



APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 7, 2019
Selectmen's Meeting Room
7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman, Elaine Kelly
Bob D'Amico
Rick Nieber
Tony Poteete
Janice Hight

MEMBERS ABSENT: George Brenckle

ALSO PRESENT: John Coderre, Town Administrator
David Parenti, Fire Chief
Scott Charpentier, DPW Director

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 21, 2019

Mr. D'Amico moved the committee vote to approve the meeting minutes of the February 21, 2019 meeting as submitted; Ms. Hight seconded the motion; all members voted in favor.

FIRE DEPARTMENT FY2020 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Chief Parenti reviewed the FY2020 Fire Department Budget, which reflects an increase of \$28,366 or 1.43% in the General Fund appropriation. The departmental budget as presented does not include contractual wage increases for Union and Non-Union personnel, as those expenses have been budget centrally pending completion of union negotiations.

In addition to the General Fund appropriation of \$2,009,086 (which includes a transfer in of \$325,252 from the Fire Department Revolving Fund under Article 4 of the Town Meeting Warrant) the departmental budget also includes \$503,731 in planned expenses that are charged directly to the Fire Department Revolving Fund. The Fire Department Revolving Fund is supported primarily by fees for ambulance services. The direct Revolving Fund charges include ambulance billing services, overtime wages, licensing fees, related maintenance and operational expenses of the ambulances and related equipment. The account also pays for the debt service associated with the purchase of ambulances. The total FY2020 budget that supports the Fire/EMS services is \$2,512,817 (\$2,009,086 plus the Fire Department Revolving Fund direct charges of \$503,731).

Chief Parenti indicated that the capital request for self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) replacements in the amount of \$290,000 has been removed due to the receipt of a Federal Firefighter Assistance Grant. It took three consecutive tries before the Town was successful in obtaining the grant. Committee members thanked Chief Parenti for his aggressive pursuit of grant funding.

Chief Parenti then reviewed the following capital requests for FY2020:

Ambulance Replacement - \$315,000

The Town operates an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance service, which is physically housed in the Fire Station at 11 Pierce Street. There are two ambulances associated with this service, a front line ambulance and a back-up ambulance. The newest ambulance operates as the front-line responder and the older ambulance serves as the back-up. Typically, a new ambulance serves for about 8 years as a front-line responder and an additional four years as the back-up ambulance before being replaced. This request seeks to replace the 2012 ambulance in FY2020, at which time the 2016 ambulance would become the back-up. Purchase of new ambulances are funded entirely by EMS user fees. The planned, regularly scheduled replacement of emergency ambulances is critical to ensuring public safety.

Fire Station Addition/Renovation Project – Phase II - \$3,500,000

This request provides for the relocation of the existing fire station located at 11 Pierce Street. Built in 1974, the station's main systems are all in need of replacement and updating, including HVAC, roof, electrical and plumbing. The operational areas lack the appropriate space and accommodations needed for today's staff and equipment. The Town engaged an architect and a Feasibility Study is currently underway to better define the proposed project location, design and cost estimates. In FY2020, funding will be sought for design development, construction bid documents, and land acquisition. The proposed funding sources include approximately \$2.1 million in new bonds and \$1.38 million in repurposed bond proceeds that were initially borrowed to finance the now complete Lincoln Street School Addition/Renovation project. These funds can only be used for another debt-excluded project with a 20-year life and would offset future costs of a fire station renovation/addition project.

Mr. Coderre reminded the Committee that a joint meeting of the Financial Planning Committee, Appropriations Committee, Fire Station Building Committee and the Board of Selectmen is scheduled for April 4, 2019 at 7pm at the Library to review the Fire Station Project presentation to be made at the Annual Town Meeting. The updated presentation will include detailed cost estimates based upon the selected site and design.

DPW PROJECT UPDATE AND FY2020 BUDGET PRESENTATION

DPW Director Scott Charpentier reviewed his February 12, 2019 memo which provided an update on all capital projects including: the pavement management plan, Fisher Street culvert replacement, Town Common, West Main Street sewer pump station improvements, Edmund Hill water tank rehabilitation, Park and Winn Street water main replacements, sanitary sewer inflow and infiltration (I&I) program, Community Preservation Committee Funded cemetery projects, incremental sewer pump station improvements and the Rice Avenue culvert replacement project.

