

**FINANCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE****MEETING MINUTES**

63 Main Street

Selectmen's Meeting Room

February 9, 2023

7:00 PM

---

---

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** David DeVries, Chair  
John Rapa  
Michael Hodge  
Thomas Spataro

**MEMBER ABSENT:** William Peterson, Jr.

At 7pm, Chairman DeVries opened the meeting of the Financial Planning Committee.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 2, 2023 REGULAR MEETING**

Mr. Rapa moved the Committee vote to approve the February 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes, Mr. Hodge seconded the motion. Vote 4-0-0.

**REVIEW OF DRAFT SIX-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FY2024-FY2029**

Mr. Coderre reviewed the summary of projects included in the Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan for FY2024 – FY2029. He commented that generally projects included in the Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan are reviewed for years before being included in a Capital Budget, so the projects before the Committee for funding in FY2024 have been discussed and reviewed in detail for the past 5-6 years. New projects are generally added in year 6 of the Plan and move up each year until fully defined and ready for funding.

**DISCUSSION REGARDING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FY2024 SPENDING OPTIONS**

Mr. Coderre provided an update on the latest information regarding ARPA funds that have been received and committed to date. Mr. Coderre indicated that the three projects recommended for funding with ARPA are the Proctor School roof, Fire Engine replacement and DPW Tight Tank compliance project. He noted that these projects will require the issuance of debt if not funded with ARPA because there is not enough Free Cash for medium sized projects such as a \$1.7 million roof.

The Committee discussed the recommendations, noting that while there are numerous projects and initiatives that still require discussion, the Proctor School roof, Fire Engine replacement and the DPW Tight Tank compliance project are now time sensitive and require a decision in order for the Town to move forward with the FY2024 Capital and Operating Budgets, as well as the 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. These three projects impact the most critical areas of our community: the health and well-being of our children, the safety of our residents, and the protection of our environment and water supply. They agreed that these three investments in our community need to be funded in the upcoming budgetary cycle so that that can be completed as soon as possible and to avoid the ever-increasing costs due to the economic environment. Mr.

Hodge added that he did not see the need to take on debt and increase taxes when the funds are available. An increase in taxes, no matter how small, has a significant negative impact on our town's most vulnerable residents. Taking on debt for these projects unnecessarily raises taxes.

Mr. Rapa moved the Committee vote to recommend that the Board of Selectmen approve ARPA funds for the Proctor School roof, Fire Engine replacement and DPW Tight Tank compliance project; Mr. Spataro seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

The Committee agreed that Chairman DeVries will submit a letter to the Board of Selectmen expressing support of the ARPA fund spending for the Proctor School roof, Fire Engine replacement and DPW Tight Tank compliance project on behalf of the Committee.

### **K-8 SCHOOLS AND ARHS CAPITAL REQUESTS**

Superintendent of Schools Greg Martineau and School Committee member Lauren Bailey- Jones were present. Superintendent Martineau presented the following School Department Capital Projects.

#### Flat Roof Area Replacement – Proctor Elementary School - \$1,7,000,000

It was noted that on February 28, 2022 the Board of Selectmen authorized the School Superintendent to file a Statement of Interest (SOI) with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) regarding replacement of the 40,000 square foot flat sections of the Proctor Elementary School roof. The peaked metal roof sections were previously replaced. MSBA's Accelerated Repair Program (ARP) was anticipated to cover approximately 45% of the \$1.7M total project cost. On October 26, 2022 MSBA declined the project and on November 2, 2022 suspended the ARP due to "unanticipated market volatility and supply chain issues" resulting from the pandemic. It is recommended that \$1.7 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funds be released to fund the project which can no longer wait. If ARPA funds are not released, the project will require authorization for the issuance of \$1.7 million in debt at the April 2023 Annual Town Meeting. The Superintendent noted that an updated formal request has been sent to the Select Board requesting the full project amount be funded by ARPA monies.

