



FINANCIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

February 24, 2021

7:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: David DeVries, Chair
Michael Hodge
William Peterson, Jr.
John Rapa
Thomas Spataro

OTHERS PRESENT: John Coderre, Town Administrator
Scott Charpentier, DPW Director
Keith Lavoie, Director of Operations

At 7:00pm, Chairman DeVries stated that this Open Meeting of the Financial Planning Committee was being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus.

Chairman DeVries added that in order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, the Town has been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor's Order suspended the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible *physical* location.

Chairman DeVries noted that the Order allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. He indicated the ways in which the public may view this meeting as listed on the posted agenda. He noted that this meeting will not feature Public Comment.

Chairman DeVries confirmed that the following members and persons anticipated on the agenda were remotely present and could be heard:

Financial Planning Committee

David DeVries, Chair
Michael Hodge
William Peterson, Jr.
John Rapa
Thomas Spataro

Others

John Coderre, Town Administrator
Scott Charpentier, DPW Director
Keith Lavoie, Assistant School
Superintendent of Operations

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 16, 2021 REGULAR MEETING

Mr. Rapa moved the Committee vote to approve the February 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes, Mr. Hodge seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

DeVries	“aye”	Rapa	“aye”
Hodge	“aye”	Spataro	“aye”
Peterson	“aye”		

DPW, (HIGHWAY, PARKS & CEMETERY) FY2022 CAPITAL REQUESTS

DPW Director Scott Charpentier presented the following FY2022 Capital Requests for the DPW.

Roadway Improvements/Maintenance - \$310,000

The Town’s initial pavement management plan inventory and assessment was first completed in 2013 which measured an average Town-wide Roadway Surface Rating (RSR) 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 our current pavement conditions. A recent update to the pavement management assessment completed in 2020 found that, through implementation of the pavement management plan, the Town-wide RSR remained relatively level at 73.5. Without the requested funding of \$310,000 from Free Cash, the roadway plan will fall behind, costing the Town more money in the long run.

One-Ton Dump Truck with Plow - \$115,000

This request seeks to replace a 2006 F450 in FY2022. As part of the capital project, the existing vehicle will be repurposed to extend its useful life. The FY2022 request allocates approximately \$12,000 toward vehicle repurposing. The one-ton dumps are one of the most used pieces of equipment in the DPW 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 paired with 20-ton trucks to perform snow removal operations in the winter months. The useful life of these vehicles is 10 to 12 years. At the time of replacement, the existing truck will have reached the end of its useful life. The Town currently has 7 one-ton dump body trucks in service and has a program to replace one every other year, resulting in a 14-year replacement schedule.

One-Ton Pick-Up Truck with Plow - \$74,000

This request replaces an existing 2003 Chevy 2500 in FY2022. As part of the capital project, the existing pickup truck will be repurposed to further its useful life. The FY2022 request allocates approximately \$16,000 toward vehicle repurposing. Pickup 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.

FUTURE DPW (HIGHWAY, PARKS & CEMETERY) CAPITAL REQUESTS

Mr. Charpentier reviewed future Capital Requests as follows:

Culvert Replacement Program (FY2023, FY2024 & FY2026)

In 2019, the Town completed a culvert inventory and condition assessment including approximately 75 culverts Town-wide. Several culverts have been found to be in need of replacement due to deteriorated pipes and end treatments. Drainage systems in Town are aging and many have surpassed their functional life. The Town video inspects those systems where repeated repairs have been needed to identify and prioritize the replacement projects. This request seeks funds to systematically replace/rehabilitate culverts and failing drainage systems. The Town actively seeks appropriate grant funding through a variety of programs to assist with funding this critical infrastructure work. Mr. Charpentier noted that the culvert replacement program funding request was postponed from FY2021 due to financial constraints caused by the pandemic.

Loader (FY2023)

The Town has two front end loaders, a 2006 model and a 2014 model. This request is to replace the 2006 John Deere loader. At the Public Works Garage, the loader is regularly used to transfer materials, rotate the compost piles and load the spreaders with salt for snow removal operations. Off-site, it is used throughout Town on various construction projects as well as during snow removal operations. The loader is exposed to many different environments, including corrosive materials which cause disintegration of the equipment. As the equipment ages, it requires additional mechanical and body work to keep it operational. The project costs are net of trade-in and include approximately \$14,000 to refurbish the 2014 model year loader to extend its useful life.

