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Town of Ayer

Capital Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes for December 1, 2021

**Attendance:** Scott Houde (Chair/Select Board Representative); Pat Diamond (Fin Com Chair); Rick Skoczylas; Robert Pontbriand (Town Manager); Lisa Gabree (Finance Manager)

**Absent:** Jim Pinard; James Stephen

**Also in Attendance:** Carly Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager; Susan Copeland, Town Clerk; Alan Manoian, Director of Community & Economic Development; Alicia Hersey, Program Manager; Chuck Shultz, Facilities Director; Cindy Knox, I.T. Director; Katie Petrossi, COA/Senior Center Director.

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm on the Town's Zoom Meeting Platform.

S. Houde read the following into the record: *Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, Governor Baker issued an Emergency Order Temporarily Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. Public bodies otherwise governed by the OML are temporarily relieved from the requirement that meetings be held in public places, open and physically accessible to the public, so long as measures are taken to ensure public access to the bodies' deliberations "through adequate, alternative means." This meeting will be broadcast live on Channel 8, and on Zoom. The public may participate remotely by following the call-in information on the bottom of the live broadcast screen.) For the Zoom meeting information relating to remote participation, please contact Cindy Knox, IT Director at [cknox@ayer.ma.us](mailto:cknox@ayer.ma.us) or 978-772-8252 prior to the meeting.*

**Review/Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes from November 17, 2021:**

The Committee reviewed the meeting minutes from the November 10, 2021, meeting.

L. Gabree pointed out a small error on page 2 where it should read "our" instead of "are".

**Motion:** A motion was made by R. Skoczylas and seconded by P. Diamond to approve the meeting minutes from December 8, 2020. **Roll Call Vote:** S. Houde, Y; P. Diamond, Y; R. Skoczylas, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y; L. Gabree, Y. **Motion Passed 5-0.**

**Review and Discussion of the FY 2023 Capital Planning Requests for the Following Departments:**

- Council on Aging/Senior Center
- Economic Development (Depot Square Project)
- Facilities Department
- Information Technology (I.T.)
- Town Clerk

S. Houde asked if the Committee had any objections to taking the presentations in the following order: Town Clerk; Economic Development (Depot Square Project); Council on Aging/Senior Center; Facilities Department; and I.T.?

The Committee had no objection to proceeding in this manner.

Town Clerk's Office: FY 2023 Capital Requests:

Susan Copeland presented the two FY 2023 Capital Requests for the Town Clerk's Office. The first request is in the amount of \$10,150 for Poll Pads. She provided an overview of the request and explained that this technology will streamline the checking-in process and would be useful for early voting. It would be an investment in the modernization of our elections.

P. Diamond stated that it is a good idea and that he supports this request.

S. Copeland presented her second request which is for \$10,000 for improvements to the Town Clerk's vault. She stated that she does not have an accurate figure for the request but wanted the Committee to be aware that there is a need for climate control improvements to the Town Clerk's vault which stores all the Town's important and permanent records. There have been some past issues involving humidity and temperature.

S. Houde asked if she was looking to hire a consultant for FY 2023?

S. Copeland stated that she would love to and that is the first step to come up with the solution.

P. Diamond asked what she would like the Committee to do?

S. Copeland asked when the final deadline would be for her to obtain an accurate figure?

S. Houde advised by late December or early January at the latest.

L. Gabree stated that this is not the first time that issues/concerns about the vault have come up.

S. Copeland stated that she will work with the Facilities Director to produce an accurate figure and defined request by the deadline of late December/early January.

Economic Development (Depot Square Project):

R. Pontbriand introduced Carly Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager; Alan Manoian, Director of Community and Economic Development; and Alicia Hersey, Program Manager who have worked on this request and will make a brief presentation.

C. Antonellis made a brief presentation requesting \$65,000 for the final phase of the Depot Square Project which will consist of the commuter waiting shelter; benches and trash receptacles; and the final landscaping.

S. Houde asked what the timeline for completion would be?

C. Antonellis advised that the goal is for everything to be completed by September 2022 and to have a ribbon cutting ceremony at that time.

L. Gabree advised that if this were a borrow article, the commuter waiting structure could be ordered upon approval of the borrow article by Town Meeting.