#### Rear Entrance Repairs – Zeh Elementary School - \$40,000

Superintendent Martineau informed the Committee that the cement area leading to the rear entrance of the Zeh Elementary School has deteriorated. The area has been patched numerous times; however, the patches have not sustained during the severe temperature changes. It has been advised that the current footprint be excavated and prepared for properly pinned cement slabs with expansion joints to hold up to harsh winter conditions. The other benefit of this project would be to improve the transition to the parking lot, allowing for a smoother transition and easier access for all visitors. Mr. Hodge asked if the future paving of the parking lot would interfere with the entrance project. The Superintendent indicated it would not.

Following Superintendent Martineau's presentation, Mr. Coderre reminded the Committee that some of the larger future capital requests listed in the Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan for the School Department include:

#### FY2025: Roof Repairs – Zeh School - \$2,000,000

This project entails the replacement of the pitched asphalt shingled roof at the Zeh School. The existing roof is approximately 20 years old and has experienced multiple repairs over the past several years due to high wind events and the quality of current shingles. The shingles are also

beginning to display thermal cracking. This project is slated for FY2025 and represents the replacement of approximately 20,000 square feet of shingle pitched roof with a metal roofing system carrying a warranty of 30 years and a projected lifespan of 50 years. The Superintendent indicated that MSBA grant funds will be sought, assuming the Accelerated Repair Program is back by then.

#### Addition/Renovation Project – Peaslee Elementary School - \$28,700,000

This project entails the feasibility study, design and construction for a renovation/addition to the Peaslee Elementary School. The goal of the project is to modernize and expand Peaslee School to a condition that rectifies current deficiencies and satisfies projected future requirements for educational programs and student enrollment. A Statement of Interest (SOI) for this project will be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) at the appropriate time. To qualify for funding, the district must follow MSBA statutes and regulations which require MSBA to invite the Town to collaborate on the potential project. Collaboration does not necessarily mean a grant will be approved.

#### Algonquin Athletic Complex

Mr. Spataro moved to the audience and recused himself from any discussion regarding the Algonquin Athletic Complex as he is a member of the Athletic Complex Project Committee and does not want the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Superintendent Martineau provided an overview of the events leading up to tonight's presentation on the Athletic Complex project. He reviewed the current conditions of the existing track, stadium field, tennis court and multipurpose fields, which are all beyond their useful life and are not ADA compliant. He also reviewed the expected project timeline, which will soon be moving forward to the permitting and bid preparation phase.

The Algonquin Athletic Complex project includes the following:

#### Replacement

Track

Stadium field – with turf

Multi-purpose field – with turf

Grandstand – with ADA compliant seating

Stadium lights – with LED

Tennis courts replacement and conversion to

3 pickle ball courts

#### Renovation

Amenities Building – adding ADA compliant restrooms

#### Installation

Amphitheater

Lacrosse wall

Superintendent Martineau indicated that the total estimated project cost is \$7,539,899. The cost to Northborough based on the regional agreement is \$4,699,259, or 62.33% based upon enrollment. There is a placeholder on this year's Town Meeting Warrant for this project in terms of debt issuance in the form of bond anticipation notes. Superintendent Martineau noted that the Regional School Committee is the authorizing body to approve this project and to move forward with the debt issuance so the Town Meeting vote will be a simple majority. Lastly, if the project gets approved by both communities the anticipated project start date will be around May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Committee members thanked Superintendent Martineau for his presentation this evening.

**DPW FY2024 CAPITAL REQUESTS**

Mr. Coderre noted that the DPW Director attended a prior meeting with the Committee on January 26<sup>th</sup> where he reviewed in detail the ongoing DPW capital projects. Tonight's presentation is to review the FY2024 DPW capital requests, including:

**Roadway Improvements/Maintenance - \$300,000**

The Town's initial pavement management plan inventory and assessment was first completed in 2013 which measured an average Town-wide Pavement Condition Index (PCI) of 71. In FY2015 the Legislature authorized a \$300 million Chapter 90 program; however, subsequent years' funding levels have been reduced to \$200 million. Annual spending of \$1.1 million is necessary to maintain or slightly improve the Town's current pavement conditions. Under that standard, the Town's Annual Chapter 90 allocation of approximately \$500,000 plus a local appropriation of \$300,000 results in a \$300,000 funding gap, which would be filled if the statewide Chapter 90 funding were released at \$300 million. Instead, \$300,000 in FY2024 Free Cash is needed. A recent update to the pavement management assessment completed in 2022 found that, through implementation of the Town's pavement management plan, the Town-wide PCI increased to 76.

