

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Capital Improvement Committee

40 Old Farms Road
Willington, CT 06279

Regular Meeting
Hybrid — In Person and Online

January 31, 2024
7:04 PM

Committee Members In Attendance:

Christina Mailhos, Chairman – in person
Peter Tanaka, First Selectman – in person
Stephanie Summers, Board of Finance Delegate – in person
Donna Laticincics, Business Manager – in person
Stuart Cobb – in person, left at 8:05PM
Karenann Caldwell
James Marshall
Jennifer Goodale (arrived at 7:32PM). Board of Finance Chairman Bruce Lawler and members of the public were also present in person and on zoom.

Bruce Lawler, Board of Finance Chairman, and residents also in attendance in person and via Zoom.

Committee Members Absent: Jim Bulick; Melissa McKinnon

Troy Sposato, Director, Public Works – In person
Phil Stevens, Superintendent, Willington Public Schools – In person

1. Call Meeting to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

2. Present to Speak - none

3. Approval of Minutes

a. January 17, 2024

Mr. Tanaka motioned to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2024 meeting.

Ms. Caldwell seconded the motion.

Discussion: none

In favor: Mailhos, Tanaka, Lawler, Caldwell, Cobb, Marshall

Opposed: none

Abstentions: Summers

Motion passed.

4. Project Presentations by Department

a. Public Works

Mr. Sposato reviewed request CIP-22-4, Install Storm Water Interceptors

Mr. Sposato explained that this will bring the town into compliance with MS4 permitting and is listed for year 2. The request is for the materials; installation would be done in-

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house. Mr. Marshall confirmed that the price listed is based on this year's pricing. Mr. Sposato noted that a little has been added to address a potential price increase in year 2. Ms. Summers asked about what needs to be done in terms of construction. Mr. Sposato explained that this is to ensure that oil and other items are intercepted from the catch basins already in place.

Mr. Sposato reviewed request CIP-22-5, Bus Lot Paving

Mr. Sposato explained that although signage is in place, tractor trailer trucks have been entering the lot and causing damage. Water is puddling in multiple areas. To address this, the pavement needs to be ground and regraded so water can flow appropriately. While they have patched areas, the lot holds a lot of water. Mr. Marshall asked if they could address the tractor trailers use of the lot moving forward. Mr. Sposato explained that locking the gate would create issues for buses. Mr. Marshall expressed concern regarding maintenance and noted that this could be a further discussion. Ms. Summers noted that due to the location, perhaps some negotiation could take place if there is data. Mr. Cobb recommended having a power gate with a code albeit there would be a cost. Ms. Summers noted that it could be a CIP project.

Mr. Sposato reviewed request CIP-22-6, Salt Shed Reconfiguration

Mr. Sposato explained that excavation will be needed. The majority of the cost is due to the amount of material that would need to be removed to make it a level site. The cost of just the canopy has increased from \$200K to an estimated \$300K. The other option is to add to the shed already in place, but it has cracks, and the combination of salt and concrete is not ideal. That said, water is not getting inside. The new shed would be 100'x100' with 6' or 8' walls, have a vinyl canopy, and the front would be open with the area divided for the salt and sand/salt mix. The concrete would have a rubber membrane. A brief discussion regarding the STEAP grant took place. Ms. Mailhos noted that a STEAP grant was awarded for another project a few years ago and they had money left over. When asked about the balance, the state responded that it could be used toward this project so the remaining \$350K should be available. Ms. Summers asked about the storm experience over the last 3 years. Mr. Sposato explained that 200 tons of salt can be contained, and the 20-hour storms have used the entire 200 tons. A delivery service replenishes the salt but if there was a salt shortage, which there has been in the past, the town would have an issue. Mr. Marshall asked if there would be operational savings if the town was able to order in bulk. Mr. Sposato explained that they pay per ton but there would be savings if it could all be delivered at one time during a summer month. Ms. Summers asked if the savings could be quantified and noted that they are now more reliant on salt due to using less of a sand/salt mix. Mr. Sposato explained that there is always 200 tons in the bin whether or not they are using a mix. Ms. Summers asked if the state of the salt bin is creating more runoff. Mr. Sposato noted that it is, but they try to contain it and do regular sampling. It is in year 1 because it is something that needs to be done, albeit not today.

