



Capital Planning Committee

Capital Plan for FY2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021)
5-Year Plan for FY2021 – FY2025

Date: Thursday, September 19, 2019

Time: 5pm-7pm

Location: Town Manager's Conference Room, Arlington Town Hall Annex, 730 Mass Ave.

Minutes

Attendance: Joseph Barr,
Ida Cody (arrived at 5:15pm),
Phyllis Marshall,
Michael Mason,
Chris Moore,
Sandy Pooler,
Brian Rehrig,
Julie Wayman, Management Analyst,
Timur Kaya Yontar.

Not in attendance: Stephen Andrew
Charlie Foskett
Angela Olszewski

Meeting Opened: Mr. Yontar called the meeting to order at 5:05pm. The minutes of the meeting of June 6, 2019 were unanimously approved.

Membership: Mr. Yontar summarized the current membership on the committee, including the members appointed by the Town Moderator (Steve Andrew, Joe Barr, Chris Moore, Angela Olszewski, Brian Rehrig, Timur Kaya Yontar), the Finance Committee representative (Charlie Foskett), and the *ex officio* members who are Town staff (Ida Cody, Phyllis Marshall, Michael Mason, and Sandy Pooler). The current appointed members have three-year terms that expire as follows:

- June 30, 2020: Steve Andrew, Chris Moore
- June 30, 2021: Joe Barr, Timur Kaya Yontar
- June 30, 2022: Angela Olszewski, Brian Rehrig

The current officers (Timur Kaya Yontar, Chair; Chris Moore, Vice-Chair; Joe Barr, Secretary) were elected for one-year terms that expire on June 30, 2020. Mr. Yontar also welcomed new Committee member Angela Olszewski and new Management Analyst Julie Wayman, and thanked Mr. Foskett and Mr. Rehrig for their years of service as Chair and Vice-Chair. Mr. Yontar reminded members to let both him and Ms. Wayman know if a member cannot attend a meeting, and also reminded members of the required ethics training, which must be done on a two-year cycle.

Subcommittees: Mr. Yontar summarized the subcommittees that will work on preparing summaries of the capital requests for each department, which have stayed much the same as in previous years. To balance the subcommittees, Mr. Foskett is moving from the Finance Subcommittee to the Administration Subcommittee; Mr. Yontar also noted that Ms. Olszewski will also be joining the Administration Subcommittee, which was not shown on the handouts. In addition to the department review subcommittees, the Software Subcommittee is continuing its work and it is hoped that it will finalize and implement recommendations during the current year. A new Deliverable Review Subcommittee is also being created this year, which is intended to solicit feedback on ways to improve the annual Capital Plan Report to Town Meeting from users of that report, including Town staff, Town Meeting Members, Select Board Members, the Finance Committee, and others.

Facilities Department Personnel Change. Mr. Pooler noted that with the departure of Steve Nesterak, Jim Feeney is now the Acting Facilities Director, at least through Town Meeting. Mr. Yontar asked whether Mr. Feeney is aware of the request that the Facilities Department vet any building-related projects in advance, and Mr. Pooler suggested that Mr. Feeney be invited to attend a CPC meeting in October to discuss the desired process. Mr. Pooler also indicated that he would distribute a letter that was sent to all department heads clarifying the expected role of the Facilities Department. Mr. Rehrig asked whether Mr. Feeney will continue to have a role in Parks projects (since that is part of his prior role); Mr. Pooler said that he is not sure but expected that he would stay involved in some of the larger projects.

Subcommittee Meetings with Town Departments: Mr. Yontar summarized the process of having subcommittees meet with Town departments to review progress on prior capital requests along with future year capital requests. As background, Mr. Pooler handed out an analysis of the status of FY20 capital expenditures, and clarified that the “% USED” column in the table includes both “YTD” spent and the “ENCUB” encumbrances and also indicated that there are no major problems with any of the FY20 capital projects, roughly ¼ of the way into the fiscal year. Ms. Cody indicated that she will soon be sending around a report on the status of prior year capital requests so that subcommittees can consider what “sweeps” of unspent funds are possible. A couple of updates were provided on projects and personnel:

- Mr. Mason indicated that the bids for the Hardy and Pierce playground projects have come in higher than expected, but that Arlington Public Schools is working on rebidding the work in a manner that they hope will reduce the costs.

