



TOWN IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

**July 24, 2024
Ludlow Room
Special Meeting
HYBRID Meeting**

APPROVED MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Mary Armstrong called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Present was Councilor Naeem (in place of Councilor Leroy Smith) and Councilor William Pelkey

Staff: Peter Souza, Town Manager; Scott Colby, Assistant Town Manager; Mark Goossens, Director of Public Works; Paul Norris, Director of Recreation & Leisure Services; Marco Aglieco, Building & Facilities Manager; Paul Goldberg, Fire Administrator; Suzanne Choate, Town Engineer, Danielle Batchelder, Chief of Operations, Board of Education; Carlos Rosario, Facilities Manager – Board of Education

Absent: Councilor Leroy Smith

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

George Slate, 74 Ethan Drive, said he liked the chart in the CIP on Roman numeral page XII. He said the projected debt service as a percentage of the General Fund is totally static. He thought it was odd that the page before which is the General Fund projects not requiring voter approval are on the scale at one half percent. That is a lot of swing. He would find it helpful to put an estimate of costs for the new elementary school, middle and high schools. He'd like to place the item for a new senior center in the section of the CIP where there are unscheduled projects just to have it out there. This would jumpstart the conversation or that thinking process.

Darleen Klase, 318 Hitching Post Lane, stated she would like to see money put aside to evaluate schools, then also public buildings to see what the community might want and what the future costs of those might be for either significant refurbishment or new builds. She'd like to know what the plan is and how long that plan would be and start to look for some funding on that. She'd also like the town to look into consolidating the elementary schools so that we could build a new high school and place elementary students in the older high school. Her suggestion would be to have the new high school on Day Hill Road with fields and to look at the development of fields that we can use for some capital. Lastly, she'd like the town to think about the development of Day Hill Road some more with retail and recreation.

3. DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED FY 25 – FY 30 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

Town Manager Souza gave the following highlights of the proposed FY 2025-FY 2030 Capital Improvements program (CIP):

- There are \$122 million of projects in the CIP which are funded through a variety of different sources including general obligation bonds.
- The CIP includes approximately \$9.4 million for street resurfacing, pavement reclamation, milling, curb replacement, minor drainage improvements and other pavement repair work. In addition, the 6 year period includes major street reconstruction or rehabilitation projects at an estimated cost of \$28.1 million. Of the total \$37.5 million included for the asset management of town roadways, \$11.2 million is planned to come from state and/or federal funding sources.
- Projected debt service ratios based on a five-year financial forecast, inclusive of all projects requiring voter referendum, are not projected to exceed the 8% policy goal in any year of the proposed CIP.
- \$81 million is in new bonding authorization over the 6 year period.
- \$2.6 million is allocated to come from the General Fund Reserve fund balance.
- The proposed CIP identifies \$23.3 million in cash-funded projects. The sources for cash funding projects are primarily appropriations from the annual General Fund as well as requests for monies from the Capital Projects Fund Assigned Fund balance and the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance. The Capital Projects Fund source fluctuates from year to year as that fund is comprised of closed out balances from completed projects.
- The remaining Outdoor Pool Facilities project (Veterans Pool) is scheduled for design in FY 2026 and construction in FY 2028. This project may require voter referendum depending on the scope of work and phasing approach.
- The proposed CIP forecasts \$80.9 million in new bonding authorization. The 6-year CIP cycle includes seven projects that would require voter approval due to current estimated costs. These projects are:
 - Windsor High School HVAC Systems Replacement
 - Windsor High School Roof Replacement
 - Poquonock School Ventilation Upgrade
 - Veteran's Pool Improvements
 - Windsor High School Fieldhouse Renovation
 - Broad Street Road Diet
 - Milo Pack HVAC, Electrical, and Energy Improvements
- School related projects total \$41.5 million over the 6-year period. Projects range from a fieldhouse renovation, roof replacements, window replacements, envelope improvements, and HVAC updates to boiler renovation/replacement and ventilation updates.

Town Manager Souza said there has been over the course of the last 9 months or so a number of comments made publicly regarding the long-range planning for school facilities. There are no funds in the CIP for this, but the Town Council at any point is able to, after conversations with the Board of Education, determine what that planning, study, scope and objectives could be. The Town Council can allocate funds to be able to fund a study that would look at the long term. Of the \$81 million going towards town and Board of Education facilities, about 53% is for the Board of Education.

Councilor Armstrong noted there are a lot of referendums required for projects in the CIP. Can these be part of the election calendar year? Are these separate referendums for voters? Town Manager Souza replied the Council has the opportunity to approach it on a regular elections calendar or off the elections calendar.

Councilor Armstrong asked what is the balance of the General Fund Unassigned Fund Balance? Town Manager Souza said the estimated balance at the end of the unaudited balance is approximately \$34 million which is about 27%.

Councilor Naeem asked if that number is at the end of the fiscal year? Town Manager Souza said yes.