Mr. Sposato reviewed request CIP-22-7, Schoefield Road Drainage

Mr. Sposato explained that BETA Group is doing a scope of work which should be completed in the next month or so to provide information about the engineering and full project costs. The estimate of \$2.2M includes construction costs. BETA estimated

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\$2.0M-\$2.5M for the entire project. Mr. Marshall commented that it seems like a lot for a 1/3rd of a mile stretch. Mr. Sposato explained that it is the hill. Ms. Summers asked if it contributes to the overall persistent icing. Mr. Sposato noted that he has not received any complaints from people unable to get up the hill, but water is in people's yards. Mr. Tanaka asked about Village Hill and what needs to be done there in relation to this project. Mr. Sposato explained that Village Hill only needs some basins and to be repaved. This project is a greater need.

[Ms. Goodall arrived at 7:32PM.]

Mr. Sposato reviewed CIP-53, Liska Road Bridge/Culverts

Mr. Sposato explained that in his time, it has washed out twice. Currently there are three 5' pipes and they would like to install a box culvert so water will flow better and there will be less damage. Mr. Marshall asked about the priority level in terms of safety. Mr. Sposato explained that if the bridge washes out, it is a safety concern to a point as emergency services would be unable to access the area. When asked how it compares to CIP-22-7, he noted that if the bridge were to be lost, it would be a larger issue. Mr. Cobb asked if there is any state or federal assistance available. Mr. Sposato believes there is. A brief discussion took place including assistance options via FEMA and the Hazard Mitigation Grant. Mr. Marshall asked if anyone is working on plans for this project. Mr. Sposato responded that the town engineer has a set of plans, but they do not have an implementation plan. Ms. Summers asked if there were any instances of emergency services calls when the bridge was compromised. Mr. Cobb noted that about 2 years ago about 6" of water went over the bridge but they did not have any calls there during that time period.

Mr. Sposato reviewed CIP-54, Village Hill Drainage Phase I

Mr. Sposato explained that it has been fully engineered. The project can be done in phases and the \$500K is the cost for the entire project as of last year. Mr. Cobb asked how many phases are pending. Mr. Sposato explained that the remaining phases would not be a CIP project.

Mr. Sposato reviewed CIP-22-8., John Deere Loader

He explained that the old loader is 18 years old, used often, and a vital piece of equipment. Mr. Cobb asked about the average repair costs. Mr. Sposato explained that this year they spent \$35K on it. This included placing the center pins, addressing grease lines and injectors, and doing an entire service. The \$35K is not what is typically spent annually. He recommended sticking to the 20-year schedule.

Mr. Sposato reviewed CIP-22-9, Dump Truck

He explained this would be for a replacement on the 10-year cycle and the old truck would be kept as a spare. Ms. Mailhos confirmed that there are 4 trucks. They wanted them to be scheduled so they would not all need to be replaced at one time. Mr. Sposato explained that they purchased the trucks over the past 3 years – they were not on a 10-year cycle. He confirmed that due to this, they will not be able to be on a 10-year or 5-year cycle. Ms. Mailhos expressed concern about having 3 trucks in FY30 and recommended adding a truck to the plan. It was noted that in year 5, the oldest truck

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will be under 10 years old and the 2020 truck is not on a lease. Ms. Mailhos confirmed that there are not any other big equipment purchases. The service truck, which would be 10-years old in 2028, would not be on the CIP. Ms. Summers confirmed that the truck being requested is the same as the one it is replacing and that the price has nearly doubled.

Ms. Mailhos will request the document regarding the fleet and share it with the Committee.

b. Board of Selectmen

Mr. Tanaka reviewed request CIP-118, TOB Flooring

Mr. Tanaka explained that standards require that the safe not have carpeting. The flooring in the meeting space has been peeling and needs to be addressed but construction will be needed as well to address privacy concerns for FoodShare and an unfunded state mandate regarding registrar storage. He noted that the project could be pushed out to year 2 given the sequence of the other projects, but it does need to be done. He will confirm the \$35K estimate but noted that it does not include the construction. He recommended doing the construction first and believes it will fall under operating costs and not the CIP.