20-Ton Dump Truck with Spreader and Plow (FY2023, FY024 & FY2026)

This request will replace a 2002 truck in FY2023 with a wing plow truck, a 1999 in FY2024 with one that includes a catch basin attachment, and a 2007 in FY2026. 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. 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 (FY2023)

This request seeks to fund 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. The project requires interior plumbing changes as well as locating the tank in such a manner that it does preclude future building expansion/reconfiguration.

Bucket Truck Replacement (FY2023)

This request seeks to fund replacement of a 2010 model 30,000-pound GVW bucket truck that is used by the Highway Division. As part of this capital item the existing vehicle chassis will be repurposed to extend its useful life. This vehicle is used for trimming and removal of hazardous town trees, as well as a variety of other aerial tasks. The useful life of these vehicles is 10 to 12 years.

Street Sweeper (FY2024)

This request seeks to fund replacement of the existing 2011 Elgin Pelican street sweeper. The useful life of a sweeper is approximately 10-12 years. As it ages the repairs become more costly. Using the department's two sweepers, it takes staff approximately 10 weeks to sweep the entire Town between early March and late June. If one sweeper were to go down, it would take the remaining sweeper into Fall to do it alone. Renting sweepers has not been feasible because every town needs to sweep at the same time. Additionally, the new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) permit requires two town-wide sweeping cycles per year.

Backhoe Replacement (FY2024)

This request seeks to fund replacement of a 2005 model backhoe that is used by the Highway Division. As part of this capital request the 2015 backhoe will have body repair and paint work completed to extend its useful life. This backhoe is used for drainage and roadway repairs, plowing of streets throughout Town and digging graves in the cemeteries. The long reach of a backhoe is necessary to properly excavate (repair, maintain and install) drainpipes and structures (catch basins, manholes, culverts, swales, etc.) throughout Town. The useful life of these vehicles is 10 to 12 years, the existing backhoe is a 2005 model year and will be at least 19 years old when it is replaced.

Stump Grinder (FY2025)

This request seeks to fund replacement of the Department's 1996 Vermeer stump grinder. This piece of equipment is used to grind the stumps flush after tree removal. The estimated cost to contract for these services is approximately \$200 per stump which represents an annual cost of approximately \$12,000, an equipment payback period of less than 6-years.

Cemetery Niches (FY2025)

A cemetery (cremation) niche is an above-ground burial space, in which a decedent's urn, containing their cremated remains, is placed and sealed. Similar to a mausoleum, there is structure with recessed compartments for placing cremation urns permanently. This request is to fund design and construction of the Town's first cemetery niche. Municipal cemetery space is a limited supply and the addition of cemetery niches is an affordable way to extend the supply of accommodations without additional land acquisition.

Sidewalk Plow Replacement (FY2026)

This request seeks to fund replacement of an existing 2012 sidewalk machine. As part of this capital item, the 2016 sidewalk machine will have body repair and paint work completed to extend its useful life. This vehicle will supplement the Town's other (2016) sidewalk machine. These

vehicles are used to clear snow from various sidewalks throughout Town. This machine will be purchased with a flail mower attachment to assist with vegetation management. The sidewalk machine is exposed to many different environments including corrosive materials which cause disintegration of the equipment. As the equipment ages, it requires additional mechanical and body work to keep it operational. Sidewalk machines are expected to last approximately 10 years.

Utility Tractor (FY2026)

This request is for a compact tractor to be used by the DPW at the cemetery for backfilling of graves and general clean-up that is inaccessible by the larger machines. It will also be used to mow the large areas in Town that are only done 2-3 times a year (conservation areas, easements, etc.) The tractor will also be used by the Northborough K-8 schools. This tractor will replace the existing 2014 all-purpose tractor that has exceeded its useful life.

Roadside Mower Replacement (FY2027)

This request will replace the existing 2015 John Deere tractor with a side boom mower and articulating arm. This mower is used to cut back brush along the edges of the roadway. The useful life of this equipment is 10-15 years. As part of this capital item the existing tractor will be repurposed to extend its useful life.

Memorial Field Pedestrian and Parking Improvements (FY2025)

This request seeks to fund the design and construction of improvements to the parking and pedestrian circulation for both upper and lower Memorial Field. Work will include a new parking configuration, spectator viewing areas, and pedestrian circulation to both fields as well as the recently renovated snack shack building. The project is a good candidate for potential funding using Community Preservation Act Funds and will be submitted to the Committee for consideration once the project scope is fully defined.