Councilor Armstrong said that there was a discussion with the Board of Education but no planning funds were allocated in the CIP. Is that going to be assigned? Town Manager Souza said that's a discussion between the Town Council and the Board of Education and really defining what that scope of work would be. Once that is deciphered, staff from both entities could work to develop a cost estimate and bring it back to both government bodies for review and potential funding.

FY 2025

Town Manager Souza gave some highlights of the FY 2025 Capital Improvements program.

Councilor Armstrong stated that she saw that at some point, generators are going to be put into schools, but she thinks that's a long-range project in 2026 or something like that. Town Manager Souza stated that if we have an opportunity we'll see if we can do it early or at least look at it and see if it's feasible or not.

Councilor Naeem said the Town Manager had mentioned that in a couple of these areas the cost had decreased. It's surprising to her knowing that costs continue to rise. Did we estimate higher and it came in lower or are we shifting the scope a bit on any of them? Town Manager Souza said it's a little bit of both.

Councilor Pelkey said we are getting down to the end of our money from the American Rescue Funds. Is there any way that the pocket change left over from all of

the expenditures can be applied to a particular project? He understands there is criteria for those. An example would be purchasing fire hydrants. Town Manager Souza said some of the projects were approved by the Council during their July 2024 meeting. If the Council wanted to use some of the unallocated (unclassified) amount, they could potentially be able to use some of those funds for design work or for the smaller \$50,000-\$60,000 projects.

Mayor Black-Burke asked if anything has been moved around since the last cycle? Is there an explanation or rationale as to why a project might be moved up? Town Manager Souza replied the two that are noted here are both funded through the state grants which is lines 12 and 13 on sheet A-1 (Prospect Hill Road rehabilitation and Marshall Phelps rehabilitation.) Those were originally in FY 26, but have moved up due to the Engineering team having successfully submitted some grant applications. Town Manager Souza gave some information on projects that were moved out of FY 25.

Councilor Armstrong asked if any of these projects are prioritized? Town Manager Souza said those listed on the sheet are our priorities for FY 25. Councilor Armstrong said these are all the priorities that are listed that have to be completed in FY 25? Town Manager Souza said yes and added that we are trying to balance how much money there is from a bonding perspective and what the General Fund can handle. This is something that we believe the Council and community can afford.

Councilor Armstrong stated she sees lots of projects that are in design. Can you explain that to me? Do they have to be designed first before the other can take place? Town Manager Souza said that was correct. This allows us to refine the cost, scope and review the project.

FY 2026

Town Manager Souza stated the projects that are new or have been moved here is:

- LP Wilson HVAC improvements on line Number 10 on sheet A-2 would now be moved to the south side of the building with a cost of \$2.5 million.
- Day Hill Road pavement management at \$2.1 million for Marshall Phelps Road (between Marshall Phelps and Baker Hollow Road.)
- For referendums there is slated:
 - Milo Peck HVAC project
 - Windsor High School HVAC project

Councilor Armstrong stated she sees there are a lot of roof replacements on most of the schools. Town Manager Souza said that a roof lasts two decades or 25 years and we are in that cycle now.

Councilor Armstrong stated that she sees that Milo Peck is always a part of the agenda. Town Manager Souza said we are repairing a 50 year old cast iron boiler. We will be

replacing some sections and that equipment should be in place in town in October and we'll be able to replace that in November. This does not include the cost or handling of the ventilation and air conditioning component of it.

Councilor Pelkey asked if that number is inclusive of or is that selecting one option to give us that number or is it a rough estimate of the natural versus gas? Town Manager Souza responded that it is pretty much what the electric was at that time when we did the design. There's only about a \$200,000 difference.

Mayor Black-Burke stated regarding the Board of Education bathrooms, it's just a concern that she's making sure that it's something we're thinking about. The bathrooms look the same as when L.P. Wilson was a school. We've been talking about these bathrooms for 8-9 years now. Town Manager Souza said the Board of Education bathrooms have gone through the design stage. The bathrooms will be roughly \$900,000 to complete. The Town Council can take this project and shift it to another year if they'd like. We can look at this and potentially move some projects around.

Councilor Pelkey asked is this the plan regardless of the year? Is this doable with the vendors that are capable of doing this and available in any given year? Town Manager Souza said the biggest challenge they've seen in the last 3-4 years is in the HVAC area and the limited number of vendors in that area along with the school building only having 12 weeks to do all the construction. Mr. Aglieco added that one thing they can do is to try and get the bids out sooner. He feels that the scope they presently have is manageable if they get it out early enough for bids.

The committee discussed the possibilities of moving projects around.

Councilor Naeem asked in the estimated project costs, are we accounting for inflation? Town Manager Souza said we do it across the board. There may be some projects that we use a higher inflationary rate, but we usually use a 4% factor.

FY 2027

Town Manager Souza stated that in FY 27 you start to look at some changes in funding sources on a couple of projects. There aren't a lot of changes here. The large project that's in here is the roof replacement at the high school which is about a \$10 million project. We are planning on having about 50% of that cost recovered from the State.

Councilor Pelkey asked if it would be possible to combine in a single year HVAC or other projects. Mr. Aglieco said he feels it would be difficult and would not be advantageous to us.

