

ATM 9 – Capital

draft minutes from 2/24/16 A&F meeting

Capital requests for FY2017 totaled \$37.1 million. The Capital Improvements Committee (CIC) met in early January and ranked the projects. The Town Manager is recommending projects totaling \$19.7 million which are shown in the Town Manager Recommended column on the spreadsheet. Recommended funding is as follows:

Free Cash	\$ 3,408,158.34
Other Available Funds	\$ 389,432.66
Borrowing	
General Fund	\$ 7,690,000
Sewer	\$ 6,000,000
Water	\$ 820,000
Sewer Retained Earnings	\$ 750,000
Water Retained Earnings	\$ 650,000
	<hr/>
	\$19,707,591

Questions:

There were questions and comments about the following items:

- A37 – Police Dept – Locker Replacement - \$175,755
Seems expensive. They did receive a quote. This is for all of the lockers for officers to store their personal items in while they are on duty. Each officer is assigned a locker so there are a lot of them to be replaced.
- A17 – School/PCIS – Digitize Blake Planetarium - \$230,320
The planetarium equipment has not been updated since the building was built in 1972 and it needs updating/modernizing. Are there grants available?
- B1 – DPW Admin – Water Street Promenade South Phase- \$3,900,000
This is one phase of how many? There was an appropriation for design a couple of years ago and then the work was broken into two phases.
- A23 – DPW Maintenance – Replace ADA Ramp at Manomet Youth Center - \$70,180
There was question about whether or not it was recommended. Yes, it is on the list as being recommended.
- A24 – DPW Maintenance – 1749 Courthouse - Repairs per Facilities Assessment Report - \$118,000
What does this involve? It is in the full report that the consultant developed. It is available online and the report shows all of the recommended projects in detail for each town owned building.

Kevin Canty made a motion to strike Item A17 – School/PCIS – Digitize Blake Planetarium from the list. Harry Helm, second.

There was discussion and questions about how to proceed. Can the Committee strike it? Would the full Town Manager's recommended list still go to Town Meeting? By Bylaw, the full recommended list will still go to Town Meeting. Striking one item that is \$230,000 really does not affect the bottom line enough to be reflected in the tax rate.

Ethan Kusmin made a motion to postpone making a recommendation on Article 9 until Wednesday, March 2, 2016. Kevin Canty, second.

There was additional discussion about gathering the questions and seeking answers. That it might be better to make a decision tonight.

The motion carries (8-5-1). Patrick O'Brien, Harry Helm, Marcus McGraw, Shelagh Joyce, and Robert Cote, opposed. Harry Salerno, abstained.

draft minutes from 3/2/16 A&F meeting

At last week's meeting there were questions about ATM Article 9. Many questions centered on the planetarium item, but there were other questions as well.

Dr. Gary Maestas, Superintendent of Schools, said that the planetarium was along with and within PCIS in 1972. He introduced Allison Reardon, Science K-12 Coordinator and Manager of the Blake Planetarium. She

then spoke about the Article 9 request for \$230,320 to digitize the planetarium. The planetarium has not received updates since 1972 and it utilizes the original star ball for projecting onto the planetarium ceiling. This allows a view from Earth to the sky and can be moved to show 6-8 constellations. Science and technology have come so far since the 1970s. Digital systems allow not only a view from Earth to space, but from the moon to space, or the International Space Station to Earth, or even appear to be traveling through space. There are various programs available. These updates are very necessary. The digital system puts a projector in the middle of the planetarium with a fish eye lens similar to an IMAX theater. It is a plug and play system which is easy to use. Teachers can be trained to use it so there does not have to be planetarium staff covering each event as there has been in the past. This model of training the teachers to use equipment is currently being done successfully at the Performing Arts Center at Plymouth North High School. A new digital system able to teach so many different topics would be a huge asset to the students of Plymouth. We could also bring in revenue with field trips from other towns, family shows in the evenings, and even marketing events to tourists. Our planetarium has 60 seats and planetariums typically charge \$10-\$12 per visitor. It could create a significant revenue stream.