Dog Park (FY2026 & FY2027)

The community has expressed interest through both the Master Plan and the Open Space Plan in development of a municipal dog park in Northborough. Planning and design for a facility such as a dog park is an extensive and thorough process. The request for FY2026 will fund siting, public outreach, and design of the dog park while FY2027 will support construction include applicable grant applications. The project is a good candidate for potential funding using Community Preservation Act Funds and will be submitted to the Committee for consideration at the appropriate time. The Town will also be pursuing grant funding for this project, which could impact its timing either way.

Brush Disposal Area (FY2027)

The current brush and lawn debris area is located at the Highway Garage and is approximately 7,500 square feet in area. The small size requires the material to be trucked away no less than two times per year at an annual cost of between \$80,000 and \$100,000. The typical size for this type of facility in a similar size municipality is between 3 and 5 acres and allows for on-site processing. This request is to fund design, permitting, and preparation of a town brush and lawn debris disposal site adequately sized for on-site processing and available for use by the residents of Northborough.

WATER & SEWER ENTERPRISE FUND CAPITAL REQUESTS

SCADA System (FY2022)

A fully encompassing SCADA (Supervisory Control And Data Acquisition) system is needed to monitor and efficiently manage the Town's utility infrastructure. Remote features to ensure adequate alarm response is critical to the health and wellbeing of the residents. Currently, the water tank, MWRA connection, and sewer pump stations are not technologically connected to a main point of contact/computer. Alarms that are received are simply 'general' in nature and do not alert the on-call responder to the potential issue - creating a delay in adequate and proper mitigation. This project consists of two phases. Phase 1 entailed the completion of a radio study and assessment in FY2015. In FY2022 Phase 2 will consist of the construction and implementation of the system and costs will be split 44% Water and 56% Sewer.

Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Mitigation (FY2023, FY2025 & FY2027)

This request is to continue the implementation of the Town's detailed Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Plan to mitigate inflow and infiltration into the Town's sanitary sewer system. This inflow is from flowing stormwater and runoff making its way into manhole covers and grates. Inflow is the seeping of groundwater into the system through pipe connections, cracks in the manholes or other small openings in the system. Mitigating I&I greatly reduces the volumes of 'clean' water sent to the wastewater treatment plant for processing. As required by a State mandate (314 CMR 12.04) municipalities need to implement a detailed O&M Plan to address I&I.

One-Ton Utility Body Truck with Plow (FY2027)

This request is to replace a 2014 utility body truck. This vehicle is used daily to perform the regular inspections and general maintenance of the Town's water and sewer system. It is a general response vehicle to all calls throughout the water and sewer division. The new truck will also be used as a plow vehicle throughout Town. The useful life of these vehicles is 10-12 years. Cost for this vehicle will be divided 60% Water and 40% Sewer.

Reservoir Dam Compliance (FY2022 & FY2024)

Reservoir Dam is owned by Northborough and located between Shrewsbury and Boylston. This structure is a significant hazard, poor condition dam. The Office of Dam Safety has ordered Northborough to either bring the dam into compliance or permanently breach the dam. This request is for design and permitting in FY2022 and construction in FY2024 to permanently breach the dam. The Town has submitted a grant application to fund 75% (\$150,000) of the design and permitting, therefore the FY2022 request for \$50,000 is to fund the remaining 25% match.

In answer to questions from Committee members, Mr. Coderre indicated that at some point the resulting property would be surplussed through a public process and the proceeds would go back to the Water Enterprise Fund. Mr. Charpentier indicated that the land consists of approximately 16 acres, but it is unclear how much of it will be usable following the dam breach.

Utility Tractor (FY2024)

This request is to replace a 2003 Kubota utility tractor with trailer. This tractor is a multi-purpose piece of equipment that is used throughout Town to clear the water and sewer cross-country easements in the summer growing months as well as spring & fall cleanups with the large blower attachment as well as clearing around hydrants during the winter months. As part of this capital

item an existing piece of equipment will be repurposed to further its useful life. Cost for this equipment will be divided 40% Water and 60% Sewer.

15-Ton Dump Truck (FY2024)

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.

