

Brookline Fiscal Advisory Committee
Financial Policies and Principles Subcommittee
Minutes
April 1, 2019
5:00-7:00 PM
Town Hall, Room 103

In attendance: Subcommittee members Cliff Brown, Nancy Daly, Peter Bleyleben, Carol Levin, and Mike Toffel. Also in attendance: Ben Franco (Select Board), Michael Sandman (Advisory Committee), Mark Gray(TMM Precinct 7), Linda Olson Pehlke (TMM Precinct 2), Paul Saner (BFAC), Richard Nagle(TMM Precinct 15), Erin Chute Gallentine (Parks & Open Space Director) Mary Ellen Dunn (School Department), Helen Charlupski and David Pollack (School Committee)

Approved minutes of 3/4/19 meeting by a vote of 4-0-0.

Next Meeting: 4/22/19, 5:00 to 7:00.

The purpose of this meeting is to learn about the School and Park departments' policies, procedures and approaches to capital budgeting.

Erin Chute Gallentine, Parks & Open Space Director: The Parks & Open Space Division is part of the Department of Public Works. It works with four commissions and committees: The Parks & Recreation Commission, the Tree Planting Committee, the Conservation Commission and the Trustees of Walnut Hills Cemetery

Parks: Inventories all open spaces, features and work done. The 2006 Master Plan did a full assessment of all spaces. The Capital Asset Conditions Assessment: Staff is annually reviewing space with a priority on noting the safety and compliance with Disability Act. Manufacturers give estimated life span for equipment. Playground equipment has a 20-year life cycle. These estimates lead to a preliminary capital plan, typically based on replacement of what is already in place. Based on the size of the space (square feet or linear feet) the division uses a database of most recent bids to make a capital budget. Typically line item bids are done for all components of the work. From line item bids an estimate is created for each park, current prices are inflated by 2.5% per year, and 10% is added for design and engineering. Project management & design – sometimes in-house, some out of house depending on work and level of specialization. The division does its own construction oversight. 85% of what is done is designed in-house. The division has 2.5 FTE In-house landscape architects

Maintenance is a mix of in-house and out sourced work. The regularly scheduled maintenance of school grounds is outsourced (in Parks' operating budget.) As a result, the Division was able to reduce staff resulting in a long-term savings. Hourly contractual workers are also utilized. There is one contractual crew of foresters. The Division's experience with contractors is mixed

for both general landscaping and snow removal. If it relies solely on contractual services, there is some loss of control and incentive. All design work is done with consideration for long term maintenance costs and sustainability.

Every 2 years the playgrounds are inspected by an outside safety consultant to make sure everything is okay. This helps generate a list of necessary repairs and replacement parts. Items uncovered as part of these assessments are used in developing prioritizations. Capital plans are developed for a 6-year horizon, but annual site visits with the commissioners helps to set priorities and plans for later years. The Division also holds annual meetings with the public to get feedback on priorities. It also meets with the Planning Board to obtain its input. Finally, the Parks & Recreation Commission votes annually on the capital plan. There is some annual movement of project timing. For example, the Kraft Family turf field was 5 years beyond its warranty, and in a condition that required replacement. The work on the Harry Downes Playground was moved-up so both projects could proceed simultaneously, thereby minimizing disruption to the neighborhood.

Projects typically are moved around in the CIP because of the financial needs of the Town. The Deputy Town Administrator will move things around when looking at all the capital needs of the Town. The size of individual line items in the Division's CIP changes year to year based on the capital plan. The line items for fields, fence and playground capital items are fairly consistent.

The Division is working on a scorecard for the Parks to address and quantify their conditions. It is a bit ahead of the industry, in that standards are not yet developed. The Division is working with San Francisco and NYC Parks and Recreation on measurement tools.

Mike Toffel encouraged giving grades similar to a restaurant scorecard. Erin is working on this project as an internal tool. Mike suggested this would also be useful for the public.

The question was asked if the work funded in the CIP are truly Capital Items or should be categorized as Maintenance. Erin feels they are true capital items. Some committee members felt differently with respect to some of the work.

Once a project is approved there is a design review committee/process: 4 members of the committee and members of the public. The design committee works with a project budget. A base project (what is needed) is identified, then a list of priorities (a wish list) is developed. If the bids come in lower than the budget, then the design committee goes back to the commission and adds components from the priorities list. To develop project budgets, the department uses a detailed line item internal database of the cost of all previous projects. Costs in the database are inflated by 2.5% annually and then adjusted as necessary based on the most recent actual costs. Question whether 2.5% is enough.

Question: How much of the wish list is achieved every year? – Always has wish list a few years out so there is time for projects to move forward into the capital planning process. The Larz Anderson project has been on the wish list for a long time. The park has many structural elements that are literally crumbling. A study is underway of the structural elements of the park to determine what can be restored versus replaced.

Peter: Is it possible to have a “Friends of Lars Anderson” to fund these items? Parks and Open Space does a lot of work with Friends Groups, grants, etc. and leverages them to work with other dollars. Erin is currently strategizing on ways to get public interest and fund raising for Larz Anderson. She is thinking of ways to tie in the private schools and their families.

