

MINUTES  
Capital Planning Committee  
March 2, 2017 at Town Building

Present: Steve Jelinek, Chair, Jim Salvie, Dave Arsenault

Mr. Jelinek called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Arsenault moved to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2017 meeting as written. Mr. Salvie seconded. The vote was unanimous and the minutes were approved.

I. Fire Department.

Fire Chief Joe Landry met with the Committee to discuss his request for \$285K for a new ambulance. Chief Landry proposes keeping the present ambulance as a back-up. The new fire station has space for two ambulances. Chief Landry noted that the present ambulance dates from 2010 and its projected life span was five to six years and "it's starting to show its age." He emphasized the desirability of having residents treated by a "Stow crew" as opposed to another town's crew through mutual aid. Trade in values on ambulances are not good, a generous estimate would be that we could receive \$25K on trade in of the existing vehicle.

The ambulance is a revenue generator since the town can bill insurance, or medicare or Medicaid for the services. Chief Landry said the town earns about \$1,000 per run if reimbursed by private insurance, perhaps only \$300 or \$400 if reimbursed by medicare or Medicaid. Although the town has a right to invoice the resident for the balance due, and we do, if the debt remains unpaid after two invoices we do not start collection activities. This was a policy decision from long ago. Statistics show there were 37 ambulance runs covered by mutual aid last year because our ambulance was busy. Ambulance unavailability has increased because a recent change in regulations requires us to transport an individual to any hospital at which they are currently treating, e.g. Dana Farber, not the closest hospital, i.e. Emerson. Thus, even at \$400 per run, the "cost" of keeping the ambulance (i.e. the missed trade in value) would be made up in a couple of years. As a back up vehicle doing far fewer runs, the present ambulance should last much longer with fewer maintenance calls. We currently spend between \$6000 and \$10K per year on maintenance of the ambulance, but that's a vehicle that goes out all the time.

There was a brief discussion of the proposed replacement of engine 14 in fiscal 2020 for \$525K.

II. Police Department.

The Committee met with Police Chief Bill Bosworth and dispatcher Darlene Trefry concerning the police department's request for \$48K for a new vehicle. This is an

increase over the originally proposed \$42K. This cost includes a laptop and radio. This new vehicle would replace a 2006 black, unmarked Ford Expedition with 130,000 miles that for the past few years has been used as the "court vehicle." Its radio is older than the vehicle and is not transferable. This vehicle is our oldest and is the last "large SUV," the newer ones are smaller. There are seven vehicles in total and after this one the oldest is from 2013. The chief plans to continue to ask to replace one per year, he is afraid to skip a year because he does not want to have to come in and ask for two vehicles in any one year. The chief estimated that we spend \$17K per year on maintenance of cruisers.

There was a brief discussion of the Building Department's proposed upgrade of the HVAC system but the chief was unfamiliar with details of that project.

### III. Highway Department.

The Committee met with Highway Superintendent Mike Clayton and assistant Justine St. John about the department's request for \$100K for two replacement one ton dump trucks, one purchased in 2002 and one in 2008. The 2002 one has 120,000 miles and clearly has exceeded its lifespan, the 2008 one is being replaced earlier than what had been anticipated because of emissions problems that it has had since it was purchased. It has 82,000 miles. The 02 had \$1100 in maintenance this year and the 08 had \$1300. Mr. Clayton did not have an estimate of trade in value. He is planning on keeping one of the vehicles for spare parts. He believes that the warrant article amount includes all equipment including radios.

Mr. Clayton removed his request for the two radar signs. They will be purchased but they are not capital items.

There was a brief discussion of cemetery's request for a skidsteer, which Mr. Clayton did not think was necessary and which, in any event, has been withdrawn, and of the continuation of Highway's "small roads" improvement plan. In fiscal 18 the plan is to address Forest Road and Hillcrest Road.

The Committee discussed the Planning Department's request for Lower Village. The Highway Department has pledged \$450K toward that project, which represents almost two years' worth of "chapter 90 money." We do not spend all our chapter 90 money every year and there is a reserve of some of approximately \$225K. Mr. Clayton could not say that if the Lower Village project proceeds that nothing else will suffer, but he emphasized that improvements in Lower Village, particularly drainage improvements, are his highest priority. Great Road from the post office to Melone's in the east is serviced by one 18 inch pipe on the north side that does not adequately drain the lower parts of the area, notably the area around the lower common. The Lower Village project would install two pipes, one on each side of the road, of a greater width, he thought. That project, if done alone, would probably cost about \$400K, perhaps \$100K more if incidentals like police details are included.

Mr. Jelinek said that next week the Committee will meet with the Nashoba Regional School District and with Minuteman.

There being no further business, at 8:50 p.m. Mr. Arsenault moved to adjourn, Mr. Salvie seconded, and all voted in favor.

---

James Salvie, Clerk