Mr. Coderre noted that a complete reassessment of all town sidewalks was conducted in 2022 which will culminate with a sidewalk management plan and accompanying capital improvement plan. Unfortunately, the assessment identified approximately \$2.1 million in existing sidewalk repair. In March of 2022 it was recommended that ARPA funds be used to address a portion of the immediate backlog of existing sidewalk repairs. Without an identified funding source, the cost will continue to rise. ARPA could also be used to fund sidewalk and accessibility improvements at various town owned locations. Northborough identified sidewalk and pedestrian improvements as a priority in the 2020 Master Plan, and as a result has become a MassDOT Complete Streets Community. At the December 19 meeting of the Board of Selectmen, Northborough's Complete Streets Prioritization list was approved, which includes 25 projects totaling between \$3.5 and \$4.4 million.

**20-Ton Dump Truck with Spreader & Plow - \$355,000**

This request will replace a 2005 truck in FY2024 with a 4-wheel drive, a 1999 in FY2026 that includes a catch basin attachment, and a 2007 in FY2028. All new trucks will come with plows and spreaders. As part of each capital item an existing vehicle will be repurposed to extend its useful life. These trucks have useful life expectancy of between 15 and 20 years. Due to the caustic nature of the salt and chemical additives used in snow removal operations, the metal bodies of these vehicles disintegrate much sooner than the total number of hours or miles would typically indicate, in spite of being washed after every salting event. Not only are these trucks used for snow removal operations but also for hauling materials during the construction season. The Town currently has ten 20-ton trucks in service and has a schedule to replace one every other year, resulting in a 20-year replacement cycle.

**Highway Garage Tight Tank Installation - \$475,000**

This request seeks to fund the installation of a tight tank system at the highway garage located at 190 Main Street. The existing garage was built in 1984 and no longer complies with State environmental regulations. The building is served by an onsite septic system which cannot accept discharge of truck wash water. In accordance with MassDEP requirements, an underground holding tank is required for this wastewater. This requires interior plumbing changes as well as locating the tank in such a manner that it does preclude future building expansion/reconfiguration.

It is recommended that the project be paid for using part of the Town's \$4.5 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant. If not funded with ARPA, authorization to issue debt will be needed at the 2023 Annual Town Meeting. Mr. Charpentier noted that MassDEP is aware of the situation but has not issued a notice of noncompliance yet because the Town indicated the project was up for funding.

#### One-Ton Dump Truck with Plow - \$150,000

This request funds the purchase of a F600 in FY2024. The existing 2012 and 2016 trucks will be replaced in FY2027 and FY2029 with similar models. As part of each capital item an existing truck will be repurposed to further its useful life. These trucks are the most used equipment in the fleet. The Public Works employees use these vehicles to perform their everyday tasks including moving materials and equipment that is carried and towed by these vehicles. These trucks are also responsible for snow removal at the municipal buildings during the winter months. The useful life of these vehicles is 10 to 12 years.

The four projects total \$1,280,000 with recommended funding of \$475,000 from ARPA and \$805,000 from Free Cash.

Mr. Charpentier also reviewed the following future DPW capital requests below. Full descriptions of these “outyear” projects will be included in the full CIP document and made available on the Town’s website.

#### FY2025

Enclosed Public Health Trailer - \$90,000  
Town Building Assessment - \$60,000  
One-Ton Pickup Truck with Plow - \$190,000  
Culvert/Drainage Replacement Program - \$300,000  
Bucket Truck Replacement - \$380,000  
Cemetery Niches - \$100,000  
Sidewalk Plow Replacement - \$290,000  
Hook Lift Truck - \$140,000  
All Purpose Tractor - \$100,000

#### FY2026

Street Sweeper - \$280,000  
Dog Park Bidding and Construction - \$500,000  
Memorial Field Pedestrian and Parking Improvements – cost to be determined  
Sidewalk/Pedestrian Improvements - \$200,000  
Mini Excavator - \$150,000

#### FY2027

Stump Grinder - \$80,000  
Brush Disposal Area Design and Permitting - \$100,000  
Roadside Mower Replacement - \$125,000