One-Ton Utility Body Truck with Plow (FY2025 & FY2027)

This request replaces an existing 2015 model year in FY2025 and 2016 model year in FY2027. As part of the FY2025 capital item the existing pickup truck will be repurposed to further its useful life. Pickup trucks are the most used equipment in the fleet. The Water and Sewer employees use these vehicles to perform their everyday tasks including moving materials and equipment that is carried and towed by these vehicles including the replacement utility trailer. These trucks are also responsible for snow removal at the municipal pump stations and assist with the municipal buildings during the winter months. The useful life of these vehicles is 10 to 12 years. The cost for these vehicles will be divided 60% Water and 40% Sewer.

Water Main & Service Line Repair Replacement Program (FY2025 & FY2026)

This request is to fund a Water Main and Service Replacement Program as part of an ongoing commitment to provide quality water services to the residents of Northborough. This project focuses on replacing old undersized mains and services with reliable new materials which will significantly improve reliability, flow and fire protection while reducing the likelihood of breaks or leaks in the system. The 2025/2026 improvements are specifically to eliminate system restrictions and dead ends.

Lastly, Mr. Charpentier reviewed energy efficiency projects, including a future streetlight conversion project. The 682 streetlights in Town are owned by National Grid, but the Town pays for their usage. The Town has the option to purchase them from National Grid for a fee and he is currently waiting to hear back from National Grid regarding what the purchase price for each light will be. Following the purchase of the streetlights, the Green Community program can fund a full conversion of these streetlights to LEDs, resulting in substantial cost savings. The Town would then own the lights and would need to contract with a service vendor to maintain them. Unfortunately, it appears that National Grid may not get the Town the requisite information in time for this grant round.

Mr. Charpentier indicated that the Town is also working on other energy efficiency projects, including weatherization and mechanical insulation to improve, repair and enhance the insulation systems in and around the mechanical systems at all of the schools. The Town is currently looking at efficiency projects at the Zeh school and the Highway Garage. He added that the Town will submit a grant application for energy saving funds of up to \$200,000.

K-8 SCHOOL DEPARTMENT FY2022 CAPITAL REQUESTS

Director of Operations Kevin Lavoie reviewed the School Department's Capital Improvement Plan for FY2022 – FY2028 as follows:

Snow Removal Equipment: FY2022 & FY2023

Funds are requested for \$12,500 in FY2022 and \$12,500 in FY2023 for the purchase of a tractor with a snowblower attachment and walk-behind snowblower. As snow equipment is shared between all school buildings, this will establish a good cycling plan to have new equipment in place.

Peaslee Elementary School: FY2022 - 2026

Funds for the Peaslee Elementary School are being requested as follows:

- Parking Lot and Walkway Repaving: \$245,000 in FY2023
- Classroom Tile Replacement: \$15,000 in FY2022; \$15,000 in FY2023; and \$20,000 in FY2024
- Design and Installation – Fire Monitoring Systems: \$480,000 in FY2024
- Feasibility Study: \$500,000 in FY2025
- Renovation with MSBA reimbursement: \$28,700 in FY2026

Zeh School: FY2023

Funds are requested for \$600,000 in FY2023 for replacement of the gym roof at the Zeh School in combination with MSBA reimbursement through the Accelerated Repair Program.

Melican Middle School: FY2022 – FY2027

In addition to funding through the operational budgets, capital funds for the Melican Middle School are being requested as follows:

- Tennis Court Resurfacing and Fencing: \$100,000 in FY2024
- Science Room Renovations – Electrical and Tables: \$12,500 in FY2022; \$12,500 in FY2023; \$12,500 in FY2024; and \$12,500 in FY2025
- Carpet and Floor Replacement – may be pushed out further than FY2022: \$16,200 in FY2022 and \$16,200 in FY2023
- Student Desk and Teacher Chair Replacement – may be funded through the operational budget: \$14,200 in FY2022; \$14,200 in FY2023 and \$14,200 in FY2024
- Feasibility Study: \$500,000 in FY2027
- Renovation with MSBA reimbursement: To Be Determined

Mr. Lavoie added that the top priority is the snow equipment. The Town and School Department are working collaboratively to capture this in a different manner since most of these requests do not reach the Capital Improvement Plan threshold of \$25,000 or more.