Councilor Armstrong said she still has a concern regarding the Sage Park water issue. She believes that this was on the list as well. Town Manager Souza stated that is slated

in fiscal year 2025. He said the town has basically done preliminary investigative work. It's a little bit of a dilemma because when we did this, there definitely was water in past years that percolated up through the gymnasium floor and some of the classrooms and administrative areas. However, when we did the investigative work this past year, the table wasn't as high. Town Manager Souza asked Mr. Rosario if there has been any indications of water in the past 6 months. Mr. Rosario responded there has not been any.

FY 2028

Town Manager Souza said one new project is the Day Hill Road reconstruction at the west end of the corridor. This could be a grant application as well. There's also the emergency power generators for town facilities. We have some generators at the fire stations, town hall and the public works department. We are looking at replacing them as they age out. He added only a partial part of the high school has backup power from a generator.

Councilor Armstrong asked if the items for public safety equipment come from the General Fund? Town Manager Souza said the funds are being used in two ways. One is pay as you go and the other is done by cash financing. So, some of it is in the reserve and some is in the pay as you go right now.

Town Manager Souza said for the Veteran's Pool, this will not only be a financial decision but a programmatic and policy decision. This community has made significant investments in aquatics over the years both in capital and programmatic. For a community of 30,000 to have three outdoor pools and one indoor pool, it needs to be discussed especially since it will be a \$4 million project. It's a big investment but it's also a great amenity as well.

FY 2029

Town Manager Souza stated that some of these projects come from either new identified projects or projects from the unscheduled list. It's really a place holder for the field house renovation. Decisions regarding that project will be made within the next 18-24 months on which way to go and then it may move up and the project may change. That number could change drastically.

No comments from councilors.

FY 2030

Town Manager Souza said to not be deceived by the low dollar amount and bonding. That generally is what happens in the out years just because things haven't yet been solidified. Improvements to Capen Street and Sage Park Road is something that we've

identified, not necessarily from significant accidents but because we have heard from the public if we can do something different with that crazy 'Y' intersection.

Town Manager Souza stated that you can see the overall total in the bottom left hand corner of the document on page A-6. The breakdown is roughly \$81 million in new bonding and \$17 million in State and Federal aid hopefully. Then you see the different cash funding sources of \$23 million.

Town Manager Souza added that the goal is to bring this proposed CIP to the Town Council during its August 5th meeting. Years one and two are the most critical. We can get the momentum for staff to start work on that and develop an action plan for those projects in FY 26 along with some of those that might need to be in the early planning stages in FY 26.

Mayor Black-Burke was wondering about the condition of the tennis and pickleball courts at Welch Park. She's not sure how much wear and tear there is. She also asked about the Board of Education bathrooms. Mr. Norris responded we did repair the courts about 10-12 years ago. The tennis courts are not only used for tennis but as an ice rink in the winter. Because of the deterioration of the courts, we will be looking at replacing the courts altogether as there are no courts north of Sage Park Middle School. We would also be adding pickleball courts and new fencing to the location. These courts are in such bad state that they are not being currently used.

Councilor Armstrong stated that they had also discussed the Clover Street project regarding the field. She doesn't see that in the CIP. Town Manager Souza stated the Clover Street cricket project has already been funded and construction will be underway in August and September. That's why it's not reflected in here because it's already been funded by the Town Council.

MOVED by Councilor Pelkey, seconded by Councilor Naeem to recommend to the Town Council the approval of the FY 2025 – FY 2030 CIP.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

4. STAFF REPORTS

Town Manager Souza said there are a whole host of projects that are underway. The Public Building Commission provides their updates to the Council on a regular basis.

The Wilson Park is well underway. You might not have seen much for the first month or so because it's been all underground work. They're putting all the conduits in. The playground equipment has already been delivered and the Public Building Commission has approved the submittal of the prefab restroom building.

Public Works/Engineering have combined the first phase of the street rehabilitation for milling and paving. The Mountain Road/Trent Drive area has been completed. In the next couple of weeks, we'll be starting the next phase which is the south end of town.

Baker Hollow Road's construction is substantially complete. This is the project the Town Council previously approved. That's the section that goes from Marshall Phelps to the improved section on Day Hill Road and Baker Hollow. That should be ready to be opened up in the next 3-4 weeks or so.

The playgrounds at Deerfield and Washington Park have had some improvements made to them.

Broad Street Road Diet – one of the discussions we'll be having is regarding what the next steps will be. How do we want to keep the Town Council up to speed? Do we have a full workshop? That's a conversation we'd like to be able to have to either have a full Council workshop or an additional public input over the next 60 days.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a) February 28, 2024

MOVED by Councilor Pelkey and seconded by Councilor Naeem to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2024 meeting as presented.

Motion Passed 2-0-1 (Councilor Naeem abstained)

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councilor Naeem and seconded by Councilor Pelkey to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Motion Passed 3-0-0

Respectfully Submitted,

Helene Albert
Recording Secretary