

2021 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee wrapped up its work on October 28th, 2020 with a total project cost for 2021 of \$555,000. This represents a \$13,000 decrease from the 2020 schedule. New Boston's CIP Committee works to develop a six-year schedule of capital projects and purchases that reflect the town and school needs as well as the taxpayers' ability to afford. Through the use of Capital Reserve Funds (CRFs), taxpayers have supported yearly allotments for the future purchase of fire and highway vehicles and equipment as well as bridges, preventing huge spikes in the tax rate for the year these expensive items need to be funded.

The CIP schedule represents projects and purchases that cost \$20,000 or more. Unless there is an unforeseen emergency, any new project comes onto the schedule six years out. It is expected that the Selectmen will bring forward to the March 2021 ballot the CIP items scheduled for that year. Voters are encouraged to consider these requests carefully.

Fire Department Vehicles CRF

This yearly CRF includes both replacement and mid-life refurbishment of all Fire Department vehicles except the ambulances, which are purchased through a separate ambulance fund that derives its revenues from user fees not taxes.

The vehicles previously included two front-line pumpers and a preowned pumper at the Hilltop Station, a tank truck, a hose reel truck, a forestry truck and a light rescue vehicle. Two years ago the Fire Wards made two changes to the vehicle roster. The hose reel truck, scheduled to be replaced in 2024 with an estimated cost of \$540,000, was removed from the list. This piece of equipment is infrequently used and with some moderate upgrades the pumpers can be retrofit to accommodate additional hose. Once the pumpers have been retrofit the Fire Dept. intends to sell the hose reel truck. The Fire Wards also added a Command Vehicle to the list and intend to seek a warrant article to purchase this vehicle in 2024.

All of these vehicles are extremely expensive, with pumpers costing over \$600,000. With a midlife refurbishment, these pumpers generally have a 25-year life cycle. The other vehicles also have 15 to 30-year cycles. While this is good on one hand, it makes projecting future costs problematic.

The CIP Committee carefully reviews this vehicle schedule annually, attempting to account for any known increases in vehicle costs and has recommended a deposit into the CRF of \$150,000.

Fire Station Bond

The Fire Wards will again bring forward a warrant article for the construction of a new Fire Station on the town owned land beside the post office. The updated cost for a four-bay building is expected to be approximately \$3.3 million and the CIP Committee has reflected the initial bond payments for the project beginning in 2022.

Highway Dump Truck CRF

This CRF now covers three full-sized 6-wheel dump trucks (\$260,000 new replacement cost), one smaller 6 wheel truck with plows (\$125,000 new replacement cost), four 10-wheel trucks (\$295,000 new replacement cost). Through 2026 most of this fleet will need to be replaced.

There are also two 4x4 pickup trucks (one with plows and one without plows) at the Highway Department. At least one of these was purchased in the past with Highway Block Grant funds. These vehicles (\$65,000 new replacement cost) are not currently part of the CRF but is anticipated that the Selectmen will propose a warrant article when it is time to replace them.

The Road Agent believes that he will continue to replace vehicles with a mixed of new and used trucks which saves the Town a considerable amount of money.

Consistent with past CIP schedules, the CIP Committee recommends a \$110,000 CRF deposit in 2021 (an increase of \$10,000 over 2020) increasing to \$120,000 per year in future years in order to maintain balances in the fund needed to purchase these vehicles.

Highway Heavy Equipment CRF

The CRF covers the replacement cost of the grader, loader and backhoe. After reviewing the replacement schedule provided by the Road Agent the CIP Committee recommends a \$45,000 deposit into the fund each year for the next six years. This is an increase of \$5000 per year from previous years due to the necessity of replacing both the grader and front end loader in 2030.

Road Improvements

This yearly funding of roadwork is one of the things that have prevented New Boston from needing multi-million dollar bonds to repair severely deteriorated roads. The CIP committee once again included \$85,000 on the schedule for road improvement projects in each of the next 6 years.

Projects currently scheduled include Meetinghouse Hill Road in 2021, Christie Road in 2022, and Beard Road in 2023. As the Road Agent explained these projects often include extensive tree trimming and drainage work prior to any re-paving.

Bridge Repair/Replacement CRF

This yearly CRF will remain at its current funding of \$40,000. Upcoming projects to be funded by this CRF are repairs to Howe Bridge (2022) and Tucker Mill Road Bridge (2023).

Highway Dept. Garage Addition

Five years ago, the Road Agent introduced a project to construct an addition to the Highway Dept. building of approximately 1,200 square feet with an estimated cost of \$70,000. This addition would enable the department to keep more equipment indoors thereby extending the life of our expensive trucks. The CIP Committee determined that funding for this project should be raised over two years with \$35,000 to be collected in 2021 and 2022.

Property Update/Reval Funding

This CRF collects funds for both the revaluation update (last performed in 2016) and the full revaluation required by the State every 10 years (being conducted in 2020/21). Due to the disparity in funding these two revaluations (an update is approximately half the cost of the full revaluation) the CIP Committee recommends lowering the deposit to \$25,000 (a savings of \$5,000 over the prior year) for the next five years.

GIS Mapping System

Four years ago, Peter Flynn, Town Administrator, presented this item on behalf of the Selectmen. This project entails the implementation of a computerized Geographic Information System (GIS) to track all of the Town's tax maps to replace the existing paper maps which contain errors and inaccuracies. The project includes a complete review of existing parcels down to the deed descriptions in order to ensure the accuracy of the new maps generated. The CIP Committee placed this project on the schedule with a funding request of \$60,000 per year for 2022 through 2024. Since this work is expected to extend over three years the funding request should match the billing schedule of the vendor that will be chosen.

NBCS Addition Bond

New Boston Central School Principal Tori Underwood re-presented the 4-classroom addition project with an updated cost of \$2.3 million. They requested the bond amount for the project be pushed back again on the schedule until 2022 since the number of students at NBCS did not increase dramatically and the school, utilizing two portable classrooms, currently has room for all of its students. It is expected, given the amount of available housing lots in town, that this addition will be needed in the near future.

Transfer Station Food Waste Composting System

Transfer Station Manager Gerry Cornett expressed a desire to postpone the institution of a mechanical food waste composting system project that would cost approximately \$150,000 citing the Town's finances, as well as ongoing developments with these systems, as his reasons. The CIP Committee felt that the project should remain on the schedule as a placeholder and pushed back the collection of the first half of the funding until 2026.

Future Items

Two items were added this year to the CIP Project list but funding will not be required until 2027. The Transfer Station waste hauling trailer is expected to cost \$115,000 and was included under the Transfer Station Department. A new department, Emergency Management, was also created on the schedule this year (based on the passage of a 2020 Warrant Article) and the project placed on the schedule was the maintenance of the radio tower and communications system at an expected cost of \$120,000. It is anticipated that some of this cost will be funded with grant money.

CIP Committee

Fred Hayes, Chairman, At-Large
Ken Lombard, Finance Committee Representative
Ed Carroll Planning Board Representative
David Litwinovich, Selectman Ex-Officio
Matt Beaulieu, At-Large
Jennifer Allocca, At-Large