Mr. Hodge shared his concern with many of the above items not being of a capital nature and asked Mr. Lavoie to share what items might be funded through the operational budget? Mr. Lavoie responded that some of the equipment, carpet and furniture replacements may be funded within the operational budgets or through grant opportunities in FY2022 and FY2023.

Mr. Coderre added that he and School Superintendent Greg Martineau have had significant discussions about the School Budget and one thing they discussed was the possibility of adding \$25,000-\$30,000 to an equipment line item within their FY2022 operating budget that is dedicated to those items such as small equipment, carpet and furniture replacements. He asked for the Committee's support in recommending this type of approach in recognition of the efforts of the Schools to work collaboratively with the Town to propose budgets that are fiscally responsible.

Mr. Coderre expressed his concern regarding the impact that Covid has had on the ability to fund some capital projects, such as the \$600,000 roof replacement at the Zeh School in FY2023, adding that the Financial Planning Committee may have to consider issuing some short-term general obligation debt. With that being said, he noted that the Federal Government is working on a \$1.9 trillion-dollar aid package that will include direct funding to municipalities for revenue replacement due to the pandemic. If this were to come to fruition after Town Meeting, the Town would have the option to schedule a Special Town Meeting to spend the additional funds or the funds may close out to free cash, in which case there may be a little additional capacity for capital projects in FY2023.

REVIEW OF TOWN'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Mr. Coderre informed the Committee that Senators Chandler and Eldridge and Representatives Gregoire and Kilcoyne will attend the March 8th Selectmen's Meeting to discuss the Town's legislative priorities. He reviewed the Town's legislative priorities letter, noting that the goal of preparing this letter is to provide the Town's State Legislative Delegation with clear direction regarding the Town's priorities. Mr. Coderre reviewed the top two legislative priorities.

Mr. Coderre stressed the need for increased funding of the Chapter 90 State Transportation Funding Program for eligible roadway improvement projects that will maintain the Town's infrastructure such as roadway construction and repairs. Although Legislature authorized a \$300 million Chapter 90 program for FY2015, subsequent years' funding levels have been reduced to \$200 million. 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. He noted that the DPW Director's FY2023 capital request of \$250,000 for culvert replacement projects is necessary in order to keep the \$1.1 million necessary to maintain or slightly improve the Town's current pavement conditions. Past culvert replacement projects were completed on Church Street, Otis Street, Rice Avenue and Fisher Street. Culvert replacement projects in FY2022 will take place on Ridge Road, Lyman Street and Davis Street. Funds spent on culvert replacements have been diverted from roadway resurfacing by necessity, which is why additional funds are needed.

Mr. Coderre stressed the need for Local Aid increases that keep pace with State revenues for the Student Opportunity Act and Minimum Aid, Special Education Circuit Breaker, Regional Transportation Reimbursements and Unrestricted General Government Aid. He noted that Northborough's State Aid represented 13.1% of revenues in FY2003 and has steadily declined to 8.3% in FY2021.

Mr. Coderre invited Committee members to watch the March 8th Selectmen's Meeting where the Town's legislative priorities will be discussed.

NEXT MEETING

The Committee members agreed to set the meeting schedule as follows:

Tuesday 3/2/2021	Review CPC Project Requests; Final Review of FY2022 Capital Budget; Discussion of Financial Planning Committee Recommendations and Draft Report
3/22/2021	Joint Meeting with Board of Selectmen – Budget Hearing (Charter 6-5) (FPC Optional)
4/26/2021	6:00 PM Annual Town Meeting - Tentatively could be changed to Saturday, May 1 st with a rain date of May 8 th

Mr. Coderre noted that the Master Plan Implementation Committee will begin to meet soon and may have future capital requests for projects and or studies that the Committee may wish to include placeholders for. Chairman DeVries agreed that this will become a new priority.

OTHER BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hodge moved the Committee vote to adjourn; Mr. Rapa seconded the motion; the roll call vote was taken as follows:

DeVries	“aye”	Rapa	“aye”
Hodge	“aye”	Spataro	“aye”
Peterson	“aye”		

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Coderre
Town Administrator

Documents used during meeting:

1. February 24, 2021 Meeting Agenda
2. February 16, 2021 Meeting Minutes
3. DPW, Water & Sewer FY2022 Capital Requests
4. K-8 Schools FY2022 Capital Requests
5. Legislative Priorities Letter
6. Meeting Schedule