Council on Aging/Senior Center:

Katie Petrossi, COA/Senior Center Director stated that the Senior Center has successfully re-opened to in-person programs after 18 months due to COVID. One of the major programs of the Senior Center is the meal program which is very important to our Seniors. K. Petrossi presented the FY 2023 Capital Request in the amount of \$56,950 to upgrade the Senior Center Kitchen.

R. Skoczylas asked if the facility had a fire suppression system?

C. Shultz (Facilities Director) stated that there is no requirement for a fire suppression system of which we are aware.

L. Gabree stated that she understands the need for the kitchen upgrade, but she is concerned about the amount of money we would be putting into a building that we do not own.

S. Houde asked what the term of the lease for the Senior Center was with the Housing Authority?

R. Pontbriand advised that the lease has been both an at-will lease as well as a definitive term lease in the past. The current lease has expired and is on an at-will lease. However, that can be codified into a specific lease term.

K. Petrossi stated that this is a fair concern to have. This is a critical part of the Senior Center's program, and we are trying to build the program and the support for not only our Seniors but a future Senior Center. She would love to see a quality meal program and would be willing to work out with the Housing Authority the appropriate agreement so that the appliances can be taken to the new facility in the future.

S. Houde stated that he agreed with the approach of having a definitive lease term as well as a provision to ensure that the appliances will be transferred by the Town to the new facility in the future. If we take this approach and say the current facility is used for another three years than the cost of the request is approximately \$19,000 a year for the next three years.

R. Pontbriand stated that he would work with K. Petrossi and the Housing Authority regarding the lease term and the provision for the kitchen improvements.

P. Diamond agreed with S. Houde that for an investment of \$56,950 over the next three years the return on that investment makes it viable. This is a good idea.

R. Skoczylas stated that he is in support of the project. He is concerned about parking at the current Senior Center, and something needs to be done about that.

Facilities Department:

Chuck Shultz, Facilities Director presented the two FY 2023 Capital Requests for the Facilities Department and made a brief presentation.

The first request is for \$65,000 for a telecommunications upgrade for the Library, Senior Center, DPW Administration Building, and Parks Building. This project will put the entire Town on the same phone system. Additionally, the project will upgrade the telecommunications infrastructure in the library which is needed.

S. Houde stated that this is a very straightforward project, and he supports it.

P. Diamond stated that he is in support of the project.

R. Skoczylas stated that he is in support of the project.

The second request is for \$30,000 for the Phase I repairs of the Town Hall roof and gutters. This project will address some of the major concerns in the Town Hall roof and with the copper gutters. Additionally, this Phase I approach will enable the Town to get a further understanding of any additional repairs that may be needed. It has been 21 years since the Town Hall roof was done and we recently had the gutters cleaned but there are some issues that need to be addressed between the gutters and the roof.

P. Diamond stated that the copper from the gutters could be sold due to the high value of copper and an alternative material could be used. This could pay for the project. He further stated that he supports this project.

R. Skoczylas stated that he supports this project.

#### Information Technology (I.T.):

Cindy Knox, I.T. Director presented the I.T. Department's FY 2023 Capital Request in the amount of \$13,000 to replace the Town Hall copier. This machine is 7 years old and in need of replacement. It is the main copier, scanner, and fax machine for Town Hall and gets a lot of use. It has printed over a million copies since 2014. She provided an analysis which demonstrated that it would cost \$12,470 to purchase versus \$14,240 to lease.

S. Houde asked if you can upgrade during the lease period?

C. Knox stated that she did not know but will find out.

#### New Business:

There was no new business.

#### Next Meeting: December 8, 2021, at 4pm on Zoom

#### Adjournment:

**Motion:** A motion was made by P. Diamond and seconded by R. Skoczylas to adjourn the meeting at 5pm. **Roll Call Vote:** S. Houde, Y; P. Diamond, Y; R. Skoczylas, Y; R. Pontbriand, Y; L. Gabree, Y. **Motion Passed 5-0.**

The Capital Planning Committee adjourned at 4:57pm.

Meeting Minutes recorded and submitted by R. Pontbriand, Town Manager.

Meeting Minutes reviewed and approved by the Capital Planning Committee on December 8, 2021.

Signed: Robert A. Pontbriand 12/9/2021

Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager