

## 2023 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee wrapped up its work on October 19th, 2022, with a total project cost for 2023 of \$540,000, a \$20,000 decrease from the 2022 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. Using 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 2023 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 vehicle roster includes two front-line pumpers and a preowned pumper at the Hilltop Station, a tank truck, a forestry truck, a light rescue vehicle and a command vehicle which was added by the Fire Wards three years ago and is expected to be placed on the Town Warrant for 2024.

These vehicles are extremely expensive, with pumpers expected to cost over \$700,000 in the next purchase cycle. 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 \$175,000 each year for the next six years. This is an increase of \$45,000 over the amount requested in previous years primarily due to the continuing increases in costs of replacement Fire Department vehicles. For example, in 2012 we asked for \$90,000 (or 16.7 cents per \$1000 of assessed valuation) when the projected cost of a Pumper was \$490,000. This year we are asking for \$175,000 (or 18.8 cents per \$1000 of assessed valuation) when the expected cost of a new Pumper is now \$710,000. The CRF deposit request has increased 12.5% in 10 years while the purchase price of a new Pumper has increased 45%.

### **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 the current building design is expected to be approximately \$6.8 million and the CIP Committee has reflected the initial bond payments for the project beginning in 2024.

### **Fire Department Equipment Discussion**

The Fire Department has a number of pieces of equipment (Thermal Camera, Jaws of Life, SCBA, etc.) with replacement costs well over the CIP \$20,000 thresh hold. In 2019 the Selectmen proposed a warrant which did not pass by the required 2/3 majority to expand the purpose of the Vehicle CRF to include equipment. The CIP Committee recommended that the Fire Wards reconvene with the Selectmen and seek a new warrant article in 2023 for a new CRF for their equipment replacement needs.

### **Emergency Management CRF**

In 2020 the town voted to establish an Emergency Management CRF for the collection of funds to maintain the Emergency Services communications and related systems. The CIP Committee is continuing to request a \$20,000 annual deposit into this fund to meet the needs of the radio tower maintenance scheduled in 2027.

### **Highway Dump Truck CRF**

This CRF now covers two full-sized 6-wheel dump trucks (\$260,000 new replacement cost), one smaller 6-wheel truck (F-550) with plows, and five 10-wheel trucks (\$295,000 new replacement cost). There is also an F-250 4x4 pickup truck with a plow.

The CIP Committee recommends a \$150,000 CRF deposit in 2023 and future years. This is an increase of \$30,000 a year in order to maintain balances in the fund needed to purchase these vehicles.

### **Highway Heavy Equipment CRF**

The CRF previously covered the replacement cost of the grader, loader and backhoe. In 2022 the Town voted to add a vibratory roller and an excavator to the roster of heavy equipment. The CIP Committee agreed to add the roller, but the excavator is still under lease and not yet owned by the Town. Adding these pieces to the repurchase schedule does not change the recommended on-going deposit of \$45,000 into the CRF since all of these pieces have working lives in excess of 20 years.

### **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 Christie Road in 2023, and Beard Road in 2025. 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 in 2023 are replacements for Tucker Mill Road Bridge and Gregg Mill Road Bridge for which the Town will only be responsible for 20% of the engineering costs and Federal and State funds will cover the balance. Also, in 2023 the Dougherty Lane Bridge will require \$100,000 from the CRF.

### **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 holding the deposit at \$25,000 for the next six years.

### **GIS Mapping System**

The Selectmen have removed the GIS Mapping System from the CIP schedule after receiving an opinion from the Town's auditors that it was not an appropriate asset to be included on the schedule. The Selectmen intend to place a separate Warrant Article on the ballot for this system.

### **NBCS Addition Bond**

SAU 19 Business Manager, Scott Gross, re-presented the 4-classroom addition project with an updated cost of \$3.4 million. They requested the bond amount for the project be pushed back again on the schedule until 2027 since NBCS enrolment has actually declined to 515 students this year.

### **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 \$75,000 citing ongoing developments with these systems and the increased interest of private groups. The CIP Committee felt that the project should remain on the schedule as a placeholder and pushed back the collection of the funding until 2028.

### **Transfer Station Trailer**

The Transfer Station waste trailer, which had previously been on the CIP schedule at a cost of \$100,000 is now expected to cost \$140,000 when purchased in 2027. As a result of this increase, the requested amount over four years has been increased from \$25,000 to \$35,000 beginning in 2024.

### **CIP Committee**

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