The current placeholder for Larz \$15 million and does not include the rink or any special items.

Mike? Is there an annual “depreciation” of these assets? - Paul Saner, no.

Parks & Open Space has a master plan that looks at national standards and current needs, and the plan shows a deficit in Parks & Open Space available to the Town. The plan is currently being updated on athletic fields. The fields are over programmed and permitted, which endangers the fields’ ability to be sustained. The balance of the plan will be updated when a fulltime recreation director is hired.

For Reservoir and Skyline Parks: There was a master planning process to look at the highest and best use for the community. It was not predetermined these spaces would be used as parks. Through the master planning process the public determined what was most important. In the development of Skyline, the Town was able to leverage the work being done to cap the landfill to accommodate recreation needs. They were able to Leverage Town funds with money received from Brookline Soccer to pay for the turf field,

For Reservoir Park, Erin worked hard with the Commonwealth to establish a low value for the property. She worked with the state to make sure the land would be classified as conservation land. This resulted in the purchase of 10 acres for \$800,000. The Town received \$3.5 million from the sale of the Town’s underground reservoir, and some other funds put together from grants were used to develop the park. All projects are valued engineered to get the biggest bang for the buck. Parks needed to go back to Town Meeting to get more funds for Reservoir park.

Discuss trade-offs in budgets, or special asks lead to private fund raising.

Some state funding and grants come with restrictions on what the funds can be spent on or require a state representative on the building committee.

Paul: Erin works with Kara Brewton & Economic Development to look for ways to leverage development and get public benefits. In the upcoming Waldo Durgin Development, the private

developer is making improvements to public space: landscaping in front of the Coolidge Corner library and converting parking on John Street into a small park.

Carol: Are these budget policies and procedures written? Erin: Not really.

Schools: Helen Charlupski & David Pollack

A huge part of Capital planning is done in concert with Charlie Simmons from Town's Building Department. Most of regular the CIP is work is not distinguished between schools and CIP. Charlie Simmons in conjunction with Matt Gillis School's Director of Operations.

Mary Ellen: The Schools benefit from a wide variety of capital projects from a wide variety of departments. The schools have a vested interest in the Parks & Open Space capital process, since some of the playgrounds are "owned" by Parks. The Building Department does the maintenance of the interior and the Building envelope, DPW does roadways and walks. Fire runs the Alarm systems etc.

Mary Ellen likes logic and structure, so this is the first year the School's have a consolidated CIP showing what all of the different departments have as CIP projects that benefit the schools. This encourages the Schools to support other departments' CIP budgets and also brings transparency. This also helps clarify what projects get pushed-off because of school building projects. Matt Gillis is working on a building inventory and assessment: What capacity is versus what is needed. He is also embarking on a safety assessment of all buildings. This has been done to date for BHS and Pierce. It is a school centric report. It also allows them to track whether the work they say is getting done is actually being completed. This year School's will be contributing a funding stream to the CIP through the facility rental fees. Rental rates reviewed by school committee last year. Expecting \$100 - \$200 k per year to move into the CIP, which will get at deferred maintenance in school buildings. Balance of rental fees used to offset expenses associated with that revenue stream.

Roughly \$1,000,000 in leases annually for BEEP and Administrative space, Baker modular spaces: These leases go into the CIP. This has been happening since 2014.

The Public Schools have been learning from Parks & Open Spaces budgeting procedures Are the policies & procedures written? Practices and procedures are not yet codified.

Different departments have different styles and details. Erin started in January 2019 the budget process for FY 2021. Other departments are not as forward thinking.

Hopefully will be able to better plan and show SC what is coming up. PSB needs to better plan for meeting the needs of disabled students as they move through the system: so for example it can plan for wheelchair accessibility. Knowing specific requirements for a particular student will allow multiple year notice to Charlie to plan for a project.

Michael Sandman: School Buildings require major renovations every 50 years, or, with 10 schools, one every five years and this needs to get plugged into the CIP and recognized.

Helen: CIP for school buildings moves around, such as the Pierce School

The School's Capital subcommittee is trying to bring forward streams of previously absent capital planning: Playgrounds which belong to schools versus those belonging to the Town: (Parks does not handle the renovations for school playgrounds that are not on Town land). Essentially doing new playgrounds when renovate the schools. Backlog of playground work (New Lincoln). Second category: within buildings programmatic needs. Have been inventorying spaces. Previously in the CIP there was a line-item for capacity to address these issues, but now it is primarily being used for the school leases. The Schools do not have a needs assessment/space plan to feed into a long-range master plan.

The Schools' are invited back to the 4/22 meeting to discuss larger capital projects. Tony Guggli should will be included.

Nancy Daly: has some comments regarding Sergio's comments at the last meeting that she would like to get into the minutes to counter his comments. Due to a lack of time, this is being held until the beginning of the next meeting.

Mike T: getting lots of information, data – question if we are getting the right information.

Carol: Parks has good procedures, not documented, but acting as a standard.

Peter. Need relatively soon, 1/2 hour to form some hypothesis, if not the next meeting, then sometime soon after.