Town of Harvard Capital Planning and Investment Committee Minutes
February 6, 2014, Town Hall

Members present: Keith Cheveralls, Marie Sobalvarro, Alan Frazer, Debbie Ricci, David Kassel, Lorraine Leonard, and Tim Bragan

The meeting was called to order at 8:20 a.m.

The minutes of January 23 and 30 were approved as amended.

The CPIC considered a request by the Harvard Cable Television committee to recommend that funding of the planned $19,850 project to air condition the new studio in the Bromfield School be made available in the current fiscal year. Debbie made a motion to recommend current-year funding of the project, seconded by David. The motion carried unanimously.

The CPIC then discussed final wording of the capital project articles for the Town Meeting warrant booklet. The Committee agreed to remove a capital request on Ambulance Service Department defibrillator kits from the Capital Plan as they do not fit the definition of a large capital item.

The CPIC then began a discussion about the presentation of the 5-year Capital Plan. Tim noted that he had removed large debt-financed projects from the Capital Stabilization and Investment Fund portion of the plan and placed those projects in a supplemental plan. The Committee voted on the revised capital plan later in the meeting.

The Committee returned to the CPIC write-up for the Town Meeting warrant booklet and the insertion of a statement about the need for a property tax override to provide a stable source of funding for the Capital Stabilization and Investment Fund. The discussion was based on Debbie's spreadsheet analysis projecting a deficit in the Fund as of FY 2019.

There was a general consensus that the CPIC write-up will include a recommendation that an override be considered as of FY 2017. The statement will not recommend a specific value for the override.

Marie moved that the CPIC accept the warrant booklet report pending agreed-upon edits, seconded by Debbie. The motion carried unanimously.

David then moved to accept the narratives written of the articles concerning capital projects approved by the CPIC for the warrant booklet. The motion was seconded by Alan and approved unanimously.

The CPIC then discussed a proposed policy and committee bylaw change to raise the threshold for placement of projects on the Capital Plan from $10,000 to $20,000. The intent of the policy change proposal was to prevent the submission by departments and boards of proposed maintenance projects for consideration on the Capital Plan.

David suggested that rather than raising the threshold, the CPIC should attempt to define "capital project" and "capital maintenance" in order to better distinguish one from the other. David maintained that by simply raising the threshold, the Committee would lose its discretion to scrutinize capital projects under $20,000, such as the bus-lane gates that were installed at the elementary school in the current fiscal year.

Keith thought it would be difficult to come up with an airtight definition of capital and maintenance projects, although he said guidance along those lines could be given to departments in submitting proposed capital budgets.

Marie suggested that the current Committee bylaw stating that capital projects must be at least $10,000 in value and have a life span of greater than three years could be changed to at least $20,000 in value OR a life span of greater than a certain number of years. This would ensure that projects such as the bus-lane gates would still be considered by the Committee.

Marie then moved a change in the CPIC bylaw to state that the Committee will review items of at least $20,000 or having a lifespan of five years. The motion was seconded by Alan. The motion carried unanimously.

Marie then moved to approve the Committee's five-year capital plan and supplemental plan for large projects as developed by Tim. The motion was seconded by David. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved at 11 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by David Kassel