Mr. Charpentier provided a summary of the Town's water storage and supply status, recent analyses, as well as an outline of design considerations which are part of the proposed FY2020 Capital Budget. He also reviewed the funding strategy for the removal of the Northborough reservoir dam in Shrewsbury.

Mr. Charpentier reviewed the FY2020 Operating Budget. Overall, the Department of Public Works General Fund budget is increasing \$37,405 or 1.39%. The majority of the increase is attributed to equipment replacement for the cemetery operations and contract services associated with maintenance of the parks and monuments. There is also an increase of \$10,000 to the snow and ice budget to better reflect historic expenditures. The departmental budget as presented does not include contractual wage increases for Union and Non-Union personnel, as those expenses have been budget centrally pending completion of union negotiations.

DPW FY2020 CAPITAL PROJECT REQUESTS

Mr. Charpentier reviewed the following capital requests for FY2020. He informed the Committee that the request for \$50,000 for improvements to the snack shack at Memorial Field has been removed because Assabet Valley Vocational students completed the work for just the cost of materials, which were funded from the FY2019 operating budget.

20-Ton Dump Truck with Spreader & Plow - \$271,000

This request will replace a 1999 truck in FY2020 with a new truck with plow and spreader. 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 of these trucks in service and has a schedule to replace one every other year, resulting in a 20-year replacement cycle.

One-Ton Pickup Truck with Plow - \$90,000

This request replaces an existing 2000 one-ton pickup truck with plow. 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 typical useful life of these vehicles is 10 to 12 years. The FY2020 replacement vehicle will also include a covered utility body primarily for use in cemetery operations.

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 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. Under that standard, the Town's Annual Chapter 90 allocation of approximately \$500,000, plus a DPW appropriation of \$300,000, results in a \$300,000 funding gap, which would be filled by this capital budget request of \$300,000. The second update to the pavement management assessment was completed in 2018 which found that, through implementation of the pavement management plan, the Town-wide RSR increased by slightly more than two points from 71 to 73.4.

Water/Sewer Garage Design & Improvements - \$75,000

This request seeks to fund the planning and design of renovations and expansion to the Water/Sewer Garage. The existing garage was originally constructed in 1964 to house only the Water Department. The Town installed sewers in the 1970's, and this expansion of the departmental operations required additional staff and equipment that was not contemplated when the original garage was built. The current facility is undersized for the number of vehicles and equipment it houses. It requires security improvements and HVAC and electrical upgrades to allow the Town to maximize the benefits of new technologies, including electronic alarms and monitoring systems. Currently, several pieces of equipment are stored outside with some utilizing on-board water, thus requiring it to be drained and winterized after each use, and others housing sophisticated global positioning and communication gear that really should be stored in a climate controlled building.

Assabet Hill Water Tank Rehabilitation Design - \$70,000

As a result of the most recent tank inspections in September 2015, which were required by MassDEP, some small repairs and a recoating are recommended for the Assabet Hill Tank which is a 3.5 million gallon concrete water storage tank. The Edmunds Hill Tank requires similar attention with minor welding repairs and a complete recoating. The cost associated with the Edmunds Hill 1.0 MG steel tank is far more than Assabet due to the complexity of steel tank stripping and coating. A tank disposition and recommendations report is being prepared which will make recommendations for both tanks based upon condition, hydraulics, storage requirements and a cost benefit analysis. This \$70,000 request is for the design and bid document associated with the rehabilitation project for just the Assabet Hill Tank at an estimated cost of \$725,000 in FY2021.

The Committee thanked Mr. Charpentier for all the projects and planning with respect to the Town's infrastructure.

NEXT MEETING DATE – MARCH 9, 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Hight moved the Committee vote to adjourn; Mr. D'Amico seconded the motion; all members in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Coderre
Town Administrator

Documents used during meeting:

1. March 7, 2019 Meeting Agenda
2. February 21, 2019 Meeting Minutes
3. Information packet – Fire Department Budget
4. Information packet – DPW Department