#### FY2028

Loader - \$320,000  
Backhoe Replacement - \$240,000

FY2029

Ellsworth MacAfee Park Building - \$500,000

**FY2024 WATER & SEWER ENTERPRISE FUNDS CAPITAL REQUESTS**

Mr. Charpentier presented the FY2024 Water & Sewer Enterprise Funds capital requests as follows:

Sewer Enterprise Funds: SCADA System - \$125,000

Mr. Charpentier stated that Northborough received notification from Congressman Jim McGovern's office that the Town was approved for a \$491,000 earmark in the recently signed Federal budget. The earmark will fund the final phase of the water and sewer Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system.

A fully encompassing SCADA system is used to monitor and efficiently manage the Town's water and sewer infrastructure. Remote features enable adequate alarm response which is critical to the health and well-being of the residents. The current Phase 1 SCADA project, funded through the FY2022 Capital Improvement Plan, connects the Assabet water tank, MWRA connection, and three of the sewer pump stations to two main points of contact/computers.

This Phase 2 project includes migration of the remaining facilities to current cybersecurity and technology standards for emergency alarms and communication infrastructure. The Town split the project roughly in half due to cost constraints and is currently completing Phase 1 of the upgrade which provides the backbone of the SCADA system. Phase 2 of the project will update controls for the six remaining sewer pumping stations ensuring the Town is meeting current cybersecurity operational needs.

The overall objective of this project is to provide staff with the ability to reliably monitor and collect data from the remote locations maintained by the Town of Northborough. Although 98% of the Town's sewer flow goes through the SCADA upgraded Hudson Street pump station, the remaining smaller sewer pump stations still use a variety of technologies with little commonality between them. The total Project was noticed on the MassDEP State Revolving Fund (SRF) CY21 Intended Use Plan as CWSRF No. 6897 and has now received 80% funding through a Federal earmark. The remaining 20%, or \$123,000, is the required local match which will be included in the FY2024 Capital Budget and presented for approval at the April 2023 Annual Town Meeting. The local match will be funded out of existing fund balances in the Water & Sewer Enterprise Funds with no additional tax or ratepayer impacts. The Committee expressed their gratitude for the grant work. Mr. Charpentier indicated that it took multiple attempts before being successful.

Water Enterprise Funds: 15-Ton Dump Truck - \$225,000

This request is to purchase a 30,000 pound GVW dump truck for use by the water and sewer divisions. The current fleet of vehicles are smaller daily task vehicles. This truck is large enough to tow the department excavator and will alleviate the need to use the highway department large dump truck when needed to move equipment and materials. Cost for this vehicle will be divided 60% Water and 40% Sewer.

Mr. Charpentier also reviewed the following future Water & Sewer Enterprise Funds capital requests below:

**Sewer Enterprise Funds**

FY2025: Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Mitigation - \$380,000

FY2026: One Ton Pickup Truck with Plow - \$100,000

FY2028: Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Mitigation - \$425,000

**Water Enterprise Funds**

FY2025: Reservoir Dam Compliance - \$800,000

FY2025: One Ton Utility Body Truck with Plow - \$120,000

FY2026: Water Main and Service Line Repair Replacement Program - \$50,000

FY2027: Water Main and Service Line Repair Replacement Program - \$400,000

FY2028: One Ton Utility Body Truck with Plow - \$130,000

Committee members thanked Mr. Charpentier for his capital budget presentation this evening.

Mr. Coderre informed the Committee that the recommended re-use proposal for the White Cliffs facility will be presented to the Board of Selectmen at their February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

Thursday 2/16/2023 7pm	Final Review of FY2023 Capital Budget; Discussion of Financial Planning Committee Recommendations and Draft Report; Review of CPC Project Requests
------------------------------	--

**OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Rapa moved the Committee vote to adjourn; Mr. Hodge seconded the motion; all members voted in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. Wackell  
Executive Assistant

**Documents used during meeting:**

1. February 9, 2023 Meeting Agenda
2. February 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes
3. Draft Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan
4. FY2024 ARPA Spending Options
5. School Department Capital Requests
6. DPW Capital Requests
7. Water & Sewer Enterprise Funds Capital Requests