

## West Newbury Capital Improvements Committee Meeting Minutes

**Meeting date & place: 7:30 PM, October 20, 2021, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Hearing Room 1910 Building and Remote Participation via GoToMeeting**

**Members Present:** Via remote and in person participation Julia Boria, Rick Parker, Polly McDowell, Patrick McCoy, Elisa Grammer, Joe Heyman, and Chair Judy Mizner. Also participating: Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Wayne Amaral.

### **Call to order**

7:34 PM

### **Approval of Minutes From 9/21/2021**

*By 6-0-1 vote (Mr. Heyman, not present, abstaining), the Committee approved the minutes of September 21, 2021, as amended.*

### **Review Litmus Test**

At the [January 20, 2021 meeting](#), the Committee considered then-Chair Nathan Kelly's recommendations that the litmus test be replaced with a more streamlined, less arbitrary means of ranking capital improvement proposals. He did not offer an alternative and the matter was tabled for further discussion.

Ms. Mizner said that she reviewed the Town's [capital improvements planning policy](#) and viewed the criteria for evaluation in that document as not substantially different from those in the existing litmus test. She noted that any scoring will be somewhat arbitrary and that the litmus test has worked pretty well in that committee members use intermediate gradations and committee members have been doing their scoring consistently. Mr. McCoy, Ms. Boria, and others agreed that it the test can be arbitrary and Mr. Parker said that in his experience, the Committee has never failed to recommend a proposed capital improvement. *Noting that we have no better alternative, the Committee agreed to keep the existing litmus test.*

### **Potential Bylaw Amendments**

Ms. Grammer noted that Town Manager Angus Jennings has proposed amendments to the capital improvements planning bylaws. This was discussed at the [January 20, 2021 meeting](#), at which time the Committee agreed with Mr. Parker's suggestion to table the bylaws amendments. Ms. Grammer noted that Mr. Jennings, not present at this meeting, has not raised this again and wondered if this was moot. Mr. Parker recommended that the matter be tabled.

### **Updating and/or Revising Capital Improvements Plan Spreadsheet**

Spreadsheet summary with future projected capital fund income and outflow

Ms. Grammer noted that at the Committee's [October 29, 2020 meeting](#), the Committee strongly supported the new Capital Improvements spreadsheet Mr. Amaral and Mr. Jennings had developed, and agreed to add former Committee Chair Dick Preble's cumulative summary to show future projected adequacy and needs of capital improvements funding:

<b>TOTAL ASSET REPLACEMENTS</b> **				875,020	2,355,000	687,000	390,000	515,000	160,000	710,000	935,000	125,000	1,420,000
(Transfer from Free Cash)													
<b>ANNUAL APPROPRIATION</b>	1,543,000			800,000	800,000	700,000	600000	600000	600000	600000	600000	600000	600000
<b>STABILIZATION FUND TOTAL</b>	1,524,520			1,451,500	-103,500	-90,500	119,500	204,500	644,500	534,500	199,500	674,500	-145,500
	2019	2020		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030

*By unanimous roll call vote, the Committee agreed to integrate the two documents discussed above into a single document that retains some of the overview information from the legacy format and uses as input the dollar values and the more detailed information in the document more recently developed.*

Mr. Parker said that the Town Manager is working on this and we should have numbers in the next few weeks. *The Committee generally supported a summary going ten years out, perhaps with a column for year 11+. This will be taken up at the next meeting.*

Messrs. Amaral and Parker said that *updates to the capital improvements spreadsheet (which, as [on the website](#), currently dates from September 2020) should be available in January or February.*

Ms. Grammer noted that the capital improvements program failed to capture and plan for the very costly need to repair the Middle Street Bridge. She asked if there were lessons learned so that going forward the Town would not be caught by surprise by very large infrastructure-related capital costs.

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Ms. Grammer said that she had briefly reviewed the materials Mr. Jennings sent, noting that they were not particularly complete nor perfectly prescient. Mr. Amaral agreed, saying that the information provides a starting point. Ms. Grammer said that as part of a Historical Commission project she and Dot Cavanaugh discovered a number of boxes of records about Page School in the Town Offices basement and they will try to get this information in one place.

Ms. Mizner asked whether an analysis of a tipping point for Page School is within the purview of this Committee—and the general view was that it is not. Parker said that this needs to be discussed by the Select Board, the Town Manager, and the DPW Director to determine what next steps might be taken.

### **Review schedule for upcoming Capital Improvement Committee meeting(s)**

Ms. Mizner noted that the Committee has nothing on its agenda until Spring Town Meeting capital improvements are presented. The Committee agreed to wait until that time to schedule another meeting.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM

### **Meeting Documents**

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

[2021 10 20 Meeting Packet](#)

Respectfully submitted

Elisa Grammer