

Capital Expenditure Committee

Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 25, 2023, 7:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Members in attendance:

Tony Battaglia
Karen Dunn
Emily Mitchell

Mary Ellen Carter
Dave McClung
Brad Morrison

Members not in attendance:

Audrey Gould

Other Attendees:

Amy Fidalgo – Assistant Town Manager
David Manugian – DPW Director
Jeanette Rebecchi – Capital Program Manager
Josh Smith – Recreation Department Director

Meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM, noting that a quorum was present.

1. Remote Meetings Guidelines

Dave McClung read the following: “Pursuant to Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, which temporarily suspends certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, this meeting of CapEx is being conducted via remote participation. Persons who would like to listen or view this meeting while in progress may do so by Zoom or by phone. This meeting is being recorded by the Town of Bedford. All votes taken by this body shall be by roll call vote.” Attendance was then taken by roll call.

2. Department of Public Works Presentation

David Manugian began the presentation by reviewing the work done over the last year by the DPW. He then gave an overview of each of the capital projects. Discussion of the proposed projects then followed.

Middlesex Turnpike MWRA Connection

This will be a fourth connection to the MWRA (through Burlington instead of Lexington) adding redundancy to Bedford’s system, as well as particularly improving East Bedford which is seeing a lot of commercial growth. There would also be a capital request in FY26.

Sabourin Field Turf Replacement

The most used field in Bedford, it has reached the end of its useful life. Replacement recommended by two different consultants.

Sewer Pump Station Program

The thirty pump stations in town have an expected thirty-year life span; every year work is required.

Sidewalk / Municipal Hardscape Improvements

Upcoming projects include Springs Rd between the VA and Page Rd, adding ADA compliant ramps and crosswalks, and may include MBTA bus stop landings.

Stormwater Permit Requirements

This work fulfills yearly federal stormwater regulations.

Stormwater / Culvert / Drainage Repairs

More intense storms and ageing infrastructure are creating problems all over town. This will be a long-term issue. This year is focused on White Cedar Swamp / Richard Rd. / Elm Brook drainage corridor.

Transportation Improvements

This year is traffic calming and pavement condition index.

Water Gate Valve Exercising

Annual requirement.

Water Main Improvement Program

Continuing ongoing program throughout town; trying to coordinate more closely with paving programs. This year focused on Middlesex Turnpike, Sweetwater Ave, Hayden Lane and Dudley Rd.

Water Quality Improvements

MA DEP requirement to confirm there are no lead services in town by 2024.

Water Standpipe Rehabilitation

Ongoing standpipe maintenance contract – just annual inspections this year.

Large Equipment Replacement

One vehicle this year: 2013 Cat 430E Backhoe. This is the only backhoe in the town's inventory and heavily used by all divisions.

Vehicle and Equipment Replacement

Several smaller vehicles: 2 Police cruisers, 2 general trucks, sewer van, water pickup, 2 mowers, mobile column lift and air compressor.

Other FY25 Capital Projects

Several items going through Community Preservation Act funds, the largest is the Sabourin Field Track rehabilitation; it would be very beneficial to do this in conjunction with the Sabourin Field replacement. There is a new program to look at invasive water vegetation in town. There is also a study to look at improving the Town Common in anticipation of the town's 300th anniversary. In addition, there is annual Road Resurfacing as part of the Operating budget.

Looking Ahead

Future major concerns are stormwater issues throughout town, Middlesex Turnpike development and changing water regulations.

Discussion of each of these items followed:

Middlesex Turnpike MWRA Connection

The agreements with Burlington for the project are based on the existing agreements with Lexington. After the construction is completed, the rates for water shouldn't change as it all comes from the MWRA and there are standard rates.

Sabourin Field Turf Replacement

A grass field would cost about \$12,000 more in annual upkeep than turf and could only be used about 60-70 percent less than a turf field. The public bathrooms voted last year came in higher than expected, but that should be resolved and work would be coordinated with the Field replacement.

Sewer Pump Station Program

Two stations need to be addressed this year (Evans Ave and David Rd), in addition to replacing a generator on Great Road. The town does receive grants through Massworks for some of this work in town, and Bedford is eligible for it because of its participation in the MBTA Communities.

Sidewalk / Municipal Hardscape Improvements

Ms. Carter suggested giving more detail about the projects that will be done for Town Meeting, rather than just a lump sum.

Stormwater Permit Requirements

Mr. Morrison questioned why this item is a capital expense, and not part of the operation budget as it is required every year. Ms. Fidalgo agreed with his question, stating it was already on her list of things to discuss with the new town manager.

Stormwater / Culvert / Drainage Repairs

This is a very large, costly and long-term project – care should be taken in explaining to the town the rationale and need for this and the risks for not doing it.

Transportation Improvements

This year is just two smaller traffic-calming projects on Dunster Road and Hemlock Lane. MEC pointed out that in general, the town shouldn't spend a lot of money on building infrastructure to calm traffic on a road, and then simultaneously put up a sign saying "No left turn from 3 to 7 pm." Looking at future projects, there was a brief discussion of the importance of creating a committee to develop and advocate for the eventual improvements at Willson Park.

Water Gate Valve Exercising

There was a brief discussion about why this yearly expense was a capital request.

Water Main Improvement Program

Mr. Battaglia asked why this item was so much more this year. Mr. Manugian replied that Sweetwater Ave and Hayden Lane are two of the largest remaining projects for the town.

Water Quality Improvements

The Town does not believe there are any lead services in use. This would entail physically checking a sampling of the service connections throughout Town in order to prove to the State that the Town is lead free. If any lead services are found, they will be replaced.

Water Standpipe Rehabilitation
No questions.

Large Equipment Replacement

This type of vehicle doesn't make sense to be electric. Backhoes are still in the 12 to 16 month timeframe for acquisition.

Vehicle and Equipment Replacement

The warrant article will be one overall number, but the individual costs will be listed. These vehicles are all replacements, and one of the mowers will probably be electric. Engine hours is probably the most significant part of the evaluation of a vehicle's usefulness.

Other FY25 Capital Projects

The open water vegetation project is more about maintaining the recreational uses of a body of water. There was a brief discussion about previous work done at Fawn Lake.

The committee members all thanked the staff for their time and effort in general and with the presentation in particular.

The next meeting will be in two weeks, on November 8, 2023.

3. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Tony Battaglia and seconded by Brad Morrison. The motion was approved by a vote of 6-0-0.

4. Documents & Exhibits Used

- Powerpoint slide entitled "DPW Capital Budget Overview"

The meeting adjourned at about 7:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted by David McClung