

West Newbury Capital Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting date & place: 7:00 PM, September 20, 2021, 1st Floor Hearing Room 1910 Building and Remote Participation via Zoom.

Members Present: Via remote and in person participation Julia Boria, Rick Parker, Polly McDowell Grammer, and Judy Mizner. Also participating: Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Wayne Amaral, Water Department Director Mike Gootee, the Board of Water Commissioners, and Town Manager Angus Jennings, ex officio.

Call to order

7:01 PM

Approval of Minutes From 2/24/2021

By unanimous vote, the Committee approved the minutes of February 24, 2021.

Committee reorganization: designation of Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk

By unanimous vote, the Committee elected Judith Mizner as Chair, Julia Boria as Vice Chair, and Elisa Grammer as Clerk.

Articles proposed for consideration at Fall Town Meeting

Engineering for water main improvements (Church & Prospect Streets) \$100,000 from Water Free Cash

Mr. Gootee said that this project is not an extension of water lines on Church and Prospect Streets, but rather replacement. Cleaning and lining existing 6" lines were considered, but rejected in favor of replacement with larger 8" lines for better water pressure to meet fire and other needs. This is part of a larger line replacement program that is contained in the Water Department's comprehensive capital plan, which is on the Capital Improvement Committee [website in a large spreadsheet](#) covering the entire Town capital improvements forecast.

The cost of construction for the Church and Prospect Street projects is around \$1M for both. This project has been accelerated by a year to make it shovel-ready should federal funds become available.

Mr. Gootee and the Water Commissioners said that the new piping would last a minimum of 80 years, possibly 100-120 years. The Water Department has a rigorous testing protocol that should, among other things help protect the water pipes.

Mr. Gootee reported that replacement of the Brake Hill water tank is largely complete. The Pipestave tank is scheduled to be drained and rehabbed next spring.

By unanimous vote the Committee recommended the capital expenditure of \$100K from Water Free Cash for engineering work in support of the Church and Prospect Streets water main replacement project.

Purchase of replacement Water Dept pick-up truck \$47,000 from Water Stabilization

Mr. Gootee said that the truck currently in use is 14 years old and has many issues that would require costly repair. Also, the undercarriage is rotting out. This item has been moved to Fall Town Meeting because in the current environment, when vehicles are in short supply, it is necessary to approve the funding now to place an order that would be ideally filled in the spring. In response to Ms. McDowell, Mr. Gootee stated that the old truck would be declared surplus and bid for sale.

By unanimous vote the Committee recommended the capital expenditure of \$47K from Water Stabilization for a new pick-up truck with plow.

Boom crane

This item was removed, and will appear for Spring Town Meeting.

Purchase of replacement DPW backhoe \$150,000 from Capital Stabilization

Mr. Amaral said that this piece of equipment is used daily for cleanup, snow removal, road work, etc. It has aged to the point where it is lacking power for lifting and pushing. The estimated cost for the base machine without accessories (e.g., bucket attachments) is \$118K, an estimate provided by Mr. Amaral's DPW predecessor. As with the Water Department truck, this item is on Fall Town Meeting to be able to place an order that, because of limited availability, would likely not be delivered until next year. Because this vehicle is so worn, its current value is perhaps \$10-12K. The bucket attachments currently used would need to be replaced because the DPW intends to switch models from John Deere to Cat.

By unanimous vote the Committee recommended the capital expenditure of \$150K from Capital Stabilization for a new DPW backhoe with accessories.

Review schedule for upcoming Capital Improvement Committee meeting(s)

Mr. Jennings noted that a close look at Page School capital improvement requirements is among the issues the Committee identified but has not resolved. Ms. Grammer added that other issues include

- Whether and if so how to revise the litmus test used to prioritize different capital improvements needs
- Whether and if so how to amend bylaws pertaining to the capital improvements review process
- Updating the capital improvements plan spreadsheet
- Revising the capital improvements plan spreadsheet to include the summary developed by former committee Chair Dick Preble, which compares current and future stabilization fund contributions vs. current and future capital expenditures.

She also commended to the Commission's attention an existing [Town financial policy about capital improvements](#), which might inform consideration of bylaws and the litmus test.

The Committee agreed to hold its next meeting on October 20, 2021, at 7:30 PM. Mr. Parker noted that Fall Town Meeting will be held on October 23d.

Middle Street Bridge Update

Mr. Jennings provided an update of the status of the project to reopen the Middle Street Bridge to traffic. He said that in April, they were informed that the cost would be almost \$1M more than the \$2.6M initially projected. The initial cost was the basis for grants obtained from the state and for a Memorandum of Understanding between West Newbury and Newburyport, which would split the cost.

Newburyport declined to fund the added cost, and negotiations are continuing between the two jurisdictions. The Select Board is proceeding with permitting in hopes of having a shovel-ready project that could receive possible federal funding.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 PM

Meeting Documents

[Meeting packet prepared by Town Manager](#)

[West Newbury Financial Policy re: capital improvements](#)

Respectfully submitted

Elisa Grammer