

TOWN OF PRINCETON, MA
Princeton Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.

AC members in attendance: Peter Giumette, Jennifer Greene, Josh Tanenbaum, Michael Cote, Forrest Finkler

Selectboard members in Attendance: Phil Gott, Karen Cruise, Robert Cumming

Financial Management team: Sherry Patch, Melissan Hawthorne

Public: Helga Lyons, Holly Burgess, Deb Cary, Daniel Erwin, Roger Brooks, John Bennett, Pamela Hill, others

Joint meeting commenced at 6:01 p.m. (via GoToMeeting)

Joint Meeting with Selectboard on FY25 Capital Plan

- Review of FY24 Capital Project Status
 - Plow blades & road sensors received a 50% grant which frees up \$19k back to ARPA funds
- Review FY25 available funds: total \$3,787,362.11
 - \$843,893 free cash
 - \$300,308 in ARPA funds (must be allocated by Dec 31, 2024)
 - Some Sale of Town Owned Land may have a liability against them from previous owners. Risk is relatively remote that we'll be impacted.
- Looking to spend down ARPA funds as we have until end of year to allocate that money
- Fire Department
 - \$30,000 for Thompson rd cistern engineering study - recommend from ARPA
 - What is the purpose of the study? – John B this would be a new cistern to provide a pressurized fire hydrant down on Mountain Rd
 - Eventually we'll want to upgrade the existing 12k gallon tank at Town Common with a larger tank.
- Highway
 - \$45k for all season body - from ARPA & \$65k for pick-up truck - as 3 yr lease
- Police
 - \$75,394 for police cruiser as 3 year lease
 - Is this a hybrid? The existing hybrid cruiser has not been performing well. One vehicle received this summer has been out of service almost continually. The second vehicle has also had issues but is still in service.
- School
 - \$60k for new phone/intercom system
- Small requests
 - COA: flooring upgrades at senior center \$9,964 from ARPA
 - Portable radios for fire & police. Request is to move that to Operating budget as it is a recurring expense
 - Fire has 22 radios total
 - Each radio is \$4500
 - Looking to get grants for purchasing radio - grants tend to be reimbursable, we have to buy first.

- Life of radio is 10 years, we have some as old as 20 years
 - Central Mass Regional Planning Commission - gave a quote for \$18,000 for Hazard Mitigation Plan. Update is required for some grants.
- What is the plan for the remaining ARPA money (only \$140k in capital plan)? – Sherry we'll be looking at those funds while forming the FY25 Operating Budget.

5 Year Capital Plan

- Fire
 - fixing Hickory Dr waterhole
 - Adding 5 above ground storage tanks
 - FY26 is replacing the center of town cistern & add pressurized hydrant district downhill from there
 - Where is the implementation plan for Thompson Rd & Echo Lake? – Looking for grants but need to fully understand what will be needed based on engineering study. KC: there should at least be some estimate for implementations in the plan.
 - What about equipment on the 5 year plan? What about car request? JB: Apparatus is up to date in 5 year horizon. JB: No new vehicles until 2030.
 - HB: will water be tested for PFAS? How do we prevent wasting money on studies if a well might end up with PFAS? It is possible to fill tanks by taking water from elsewhere an filling tank via a pumper truck.
- Highway
 - Larger requests coming in FY28/29
 - PG: can we share cost of some more expensive pieces of equipment with other towns? - Sherry, some other towns do share highway road equipment. Sherry will reach out to have those discussions with other town administrators
- Police
 - Looking for 1 cruiser in each year. Cruisers have 10 year life.
 - HB: these would phase out older cruisers. We have 2019 & 2022 cruisers.
 - PG: there are technologies that will shut down engine but keep equipment on and turn engine on to charge battery. This would help the Green Initiative without going to hybrids as well as help prolong engine life.
- Buildings
 - FY27 - Princeton Center Roof Repairs unless it is replace by PSB
 - FY27 - Mechanics Hall Roof Repairs
 - Assuming PSB construction in FY26/27 total \$12m
 - KC: put in the cost of razing the building instead of repair
 - KC: are the plans for FY28/29 – Sherry, need engineering study of all the buildings. KC: update 2016 study.
 - KC: what about the library? Melissa, only request is for small capital over 3 years. Not shown in this large capital 5 year plan.
 - PG: is there a plan to replace the Annex space for public meetings? KC: new PSB will have a meeting room (EOC). If Krashes field house gets heated then it could be used. KC: will virtual meetings make needing space less of an issue?

- School
 - FY28 - sprinkler system \$1m. Not required though as school is brick and grandfathered.
 - This may be much too low since we don't have a pressurized water source for the sprinklers.
 - It would also cancel the grandfathering so likely there will be many additional costs that creep in.
 - Looking for grant and other funding options
 - KC: the funding math often makes it cheaper to build a new school than to fix an old school
- 5 year summary
 - It looks like spending is pushed out and that may not be a good thing since the PSB will cause money to be very tight in the future. KC: should some things be pulled forward? PG: instead of looking at total spending per year, look at how the debt schedule affects yearly budget
 - HL: Lay out debt schedule since the current debt schedule is at the limit of 7%. Need to get some debt to come off before adding new. MH: trying to get the debt schedule in a format that can be reviewed.

Next AC Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Michael Cote (secretary)

Attachments:

FY25 Capital Plan presentation posted at: @@@