Questions:

- How much is the planetarium currently utilized? (S Stephenson) 95-98% of Plymouth students, grades K-8, visit the planetarium each year. There are some outside groups like homeschool associations that come and pay \$100 per show. We would see a lot more usage if the equipment were updated.
- What is the cost moving forward? (C Merrill) Our current service contract is \$6,000 per year. It will be \$8,000 per year with the new equipment. The system will come with 2 lamps after that replacement lamps are approximately \$800 each. There is no additional upkeep other than general maintenance.
- How much does the part time planetarium director getting paid and are you able to retain them since it is only part time? (S Joyce) It was a 20 hour a week position and paid about \$30,000 per year plus healthcare. Years ago the director stayed for 15-20 years. Recently they have not stayed as long. The current director is a certified physics teacher that is working on his masters so the part time work schedule works well for him.
- What is the feasibility of moving this equipment to another school? (S Joyce) The projector is movable but you would need a planetarium ceiling for it to work.
- At the rate of \$100 per show it would take a long time to receive a return on the investment. (S Joyce) \$100 is what we currently charge the outside groups. For evening programs, we could charge what we wanted. If we did \$10-\$12 per person we could bring in \$600-\$800 per show and if we do that 5-10 nights a month, that is a significant amount of money. We would not charge other school groups as much as that so we would have a different day rate versus night rate.
- You mentioned that there are various programs available to use with the projector. How would this help the Plymouth Public Schools curriculum? (M McGraw) The grade 3 curriculum focuses on the solar system so all students could come for the 1 hour program on the solar system. Not only can the system be used for astronomy but there are also applications where it can be used to teach anatomy and physiology, geography, social studies, biology, earth science, oceanography, so many options.
- When this is up and running would you hire additional part time help? (H Helm) No, our teachers that are interested would be trained and we would find people willing to work night events.
- Have you tried to secure grants for this project? (K Canty) We tried and have been turned away. We are asking for an amount that is too large for some grants and too small for other grants. It is in the middle. Once we get it up and running with the original capital investment, we can seek grants to add program and applications to supplement our curriculum.
- As far as the increased revenue potential, would that revenue go to the schools? (H Salerno) Dr. Maestas answered that revenue generated would go into a designated fund for the maintenance and repair of the planetarium, just like the current fund for the performing arts center is used. Ms. Reardon added that the fund could also pay licensing fees for the additional programs and applications.
- This does not address the long term regarding new applications or new technology if the digital system is

obsolete soon? (H Salerno) While the projection unit gives them clarity of images, the whole planetarium experience is a remarkable teaching tool.

- What is the resolution of the new projector? (K Canty) Looking at quotes in the mid to upper end, the resolution is 2560 x 2560 with 30,000 hours of life.
- Thinking about expanding opportunities for school children, could students create a show to use on this projector? (J Moody) Yes, and it would take 30 minutes to reformat for the projector to show it on the ceiling. The possibilities are endless.
- How many schools in Massachusetts have planetariums? (C Merrill) Not sure. There is 1 that is not used in Carver. We have children that come on field trips from as far away as Quincy.
- Could local universities utilize this planetarium? (C Merrill) Yes, we could pitch it to anyone.
- Do you do outreach with the Museum of Science? (S Joyce) 5 years ago we did. With the new system, if you create a program you can also rent it out so we will open dialog with them again.
- Will the equipment be purchased at list price? (S Joyce) It will go out to bid.
- Can you fundraise? We currently fundraise \$40,000 for the robotics program. The planetarium would not be as big a draw for fundraising.
- Will you gain space with the new projector? (P McPherson) The new system is smaller. Once the old equipment is removed we may be able to add a few more chairs. The only other thing we would need to make the switch is add new wiring for sound.
- Could the planetarium be used for event space like weddings? (P McPherson) We may be able to add some opportunities for rental for events.

Questions regarding other school items on the Article 9 list:

Are the other items part of the school building capital maintenance plan? (S Joyce) Yes, they are all part of that plan and they are phased.

Marcus McGraw made a motion to remove A17 – Planetarium from the list of recommended projects. Kevin Canty, second.

