

Capital Planning Task Force
Minutes
January 6, 2021 – approved February 3, 2021
Via Zoom

Present: Terri Ackerman, Select Board member; Jared Stanton, Director of Finance and Operations, Concord Public Schools; Elise Woodward, Stephen Crane, Town Manager, Karle Packard, citizen, Cynthia Rainey, Concord School Committee, Laurie Hunter, School Superintendent

Absent: Kerry LaFleur, Concord Finance Director, Parashar Patel, Finance Committee Liaison

Meeting was convened at 3:11

There was a brief discussion of dates and times for future meetings. Next meeting will be held on 1/20.

Mr. Packard updated the committee on his task to assess the pressing issues facing the committee.

The Committee then reviewed the letters from the Concord-Carlisle League of Women voters and the letter from the Concord Finance Committee. Ms. Woodward read a summary of the Finance Committee letter. Mr. Patel indicated that the Finance Committee would not weigh in before our committee makes our recommendations.

Ms. Ackerman compiled public comments and input and shared with the Committee.

Ms. Woodward reviewed her task which was to review the early research into what the other towns are doing regarding capital planning. Specifically, she mentioned the presentation Mark Coste, delivered at a League of Women Voters Forum last year as well as work done in Lincoln and Arlington. Also of interest is the work done by the 2002 Concord Facility Plan committee. Also, the TBA Architects document regarding Concord facilities is in draft form.

Ms. Ackerman shared her draft template for capital planning. Ms. Ackerman will work with Ms. LaFleur to reformat it with debt per year for each project.

The Committee went on to discuss the enhanced or modified process for the town and schools process option/recommendation.

The Enhanced process does not create any added layers. It supplies an additional annual opportunity for public input on a consolidated plan. Part of the process would be to solicit feedback from the Finance Committee.

Ms. Ackerman requested that the committee talk through the enhanced process. How exactly would it work?

The committee agreed that to discuss an enhanced process we need to document the current process. Ms. Woodward referred to the Financial Policies document on the Concord Finance Department page which outlines the current policy in Concord as far as capital planning. There was also discussion about how frequently and when the joint meetings would occur. The joint

meeting needs to recognize the collective needs of the community and collaboration to smooth debt service and consider land acquisition or use.

Ms. Rainey asked that the committee consider recommending a target and perhaps a maximum on annual excluded debt as a percentage of the town budget.

Mr. Crane proposed that we consider a vote to adopt the Enhanced process as our preferred process. It was agreed that the committee needs to discuss the pros and cons of the standing committee vs. Enhanced process.

The committee voted to approve the minutes of November 18th, December 2nd, and December 9th with edits from Ms. Woodward.

Citizen Comment

Karlen Reed, 83 Whits End. Ms. Reed is looking forward to more detail on the Enhanced Process.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:33