Mr. Tanaka reviewed request CIP-119, TOB/PW Building Security
They would like to move from a key system to an electronic fob system.

A brief discussion took place regarding planning. Ms. Summers commented that the CIP, a 5-year plan, has a focus on year 1 with diminishing returns on the other 4.

A brief discussion took place regarding the senior center and other buildings that may need to be addressed.

[Mr. Cobb left at 8:05PM.]

Mr. Marshall asked about the dog pound. Mr. Tanaka responded that he received a report on Monday. The dog pound failed the Department of Agriculture inspection, and it is estimated that it will cost \$100K to bring it up to standard. He has some questions and noted that the state just changed the requirements. Mr. Tanaka will meet with CRCOG next week. CRCOG is encouraging regionalization of animal control, building officials, and assessors. Mr. Tanaka would like to start with animal control. Two neighboring towns have expressed interest in regionalization as well. He will meet with them after learning more information. Mr. Marshall confirmed that this would provide budgetary savings.

Ms. Summers asked about the dog pound compliance issues. Mr. Tanaka explained that that the run dimensions and standards have changed, concrete walls are needed between the enclosures, and the floor needs to be sealed. There are also a couple of maintenance issues.

5. Overview of Projects Submitted

Mr. Stevens provided an overview of the upcoming BOE requests.

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Mr. Stevens explained that the two numbers for ventilation are placeholders. He provided the layout for both schools and a layout of year 1 for an understanding of projects that are aligned and need to be coordinated.

He explained that if funding is not in place, they cannot apply for grants.

The BOE is requesting a minimum of \$1.5M.

The roof replacement has an estimated project cost of \$850K for the Center School. After reimbursement, it is estimated to be \$306K. The solar panels, if they elect to do them, would need to be done at the same time as the roofing project because it is the solar panels would be grant-eligible. If the solar panels are not done, they would not be able to do them until the roof is replaced again in 20 years. The only other option would be ground-mounted solar panels which are not grant reimbursable via the state. The \$500K for the roof solar panels is an estimate. Research into savings etc. has not yet been done but would be if the funding is secured.

The HMS roof estimate is reasonable and would be \$432K after reimbursement.

At the Center School, both the chimney repair and repointing (\$80K, not eligible for grant reimbursement) need to be in year 1. At the moment, the BOE has funds approved in a non-lapsing fund, but every dollar from that fund will be needed to cover a special education shortfall this budget year of \$300K-\$400K. The BOE is currently under a budget freeze.

In regard to HVAC, the state requires an evaluation to be performed at both buildings. They will need more than is listed because they need to determine the required engineering. For the HVAC grant application, they will need to do a study at both schools and determine the approach. If the grant is awarded, they will receive the reimbursement funds; otherwise, the town will need to pay the full \$75K for each.

Mr. Stevens noted that before considering ventilation, they are at \$3.2M in projects that would be \$1.2M to taxpayers. About \$1M was set aside last year. The priority is roof replacement at both schools, and it needs to be done in coordination with other projects. QA&M is working on a facilities study and will provide an update on pricing.

The Board's reimbursement rate next year is 63.93% for eligible projects but very few projects are eligible. This percentage declines annually. The projects listed are eligible with the exception of the chimney repair. Mr. Stevens explained that to apply for a grant, there needs to be a Town Meeting and all of the approvals need to be done for the full amount even though the town would not be paying the full amount. Without approval, he cannot apply for the grant. Additionally, the town has to have the funds in its coffers for the local share.

Mr. Stevens explained that they have to do the HVAC study and evaluation to determine what is needed and both are necessary to apply for the grant. He provided historical information. Fifty grants were awarded in 2022 and the average project cost was \$2.1M. The majority of the grants were for \$1M+.

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The \$200K listed is a placeholder. He put in larger placeholders: \$1M and \$2M. This is before reimbursement. These could be \$7M and \$14M. They will not know until the study and evaluation are done. The reason they are so high is because they are 100-year-old and 70-year-old buildings. Retrofitting A/C and heat will be very big projects. They are saying there are 1 or 2 more rounds of the grant, but he has to do the HVAC study in order to apply. The Town Meeting has to be held, it has to pass, and the funding to support it are needed for him to apply for the grant.

