

Capital Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes

Held VIA Zoom Due to COVID 19

December 2, 2020

Attendees: Capital Improvements Committee members: Steve Ellis, Fred Bowman, Josh Lively, Bob Obear (3:12). Airport Manager Bryan Camden, Energy Committee member Ariel Elan
Meeting called to order by Josh Lively at 3PM.

1. Approve any previous meeting minutes

Mr. Bowman move to approve minutes of November 4, Mr. Ellis Seconded. Roll call vote, motion passes 4-0.

2. Discuss November 18 Tour of Pioneer Aviation Property

Members of the CIC, including Josh Lively, Fred Bowman, Bob Obear and Steve Ellis attended a tour of the Pioneer Aviation property at 38-42 Industrial Blvd., Turners Falls. They were joined by the Airport Manager, Bryan Camden, and Airport Commissioner, Seth Rutherford. The Airport Commission proposes to purchase this property as it is on the market and loss of its currently privately held amenities could jeopardize the long-term viability of the Turners Falls Airport.

Reflecting on the tour of the grounds and three buildings, Mr. Bowman noted great potential in the buildings. He feels that with the right leadership it is a good opportunity for the Town. Mr. Obear concurred that under the terms described (FAA and state DOT funding of 95% of the cost) this would be a smart long term investment, a “no brainer.” Mr. Lively shared that he tends to agree but worries about maintaining the buildings over the long term. Speculated it may make sense to sell the large leased storage building.

Mr. Camden noted that the terms of the grant agreements would not allow the hard infrastructure to be sold for at least five years. We would have to request a release of that part of the property from the FAA. We could sell the open three acres as well – or lease them. In terms of maintenance budget, as he views projected revenues with a 2% annual increase he sees \$100,000/year in maintenance as possible. His goal is to establish and build an airport stabilization fund. Mr. Lively supports that idea.

Mr. Bowman asked whether these plans, including adding a card reader to make the fueling station more accessible to pilots 24/7, would increase airport use and revenue. Mr. Camden believes it would. He elaborated on state and federal commitments, and believes those funding streams are secure in the future, though the states recent history of 95/5 cost share for projects may be reduced in the future. Mr. Camden stated that the Airport Commission’s goal is to no longer need to have a Town appropriation and he is working hard to confirm the financials of this project will support that. In FY22, this purchase would require more staffing and a town supplement of \$50,000 because revenues realized while we own it won’t be available until the following fiscal year, at which time they would re-pay the Town.

No votes were taken but members confirmed a general consensus that this appeared to be a good proposition for the Town.

3. Updates on Capital Special Articles Proposed for Winter Special Town Meeting

Discussed status of previously submitted articles including:

- WPCF Chlorine Conversion Project
- WPCF Dewatering “Sludge” Press
- DPW/Planning East Chestnut Hill Loop Bridge Replacement
- Police CoMIRS Radio Equipment

All articles remain relevant and will need to receive further consideration and discussion.

4. Review of Previously Considered and Approved FY21 GMRSD Requests/Elementary School Building Assessment Reports

Reviewed requests originally approved by the CIC for funding in FY21, consideration of which was deferred due to need to keep Annual Town Meeting Warrant brief in the context of the pandemic. Reviewed list in the context of recently released building assessment report, which showed vastly larger repointing projects at Hillcrest and Sheffield than was called for in the previous articles. This included a proposed design study of the Sheffield exterior improvements, which were projected to be in the vicinity of \$1M.

Consensus among members that it will be important to walk through these study reports with Heath Cummings. Agreed that we would invite him and Joanne Blier to either a December 9 or 16 meeting, pending their availability.

5. Adjournment.

Mr. Obear moves to adjourn, Mr. Bowman seconds. Roll call vote. Motion passes 4-0.