

Capital Planning Task Force

Minutes

September 16, 2020

ZOOM

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

Also present: Parashar Patel, Finance Committee liaison.

Absent: Kerry Lafleur, Finance Director; Karle Packard

In the absence of a Chair, Ms. Ackerman called the meeting to order at 3:03 pm on September 16, 2020, and welcomed everyone, introducing the new Finance Committee liaison and the new, at-large, member, Karle Packard. It was noted that the Task Force work has been suspended since March. During that time, Todd Benjamin resigned from the committee. She then asked for a motion and a second to elect Ms. Woodward, Chair. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Woodward then asked for a motion and a second to nominate a Clerk. Cynthia Rainey was elected unanimously.

Review & Approval of Meeting Minutes: The minutes of March 2, 2020 were reviewed and approved unanimously as amended. Ms. Woodward will submit the approved minutes to the Town Clerk for posting.

Discussion of the following topics ensued:

1. *Review of Progress to Date:*

- The Committee Charge was reviewed. It was noted that the deadline of March 1, 2020, for recommendations to be presented to the Select Board must be amended to June 30, 2021. Ms. Ackerman indicated that she thought the Board had taken that action and she will confirm.
- Feedback from Members received during the summer was reviewed.
- Specific review of the Draft Presentation for the Public Forum was deferred to later in the meeting.

2. *Moving Forward:* The Task Force reviewed previous Decisions:

- The existing Capital Planning process for Tier 1 and Tier 2 projects.
- Process for budgeting Tier 3 projects that appear in the Town Meeting warrant should be presented at the Public Forum. Capital outlay for projects in the operating budget should be made clear to the public.
- The mechanism for approving a project is important to understand how it will be funded.
- Fiscal Sustainability definition should be utilized based on definitions in Envision Concord and those used by the Finance Committee. The 1 million threshold should be noted as 2020 dollars.
- A very large project is a project exceeding a cost of \$5 million overall or any project that has two or more phases totaling \$5 million.

3. *Capital Planning standing committee:* The Task Force confirmed it would defer a vote on this recommendation until after public comment and will address the pros and cons during the public forum.

4. *Discussion:* The Task Force briefly discussed phased projects and considered the potential risks of not approving a subsequent phase of a phased project, sequencing Town and School projects, CPS projects occurring within the Town Manager's budget, and elements of the existing capital planning process

5. *Proposed format for the Public Forum:*

The draft presentation was reviewed for the Public Forum. The intention is to present this overview and to follow it with posed questions for public input:

- Background: charge and Task Force members (Ms. Woodward-slides 1-3)
- Big Picture and Transition (Ms. Ackerman – slides 4-5)
- Existing process for Capital Planning for Town (Mr. Crane, and Ms. Lafleur – slides 6-7-8)
- Existing process for Capital Planning for Schools (Ms. Hunter and Mr. Stanton-slides 9--12) .
- Recommendations of the Task Force (Ms. Rainey – slides 13-14-15)
 - Definition of a very large project
 - The process for prioritizing and sequencing projects - How are priorities developed?
 - A list of criteria
- Public input (slide 16)

Committee members suggested initial refinements including adding slides for the questions and to address:

- How projects are planned today
- Where authority lies for approval
- Collaboration between Town Manager and Superintendent
- Would a Capital Planning Committee add value to vetting projects and sequencing them?
- Criteria to assure projects are solving needs across multiple systems
- Linking criteria to Fin Com report

6. *Proposed Calendar:* The Task Force briefly agreed to meet on Wednesday afternoons at 3:00 PM. Future meetings include October 7, October 21, November 4, November 18.

Next Steps: A. Jeremy will identify possible dates for Public Forum in November.
B. Ms. Lafleur: Request that MMN record the Public Forum for community access.
C. Committee Members: send comments on presentation to Chair by October 2

The next meeting of the Task Force will be Wednesday, October 7, at 3:00 PM on ZOOM.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia Rainey, Clerk