- Mr. Pooler mentioned that the new head of the Recreation Department is Stacey Mulroy, who had been the Assistant Director.
- Ms. Wayman indicated that the PeopleForms system is still in use, and that the forms are now in Committee mode for review.

Mr. Yontar suggested the possibility of using Google Drive to manage document reviews, which the Committee agreed would be a good idea. Mr. Pooler reminded everyone that although it is fine to work on Committee documents in a cloud-based system, the final versions need to be stored and memorialized on a Town-owned server for records management purposes. Ms. Wayman asked members if they would like to receive paper or electronic copies of Committee documents, and after discussion it was decided that all members would receive documents electronically, but paper versions would only be distributed to those who specifically requested them. Mr. Pooler said that although the Town may move to a Sharepoint-type system in the future, for the immediate future documents will be distributed as email attachments.

Updates on Major Projects: Mr. Pooler provided an update on a number of major capital projects:

- Stratton Elementary School: Still awaiting completion of awnings over the doorways, but the project is otherwise complete.
- Thompson Elementary School: Project complete.
- Gibbs Middle School: Project complete.
- Hardy Elementary School: Working on minor punch list items.
- Arlington High School: The High School Building Committee is meeting every two weeks and the project is currently in Design Development, with decisions ongoing about building materials and value engineering to reduce costs. Next steps include the preparation of construction documents, site prep beginning in the spring of 2020, and major construction beginning when the current school year ends in June 2020. A public forum on the project is planned for October 30th.
- Department of Public Works Facility: The project, which will be managed by the Permanent Town Building Committee, is still in design and construction is expected to start in roughly the same time frame as the high school, with a 2-3 year construction period. A Request for Proposals was recently released to hire a construction management company. No decision has been made about the potential to acquire the lot on Grove Street for the project, although that option is still under consideration.
- Senior Center: Mr. Pooler and Ms. Marshall are working on the bonding schedule for this project, which is still in design and is expected to start construction over the winter.

Update on Fund Source Status: Mr. Pooler also provided an update on various funds sources:

- DAV Building Sale: A special permit hearing on the proposed hotel project at this site is scheduled for October 21, but the matter may be continued past this date. \$750,000 in proceeds from the sale are being held in escrow until the matter is resolved.

- Mystic Street Bridge Grant: Sewer syphon work is complete; now waiting for next phase of design with construction to start again in the spring. The \$500,000 state grant for this project is still available.
- Other State Grant: The earmark in the status budget for Lusianno Field construction remains available for when that project is moving forward.
- Arlington High School bonds: The Treasurer's Office is working on the bonding schedule for these bonds. The issuance will be done in a way that doesn't impact the FY20 budget or tax bills, and in a way that attempts to create a relatively smooth phase in of the additional taxes.
- Community Preservation Act: No specific update.

Major Upcoming Issues: The Committee discussed a number of upcoming issues that should be given careful consideration in the future:

- Mr. Yontar asked whether there should be any concerns about the current debt load and debt service, particularly in terms of the Town's bond rating. Mr. Pooler and Ms. Marshall replied that this does not appear to be a problem at this point, as there are a number of factors that the bond rating agencies consider and the Town is doing well on many of them.
- Mr. Yontar raised the question of whether there are any projects that are expected to grow significantly in size/scope/budget and/or appear unexpectedly. Although none of the Committee members were aware of any projects in those categories, it was agreed that the Committee should keep a close eye on any potential issues that might arise.
- Mr. Yontar raised a few other issues that he feels the Committee and the Town should be keeping track of, including the ongoing need for street and sidewalk improvements, the need for improvements to the Civic Block area in Arlington Center, and the condition of the Ottoson Middle School.
- The Committee also discussed the need for a clearer policy on how we decide whether an item is paid for using cash or bonding, as well as the need to develop and/or refine other fiscal policies. Mr. Pooler suggested that we could look to find examples of good fiscal policies from other nearby municipalities, and Mr. Yontar floated the idea of setting up a subcommittee on this topic.

Next Meeting: The Community Safety Subcommittee agreed to try to present at the October 3, 2019 meeting of the Committee, and Mr. Yontar asked that other subcommittees develop a schedule for when they intend to be ready to present.

Meeting Adjourned: The meeting adjourned unanimously at 6:59pm.