Discussion/Comments:

- Ethan Kusmin said as Advisory & Finance's Representative to the Capital Improvements Committee, that committee spent 10 hours hearing presentations and ranking the projects then the Town Manager spent time on the list and making funding decisions. It is unusual to remove items from the list and may open a can of worms.
- John Moody said that it is unusual but Advisory & Finance should scrutinize these items. While CIC ranks them and the Town Manager chooses which to fund, we make recommendations to fund to Town Meeting. We may look at coming up with a new process in the future.
- I love planetariums but debate whether we should fund this this year with all that is going on. (H Salerno)
- Analogy that no one wants big video tapes to watch in their car anymore. Planetarium needs updating. Fully support this project, it is important for the children, it offers huge revenue potential, can offer help seeking grant opportunities. (B Cavacco)
- I remember my trips to planetarium as a child, it is a fantastic resource and it is time to upgrade. (P O'Brien)
- It is a good project but with adding Full Day Kindergarten this year too and the school not willing to cut anything from its budget, the planetarium is supplemental, we are not taking away we are choosing not to add. (K Canty)
- I saw Mr. Blake work his magic in the planetarium as a child and will always remember it. When we talk return on investment, it is not all about the money. Look at what it does for the community. After hearing about the capabilities and possibilities I support the investment. (M Sirrico)
- I support removing this item from the list. Right now with Entergy's announcement and the sewer failure, we have a responsibility to the taxpayers. (H Helm)
- In speaking with students, parents and teachers, they do not think the timing is right for this project. It is a

nice to have but not a need to have. (M McGraw)

- We are far behind with STEM curriculum and opportunities. At first I thought this was a lot of money. The role of education is to inspire children. This is a great investment in their future. (S Stephenson)
- Also, it provides more value than revenue. We are facing the worst heroin epidemic, if this can inspire one child and keep him/her engaged, it is worth the investment. (P O'Brien)

Motion to remove item A17 from the list of recommended projects fails (4-8-1). Harry Helm, Kevin Canty, Marcus McGraw, Shelagh Joyce, in favor. Harry Salerno, abstained.

Dr. Maestas said that he knows Advisory & Finance has had two tough nights discussing the budget. He thanked them for their due diligence and all the work they have done and for their support. He knows there is a tough road ahead and will work together moving forward.

Shelagh Joyce asked if they had a chance to look at staggering the start of some programs to January instead of September to come up with some budget savings as she asked at the last meeting. Dr. Maestas said that is difficult to do in a school system. It is hard to start a program half way through the year. They have not had a chance to discuss it but will at their next School Committee meeting.

Other ATM Article 9 Questions for the Town Manager:

- Are all of the Memorial Hall items part of a long term plan? (S Joyce) Yes, they are part of the Facility Maintenance Report and Plan. The projects are phased in annually and over a long period of time. Any specific questions can be directed to Dennis Westgate, Assistant DPW Director.
- The beach wheelchairs will not be stored in the restrooms at Plymouth Beach will they? (S Joyce) They are stored in the life guard equipment storage shack near Sandy's.
- Is item #38 tied into the current sewer issues? (S Joyce) No, those items were requested long before the sewer break.
- Are they still needed now with the sewer break and upcoming repair? The Article 9 sewer requests add up to about \$3 million. We have had issues with the grit removal system from the start. (S Joyce/H Helm) Yes they are still needed. Upgrades to the Water Street Pump Station need to occur regardless. Questions are delicate with regard to our contract with Veolia. Reach out to me one on one with your questions in that area.
- Should we rely on a report from Veolia that says the pump station needs upgrades, or seek a second opinion? (H Salerno) The pump station needs upgrades regardless of any of the sewer repair options selected. We will hear about those repair options next week.

There was discussion about maybe pulling the sewer items out for now and waiting until next week, books go to print before next week, trust sewer projects will be done in order that they make most sense and efficiency, if we approve and then project does not move forward the borrowing would be rescinded and funds would not be used, should move forward with funding because there is work that has to be done regardless of sewer main repair. There was no motion made to remove the sewer items.

There was also discussion about Item A36 – CAD RMS system for the Police Department. Current system is 25 years old, this would help modernize and streamline current process to tie in all police work daily (calls, actions, identities, remarks, use of departmental assets, everything), can't imagine a modern police department operating with a system and equipment that is 25 years old, look forward to the day we have new procedures for Article 9.

Patrick O'Brien made a motion to recommend ATM Article 9 to Town Meeting. Betty Cavacco, second. The motion carries unanimously (13-0-0).