Mr. Stevens explained that there is legislation on its way that would require a temperature range of 68°-78° in schools. With this, when schools without A/C reach 79° and higher, they could not hold school.

The grand total of \$2.3M of the estimated cost to the town is low and represents if everything were to come out perfect and if the HVAC is not too expensive. If it is beyond the CIP process, the town will have to recommend a bond and in turn, it could miss out on the grant.

If enough money is not put into the CIP budget to cover the amount, they would need to bring to a town meeting.

Ms. Summers asked about the wording of the question and if the gross number needs to be used. Mr. Stevens explained that it does. If the project was \$15M, the question would ask for approval of \$15M for HVAC for Hall Memorial School. The town would receive the 63% reimbursement and need to have the 37% share in its coffers.

Mr. Marshall commented that what concerns him about what is presented is that it is not presenting projects but deficiencies that need correction. A comprehensive solution from an HVAC standpoint may trigger expensive electrical service upgrades, ceiling replacement etc. Multiple ventilation projects are listed as well. He is unsure if the BOE can capitalize on reimbursement when upgrading the electrical in support of HVAC. He believes the costs will be greater. He noted that a year 5 priority should not be in year 5 given its nature. Significant design, planning, and staging of all of what is listed is needed to make it an efficient effort for the town. He noted that he does not see an included project manager to manage the capital improvement projects over a 5-year period. An OPM helps manage the work effectively. The disruption to students' learning with any of the projects will be tremendous. The projects need professional support. They need to look at an OPM agreement. Mr. Stevens responded that they are trying to bundle items because it logically makes sense to do so. They dealt with the roof project at Center School when they had to open the roof to ensure they did not lose their warranty and in turn, the grant funding. OSCGR recommended that the roof, HVAC, and solar be done together. He has had conversations with Ms. Latinsics regarding at what point does it would make more sense to bond. In terms of solar, Mr. Marshall commented that it seems reasonable but added that the payback on such items is often a small number of years. Solar panels have a lifespan of 20 years, but the rest is savings that will be lost with the A/C.

Mr. Stevens noted that a lot of conversations need to take place. The upper wing windows may need to be done before HVAC as they are single pane. He believes a draft QA&M report may be available at the Board's February meeting.

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Ms. Mailhos asked when the minimum \$1.5M will be needed. Mr. Stevens explained that he sees this as a July 1, 2025 project but leading up to it they need to have the funding, grants, and approvals. This is for the roof project at both buildings coordinated with the HVAC engineering. The solar piece would be the final item. The \$1M is for prep work (HVAC evaluation, chimney, potentially the upper wing windows etc.). Ms. Mailhos confirmed that the funds would need to be available in the next fiscal year. A brief discussion took place regarding the timing of the projects. Mr. Stevens noted that the HVAC project would need to be completed by a certain date that is set; although, they may be able to get an extension.

Ms. Caldwell commented that the schools are in awful shape and asked if there is a risk of the state shutting them down. Mr. Steven responded that it is not that they are not safe. It is just about the replacement and constant repairs needed in older buildings. To repair plumbing, walls need to be accessed and they may be concrete.

Mr. Tanaka asked about the \$20K for plumbing and if that is in addition to the \$20K that was just spent. Mr. Stevens responded that it is and could be more.

Mr. Marshall confirmed that escalation has not been factored into what was presented. He added that without a scalable factor, they will always be underfunding, and they will not get on top of it.

Ms. Mailhos noted that they put the \$1M in every year of the plan for last year so another \$1M is not an increase to the budget; although \$1.5M would be. If they bonded, they could control and predict the annual outlay. The town needs to understand everything that needs to be done.

Ms. Summers noted that a bond would be a complete solution. She asked what portion this is of what needs to be done as a whole. Mr. Stevens responded that he does not know but these are the biggest priorities that need to be addressed sooner than later. He believes QA&M will be able to answer that question. If they bond for \$5M, they are actually paying around \$9M over the 20 years and the question is what the taxpayers would rather do.

6. Adjourn

Mr. Tanaka motioned to adjourn at 8:49PM.

Ms. Caldwell seconded the motion.

All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi

Lisa Pascuzzi
Recording Secretary

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[Signature]
TOWN CLERK