operation. The committee requested clarification on the difference between the current press and the proposed press. Since leasing is an option the committee asked for more information regarding available terms. The turnaround time needed for install of the press was requested as well as whether or not WPCF staff would be performing the install. The CIC would like the WPCF superintendent to come in for a meeting to discuss both special article requests.

**C. DPW Chestnut Hill Loop Bridge Request (\$105,000)**

Options to overcome the expected (based on engineering estimates) shortfall in grant funding for this project were discussed, including potentially using ch. 90 funds or taking from capital stabilization to cover it. The article requests a \$105,000 appropriation as a complement to the \$450,000 state Small Bridge Grant. The magnitude of cost associated with renovating even a small bridge, which is not much more than a culvert in reality, was considered. Discussion on how much additional contingency may be warranted, given that the \$105,000 request is based on an estimate and not a final bid figure. CIC requests Tom Bergeon of the DPW and Town Planner Walter Ramsey to come in for a meeting to discuss the request in depth.

**D. Police Dept CoMirs Radio System Request (\$61,784)**

Members discussed inadequacies of the current county emergency communications system and the need to upgrade at county and town level to meet state requirements for interoperability. New technology is being rolled out currently and as a result exact costs are difficult to obtain. Quotes have been presented, scrapped and updated several times already in the process, as the state negotiates with vendors and FRCOG works with towns to develop

equipment plans. CIC would like to see a breakdown of what equipment and software is being replaced. Members wonder if the upgrade is specifically for the Police Department alone or if the Fire Dept is also included. CIC requests Chief Williams and Lt. Bonnett to come in for discussion regarding the upgrade.

#### **E. Additional Requests from the Town Administrator**

On a preliminary basis, the CIC was updated by Mr. Ellis regarding three potential articles from the Selectboard which would provide \$25,000 per article for the following:

- I. Town unsafe building account
- II. Future engineering costs
- III. Inevitable bid overruns

#### **F. Timeline for GMRSD Requests**

Timeline for GMRSD article request submissions was discussed and many members thought that extending the deadline would give the District time to evaluate the Building Assessment studies, which are not yet available but could influence requests. Mr. Garrison moved to relax deadline for Capital Article Submissions for the GMRSD in the event they won't have the findings in a timely fashion. Mr. Bowman seconds. Passes 4-0. Mr. Ellis will follow up with the district.

### **3. Discuss Results of Outreach for Building/Infrastructure Assessment Project**

Discussion regarding the options for the Town with regards to obtaining relevant building assessments with accurate estimates was had. Could get a grad student from UMASS as a paid gig but unclear what the extent of experience in developing solid costs would be. A sample contract for similar work performed for the Town of Deerfield by the firm Gorman Richardson Lewis Architects was distributed and discussed. Mr. Ellis will follow up with the firm for further information, but it was observed that it was a \$40,000 study of only a handful of buildings.

### **4. Adjournment.**

Mr. Bowman moves to adjourn, Mr. Garrison seconds. Passes 4-0