

CAPITAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Gary Taylor, Selectmen Representative
Mary Hartman, Finance Committee Representative
Al Schmertzler, School Committee Representative
Jim Henderson, Conservation Commission Representative
Jacqueline Apsler, Library Trustee Representative
Andy Beard, Citizen Member
Ralph Derbyshire, Citizen Member
Anita Scheipers, Assistant Town Administrator – Member Ex-officio

The Capital Planning Committee's role as an advisory body is to study proposed capital requests for equipment or facility and infrastructure construction or improvements requiring major one-time expenses of at least \$15,000, with an anticipated useful life of at least five years. The Committee membership includes representatives from several of the major town boards, as well as two "At-large" members to allow for effective and objective discussion of each request. The Committee welcomed three new members for 2007: Mary Hartman of the Finance Committee replacing Pat Phillips, Al Schmertzler of the Lincoln School Committee replacing Sandy Hessler, and Ralph Derbyshire as an At-Large member replacing Rob Jevon.

The Committee works with funding guidelines issued by the Finance Committee at the start of the budget planning process. The amount recommended for funding FY09 capital projects was \$550,000 for cash funding of capital projects and purchases. This limit of \$550,000 does not apply to those items which are proposed to be bonded; most of which occurs as debt exclusion votes (outside of Proposition 2 ½).

Given that the Capital Planning Committee received just over \$7 million dollars worth of requests from various departments and committees, there was much deliberation about priorities of requests to fund, as well as which items would best be presented to the voters as items to bond rather than appropriate funds for cash purchases, as well as items that would be presented as separate warrant articles.

During the review phase the Committee determined that several items were regular maintenance items rather than true capital items, and recommended these items not be considered for Capital funds, but instead be considered for alternate funding through the departments' operating budget or through separate warrant articles. The committee wanted to be assured that maintenance items were not being proposed as capital items so as to relieve constrained departmental operating budgets with such costs. Such items include the routine annual request for Lincoln schools classroom rehabilitation funds, new requests for exterior painting of school buildings, and also for repairs to misc. school building components such as rakes and doors. These particular items are recommended to be covered under separate warrant articles for building maintenance in the same manner has been done with general town building maintenance and Library maintenance. Given that there is currently no committee established to review and make recommendations regarding such maintenance articles, the committee debated the merits of adding review of annual facility maintenance articles to the scope of their responsibilities. This idea will be discussed with the Selectmen and Finance Committee for future consideration.

Several major requests submitted were determined to be eligible and appropriate for consideration for bonding through debt exclusion votes at both the town meeting and on the election ballot. The Public Works request for funding of a major road pavement program for \$5.5 million. This pavement program proposes to repair and repave seven main roadways in town (such as Rt. 126, Bedford Rd, Lincoln Rd, Trapelo Rd, etc...) which are beyond the condition that can easily be repaired with the small allocation of the annual state "Chapter 90" funds. If approved by the voters, this bonded program will be completed over a period of several years, and will relieve the annual Chapter 90 funds received from the state to be used for the necessary repairs of our local residential roads.

Other potential bonding requests include a new fire pumper tanker to provide necessary water source for areas of town outside the water district, and new trucks for the Public Works and Conservation departments to replace pieces of the aging fleet well beyond their useful life. It will be the decision of the Selectmen and Finance Committee as to whether these items are furthered as bonded items for voter consideration, or as requests for cash appropriation at town meeting.

In some cases, the committee did not recommend funding of departmental requests due to concern that the request needs to be more fully considered. One such item was a request to replace the Reed School field house roof. Given that the school committee is considering major facilities upgrades to much of the Lincoln school campus, there was concern about funds being spent to replace a roof on a building that had potential to be drastically altered or demolished under a future facility rehabilitation project. It was felt that the Town would be better served by allocating a small sum to repair the roof and to conduct further study as to the best options for the roof repair should the building be determined to remain under the future building program. \$20,000 is recommended for this engineering and repair work.

Given that a number of requests received were maintenance in nature and are recommended to be presented as non-capital warrant articles, the Committee agreed to recommend \$500,000 worth of cash capital items for voter consideration in March. Since the committee feels strongly that facility maintenance is essential to maintaining our assets, they agreed to have the remaining \$50,000 left from the \$550,000 budgeted be used to help offset the costs of these maintenance articles. It should also be noted that several departmental requests were not recommended to be brought to town meeting for consideration at this time.

All requests (whether approved or denied) are listed in the following spreadsheet. This sheet indicates the level of funding recommended, as well as the Committee's recommendation as to the source of funding to be considered, and comprises the decision of the Capital Committee voted at their Dec 11, 2007 meeting. These recommendations are presented to the Finance Committee to place before the voters at the 2008 annual town meeting.