

**Town of Ayer**  
**Capital Planning Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes of January 12, 2023**



**Attendance:** Scott Houde (Chair); Rick Skoczylas; James Stephen; Barbara Tierney (Finance Manager); Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager); Kurt Frazkowski (Fin Com)

**Absent:** James Pinard; Christopher Hillman

**Also in Attendance:** Fire Chief Tim Johnston; Police Chief Brian Gill; DPW Director Dan Van Schalkwyk; Jason Mayo, Chair of the Parks Commission; Jeff Thomas, Parks Director

**Call to Order:**

S. Houde called the meeting of the Capital Planning Committee to order at 4:33pm in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Ayer Town Hall.

S. Houde asked for two amendments to the meeting agenda: 1.) to table the approval of the meeting minutes from December 15, 2022; and 2.) to have the Fire Chief Present an update on the Fire Ladder Truck after the Parks presentation.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by R. Pontbriand and seconded by J. Stephen to amend the agenda to table the approval of the meeting minutes from December 15, 2022; and to have the Fire Chief Present an update on the Fire Ladder Truck after the Parks presentation. **Motion Passed 5-0.**

**Parks Department FY 2024 Capital Funding Request for Kiddie Junction Playground Project at Pirone Park:**

Jeff Thomas, Parks Director provided a brief overview since the last meeting. We would like to get this project all done this upcoming year. We have \$552,034 remaining in funding of the \$800,000 originally secured. Since the last meeting we met with our consultant Beta to review and refine the numbers which we have done as well as identify some items that the Town can do. The two major components of this project that are also most of the costs are the pour and play surface which is \$292,800 and the playground equipment which is \$635,7500.

Jason Mayo, Parks Commission Chair stated that we also have some ad alts for the project based on public input we received from some of the forums we have conducted.

J. Thomas stated that in terms of funding we need an additional \$966,625 to complete the project. He also stated that ARPA (American Recovery Funds) is available subject to authorization of the Select Board. There is currently at 16 week wait upon ordering the playground equipment. ARPA funds would enable us to order now rather than wait until Town Meeting in April.

S. Houde stated that he would prefer not to use ARPA funds for this purpose as they are one-time funds, and the Select Board has been focusing on public infrastructure uses. He further stated that Community Preservation (CPC) should be approached for additional funding, perhaps up to \$500,000. The Town also has two major capital projects this year the West Main Street Bridge and

the Fire Ladder Truck both of which will require debt exclusions. If the playground project is the third debt exclusion this is problematic, and the likelihood of success is low.

R. Skoczylas stated that we need to get this project done this year.

R. Pontbriand concurred with S. Houde that in terms of funding options, CPC should be approached for \$500,000; Capital Planning could consider an amount if it is below the debt exclusion threshold of \$350,000.

S. Houde stated that rather than use ARPA funds perhaps a small amount of UDAG funds could be considered by the Select Board as these funds can be replenished by a future Town Meeting.

Jason Mayo stated that we will be applying to CPC.

S. Houde stated they should proceed with the CPC funding process and that they are scheduled to meet with the Select Board next week with a project update at which time we can further discuss the funding scenarios.

#### **Review/Discussion/Votes of the FY 2024 Capital Requests and Capital Plans:**

As amended by the Committee, Fire Chief Tim Johnston appeared before the Committee.

Chief Johnston advised that the original cost submission of the Fire Ladder Truck replacement has unfortunately increased from the original price submission of \$1,434,156 million to \$1,581,951 per notification from the manufacturer, Greenwood International.

Chief Johnston further advised that the revised cost of \$1,581,951 does not include a contingency or which the manufacturer has recommended a 7% contingency which would be approximately \$110,000 which would bring the new updated total cost to \$1,629,687.

Chief Johnston presented the new specs on the updated Fire Ladder Truck which includes a 100-foot ladder and a slightly larger vehicle model. It is not just the height of the 100-foot ladder which is of importance but its horizontal reach in certain fire and emergency situations.

R. Pontbriand stated that given the current purchasing climate with supply chain issues, inflation, etc., the 7% contingency makes sense.

J. Stephen concurred on the contingency and stated that it is important that we mention the importance of the horizontal reach of the 100-foot ladder and not just the height.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by S. Houde and seconded by R. Skoczylas to recommend the revised cost of the Fire Ladder Truck of \$1,629,687 for a debt exclusion to the Select Board. **Motion passed 6-0.**

R. Pontbriand asked the Chair to briefly recognize the DPW Director, Dan Van Schalkwyk to provide a brief update on a cost change for the West Main Street Bridge Replacement.

D. Van Schalkwyk stated that he is just the messenger, but he has been informed that the cost for the replacement of the West Main Street Bridge which was originally \$2.5 million is going to be

closer to \$3.5 million. He will be prepared to provide the Committee with a detailed presentation at their next meeting.

S. Houde stated that since we have a hard stop this evening at 5:30pm we are running out of time.

R. Pontbriand suggested that for the next meeting the Committee consider taking some votes on recommendations on the smaller FY 2024 Capital Requests especially with respect to water and sewer for the purposes of getting that potential information for the development of the proposed water and sewer rate recommendations of the Rate Review Committee.

S. Houde stated that for the next meeting we will start with voting on items under \$100,000 and group the water and sewer items together that fit this threshold. We will then have an update on the West Main Street Bridge and then if time permits start reviewing the larger DPW items.

**Scheduling of Next Meeting:**

The Committee concurred and decided to have its next meeting on Thursday, January 19, 2023 at 5pm.

**Adjournment:**

**MOTION:** A motion was made by R. Skoczylas and seconded by J. Stephen to adjourn the meeting at 5:24pm. **Motion passed 6-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:24pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by R. Pontbriand, Town Manager

Minutes reviewed and approved by the Capital Planning Committee on January 19, 2023.

Signed:  1/19/2023  
Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager