

Capital Outlay Committee Meeting  
Finance Commission Room  
March 7, 2023, 6:30pm  
MINUTES OF MEETING

**Members Present:** Myev Bodenhofer, Robert Donnelly, Eric Fleming, Meg LeMay, Anne Marie Mazzola, Tim McDonough, Ernie Paciorkowski, Sarah Sullivan

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Clayton Cheever, Meg LaMay (Remote)

**Absent:** Alex Haggerty, Tony Mazzucco, Gerry Miller, Kevin Connolly, Vice Chair, Tim McDonough

**Guests present:** Al Bishop, Cathy Carney, Joe Kidd, Michael Rosen, Karen Sheridan, Dave Thomson

Meeting called to order by Chair Donnelly at 6:30pm.

**Approval of February 9, 2023 meeting minutes:**

Mrs. Bodenhofer motioned to approve the minutes; Mrs. Mazzola seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with one abstention, Mr. Fleming as he was not a member of the committee at the time. Chair Donnelly welcomed the newly appointed Capital Outlay Committee member, Eric Fleming, who was appointed by the Town Moderator.

**The School Department Capital Request for Annual Town Meeting:**

The School Department of Transportation Director, Mr. Bishop provided a brief overview of what it takes to administer the Connolly contract. NPS provides transportation to special needs students in and out of the district, the transportation route is door to door. Currently NPA is utilizing 6 mini buses with no spares and 29 vans with no spares to transport the students. In the past the need was 24 with spares but due to the increase in the student population NPS is using all available inventory. NPS needs to strategically plan for continued increase in district special needs population, at this point given our inventory, the system cannot handle any additional students, NPS is running two routes to some schools and that is resulting in students arriving late. Orders for new buses and vans require at least a year lead time but likely 18 months due to supply chain issues. NPS is utilizing outside vendors at the cost of \$150 - \$250K because of demand. The goal is to keep transportation in house, it is the most economical way to manage but for the short term will have to use outside vendors. Mr. Bishop is coordinating with other nearby towns if students in the area attend the same schools.

Mr. Paciorkowski encouraged the committee to support this request and get in the pipeline for the new equipment. Chair Donnelly inquired as to the funding source for mini buses? Mr. Rosen said the funding source was not clear, but he will research. Mrs. Sullivan motioned to approve the request to put on the town meeting warrant. Mr. Paciorkowski seconded, and it was approved unanimously.

The School Department Director of Technology, Mr. Kidd presented his request for 7 new network switch replacements. To qualify for the Erate discounts these requests must be submitted during the spring town meeting. Mr. Kidd also requested funding for the updating of 2 NHS Computer labs, an AutoCAD engineering lab and a Robotics lab. The high school is now 12 years old, and the AutoCAD lab is an underpowered lab. The Robotics lab

will move from desktop to mobile laptop lab. Alumni of these programs come back and say access to equipment gives them a leg up at college. The update to the computer labs does not qualify for the Erate program.

Dr. Thomson reiterated that the schools come in to request now to line up with the Erate process. While not qualifying for the Erate program, computer labs need to be replaced during the summer when students are not in session.

Chair Donnelly asked if the new middle school budget included network switches. Mr. Kidd responded that it does. He also inquired as to the lifespan of the new computers in the lab. The AutoCAD computers are similar to what NPS currently has and replace them every 6 years. The laptops will likely last 4 years.

Mr. Paciorkowski firmly believes Norwood should be getting the best we can get to keep our kids as competitive as those from surrounding towns. Mrs. Mazzola asked if the library participates in the Erate program. Mr. Cheever answered that the library does not have the scale to make participation worthwhile.

Mr. Fleming asked about the reasoning for making these as capital requests. If something is done every year why not move to the operational budget? Mr. Kidd responded that student devices, teacher devices, network switches were all on the capital budget when he first came. NPS has moved student devices and teacher devices to the operational budget. The issue with switches and switch replacement is that they can be very different each year, not a consistent budget every year. If we move to the operational budget we would have to build a replacement cycle which could leave us replacing some that do not need to be. Network switches if needed cannot be cut from budget so putting into operational budget could be problematic.

Mrs. Bodenhofer asked what the recommended funding source is, Mr. Rosen stated he believes it is free cash.

Mr. Paciorkowski motioned to approve; Mr. Fleming seconded the recommendation of purchases with a funding source of free cash. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Updates on FY'23 capital projects**

Mr. Rosen updated the Capital Outlay Committee on FY23 projects. The Council on Aging Van purchase is delayed due to supply issues. The Tasers are expected to arrive in late March. Public Works is awaiting the delivery of the rider mower. The next update will be in May.

### **Capital Improvement Policy and Capital Outlay By-law**

Chair Donnelly thanked the Committee for the good feedback from the last meeting and reviewed portions that had been changed based on feedback. Under Section II Applicability votes identifying examples have been added under all departments.

Under Section II Policy it was requested to have something that covers prioritization if there is a financial or operational advantage to doing it now rather than waiting for another time. Added item H that reflects grant timeliness.

This will be brought back one more time and then a formal vote will be taken. After it is finalized, the three representatives from The School Committee, The Board of Selectmen and The Finance Commission will bring it back

to their boards to review for their consideration and approval.

**Planning for April Meetings**

Chair Donnelly asked for projects members might like to visit in April. It was decided that the Committee would meet to review the potential projects at the Hawes Pool, the Washington Street Bridge and the DPW vehicles. The meeting will be April 27<sup>th</sup> from 6 – 8 and more details will follow.

An additional meeting is scheduled for May 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm to review DPW projects.

Motion to adjourn made by Mrs. Mazzola, seconded by Mr. Fleming, approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Sullivan  
Clerk, Capital Outlay Committee