

Capital Improvements Subcommittee Minutes
Tuesday, August 3, 2021
4:00 PM-6:10 PM
Remote via Zoom

Capital Improvements Subcommittee Members present: Helen Charlupski (Chair), Valerie Frias, Andreas Liu, and Mariah Nobrega.

Other School Committee Members present: Susan Wolf Ditkoff.

School Staff present: Linus Guillory, Matt Gillis and Robin Coyne.

Others present: Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff, Advisory Committee members Carla Benka and Carol Levin; Select Board's Climate Action Committee Co-Chair and Climate Action Brookline member Werner Lohe; Jim Rogers and Jen Carlson (Leftfield, LLC); and Lynda Callahan (Gilbane Building Company).

1) Approval of Minutes

On a motion of Ms. Nobrega and seconded by Dr. Liu, the Capital Improvements Subcommittee voted unanimously (by roll call) to approve the July 13, 2021 minutes.

2) Request Use of American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funds

The Subcommittee discussed requesting ARP Funds for the Schools. Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff reported that a number of Town departments have submitted requests. A process will be established to solicit requests that meet the specific use requirements. Ms. Goff suggested that a School representative(s) attend tonight's Select Board discussion of ARP Funds. School Committee members commented that revenues are generally split between the Town and Schools based on a formula, and suggested that Town-School Partnership would be an appropriate venue to discuss how funds will be split between the Town and Schools. It was noted that School Committee and Advisory Committee members have requested that a Town-School Partnership meeting be scheduled.

a) New Driscoll Geothermal System

The Subcommittee discussed possible use of ARP funds for a new Driscoll Geothermal System. The system was in the original plans but was value engineered out when project bids exceeded estimates. The project has already been vetted by the community. Jim Rogers (Leftfield, LLC), Director of Operations Matt Gillis, and Select Board's Climate Action Committee Co-Chair and Climate Action Brookline member Werner Lohe discussed the potential benefits of this project in terms of reducing carbon emissions and energy consumption.

Mr. Rogers and Lynda Callahan (Gilbane Building Company) explained the scope and cost of the Geothermal project. The current estimate is \$3,898,500 for hard costs, \$80,000 for soft costs, and \$397,850 for contingency, for a total of \$4,376,350. Subcommittee members expressed surprise that the estimated cost increased that much. It was noted that this project would represent a significant percentage of available ARP Funds (total approximately \$32 million), and that it would be helpful to know what other requests for funding have been submitted. Mr. Rogers explained that this is a conservative estimate, and would likely go down as more information comes in and/or if federal grants become available.

Mr. Rogers explained that the current cost estimates assume that a decision will be made by August 12, 2021. Making a decision after this date could result in cost increases and project delays. Whether or not the project include Geothermal Wells impacts the size of the generator. The generator needs to be ordered soon because it must be installed before the structural steel work. It was noted that the larger size generator could work under either scenario. Ordering the larger generator would provide more time to make a decision, but the cost difference is approximately \$100,000.

Members asked that Leftfield, LLC and Gilbane do the following: confirm the DiRenzo estimate for site work, reconsider generator placement, try to get subcontractor estimates, look at the return on investment, and provide additional information on the carbon benefits. Ms. Nobrega and Ms. Benka will work with the Select Board to try to schedule a meeting of the Town-School Partnership. The Subcommittee will continue this discussion at the next meeting on August 17, 2021.

b) Electric Buses

The Subcommittee discussed possible use of ARP funds for electric buses. Mr. Gillis reviewed the cost to switch to electric buses, which would reduce carbon emissions. In 2019, the purchase price for an electric bus was approximately \$365,000 (compared to \$90,000 for a traditional diesel bus). The district currently pays approximately \$90,000 per year for bus service. It was noted that the Recreation Department and Council on Aging could also have access to the electric buses, if purchased. The Subcommittee discussed battery charges and battery life. The Subcommittee will continue this discussion at the next meeting on August 17, 2021.

c) Air Conditioning

Members asked that Mr. Simmons gather and review school temperature data from some of the recent hot days.

3) Overview of Capital Improvements Program (CIP) FY 2020-FY 2023, including CIP FY 2021 - Final Report; CIP FY 2022 - Budget; and CIP FY 2023

Director of Public Buildings Charlie Simmons provided an update on recent building projects - included work on the larger projects (Brookline High School and Driscoll) and ventilation improvements. Mr. Simmons noted that the ventilation improvements increased energy consumption. Mr. Gillis and Subcommittee members requested that the ventilation improvements be continued during the next School Year, and that the MERV 13 filters be regularly replaced. Mr. Simmons provided an update on solar panels. He reported that the Town FY 2023 CIP development process hasn't yet started.

4) Long-term Capital Plan

Members requested that the Building Inventory/Maintenance Backlog Binder be updated as soon as possible. Members requested a spreadsheet showing needed repairs (priority groupings). The district may want to request ARP funds for some of these items. In addition, Ms. Charlupski and staff will develop a master plan proposal.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 PM.