

Town of Rockland, MA
Capital Planning Committee

DATE: Thursday, January 30, 2025, 7:00 PM

LOCATION: Rockland Town Hall, Downstairs Conference Room

ATTENDEES: Richard Harris, Chairman
Bill Principe
Linda Sternfelt, Secretary
Doug Walo
Lauren White

GUESTS: Chief Scott Duffey, Town Administrator Doug Lapp

ABSENTEES: Vice Chairman Chris Fulton

Chairman Harris called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Chairman Harris reviewed the draft of the Capital Planning Committee's letter for the 2024 Town Report. The Committee felt that the letter did a good job of explaining what the Committee does and generally how we do it.

Chairman Harris reviewed the Fire Department's capital plan items for FY 2025. Town Meeting did not approve the new Fire Station for FY 2025. The Chief and the Fire Station Building Committee have worked to design a less expensive, smaller fire station as requested by Town Meeting. That new fire station will cost \$26.1 million and the Chief would like this to be placed on the plan for FY 2026. Town Meeting approved the ALS Equipment for the Ambulance, Radios for Fire Truck Engine 2 and Fire Fighting Turnout Gear for FY 2025. The Replacement Ladder Truck was moved out to FY 2026.

Requested capital items for FY 2026 include a Fire Department Radio System Replacement in the amount of \$300K. Many components of the system are almost ten years old. This will replace major components of the system and accompanying computers. Some of the radios have started going down and are in need of repair. The cost of this item is based on a quote obtained from the Holbrook Dispatch Center. The cost of this item was estimated at \$120K in FY 2027. The \$120K should be removed from the Capital Plan for FY 2027.

The second requested capital item is the previously referenced \$2 million replacement ladder truck. The current truck is a 1999 model that was refurbished six years ago. It is difficult to get parts for the truck at present. The truck will be a custom machine to fit the existing firehouse. There is a four year wait to obtain this truck due to build time delays.

The third requested capital item is \$325K for an Ambulance replacement. There is a two year wait time for new ambulances at present. Ambulance runs are 76% of what the Fire Department does. This

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vehicle will replace the 2007 ambulance, and the existing 2019 ambulance with 180K miles will move down in seniority. Mr. Walo asked why the fire truck needs to go out on all medical calls. The Chief responded that fire truck personnel assist in carrying equipment in and patients out on calls. Equipment that needs to be carried in includes a cardiac monitor, drug and medical kits, oxygen, a stair chair and a stretcher. In addition, the fire truck is then out and is ready for the next call should it come in when the medical call is in process.

The fourth requested capital item is \$200K for a Fire Alarm Bucket Truck replacement. This truck is used to repair the wires running between the approximate 200 red boxes throughout town. When activated, an alarm rings at the Fire Station and alerts them of the location of the emergency. In addition, this truck is used during storms and motor vehicle accidents. The current truck is a 2000 Ford that was purchased used. It is currently out of service, and parts are not made for it any more. The Department is currently borrowing a truck from another local Fire Department in order to make the necessary repairs to the fire box wiring system.

The final capital item request is \$250K to Demolish Lincoln School. Lincoln School is a vacant building that is becoming a blight to the neighborhood. The Town routinely asks other property owners to fix or demolish blighted buildings, so its demolition would be expected. If the Fire Station project fails, at least the site would be safe. Electric service to the building has been discontinued, and the water is shut off. This would reduce the cost of a future fire station as well.

Chairman Harris inquired as to the Fire Department's future capital needs. The Fire Department needs a new Admin vehicle, but this is already in the plan for FY 2027. New turnout gear will be required in FY 2029 in the amount of \$200K, and a replacement for the Department's self-contained breathing apparatus will also be needed in FY 2029, at a cost of \$320K.

Mr. Walo made a motion to add these items to the capital plan. Ms. Sternfelt seconded the motion. All approved.

Chairman Harris reviewed the Town Hall/Administration's capital plan items for FY 2025. Town Capital Projects were funded by Town Meeting, as were Recycling Center Building Repairs.

FY 2026 capital items include a \$1.5 million complete HVAC replacement for Town Hall. There are multiple separate units in the building, and all are starting to fail. The building was built in the early 70s and it is no longer possible to get parts for the units. The Committee asked if there would be savings to the Town from undertaking the HVAC replacement. Town Administrator Lapp responded that the engineer can estimate that, but he was not sure given the possible need to repair the walls of Town Hall that would be impaired by the removal of the HVAC units.

Chairman Harris asked if there were any capital needs over the next five years. Town Administrator Lapp said that the biggest problem is the lack of space at Town Hall. He is also investigating grants to digitize all paper at Town Hall, but he noted that by law, some documents need to be kept forever in paper form. Copiers and scanners also need to be replaced next year, but the Town is considering leasing them to reduce the cost.

Chairman Harris brought up an issue that was discussed at last night's Capital Planning Committee, whether or not an Annual Control Plan for I&I for the Sewer Department was an operating expense or if it belonged on the capital plan. Chairman Harris noted that Interim Superintendent Dave Taylor has this

in the Sewer Department operating budget and is not introducing a warrant item for its funding. After some discussion between the Town Administrator and the Committee, Town Administrator Lapp determined that this was an operating expense and should not be on the capital plan. Ms. White made a motion to remove the Annual Control Plan for I&I from the capital plan. Ms. Sternfelt seconded the motion. Chairman Harris, Mr. Principe, Ms. Sternfelt and Ms. White voted to do so. Mr. Walo was opposed to the motion. The motion passed by majority vote.

Ms. Sternfelt made a motion to add the Town Hall HVAC replacement to the capital plan. Mr. Principe seconded the motion. All approved.

Chairman Harris said that the Committee will meet next week if he can get a needed Department Head to attend our meeting.

Mr. Walo made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Sternfelt seconded the motion. All approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Sternfelt, Secretary

