

Capital Improvement Plan Committee
Date: Thursday, November 16, 2023
Time: 6:00 p.m. Location: Henniker Community Center

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present:

Tia Hooper, Chair; Bill Marko, Vice Chair; Heidi Aucoin; Bruce Trivellini

Committee Members Absent: Leon Parker

Tucker Free Library Representatives Present:

Joe Petrick, Deb Kreutzer, Lynn Petrowicz, Fran Tain

Members of the Public Present: Kurt Spofford, and Matt Center

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chairwoman Tia Hooper thanked the representatives of the Tucker Free Library (TFL) for coming to the CIP meeting to talk about their projects and long-term goals. The discussion will give the CIP Committee a better understanding of what the library is envisioning so that the CIP Committee can add the library to the plan and begin planning out for the future.

Chairwoman Hooper provided a brief summary of the CIP Committees objectives of trying to develop a robust long-term plan for capital expenditures that meets the needs of the town departments and municipal entities, plans for the future growth within our community, while reducing undue and large fluctuations in our tax rate.

Meeting with Library representatives to discuss CIP Request and future needs.

Copies of the form and additional information sent over by Library Director Lynn Petrowicz was made available in paper format (Exhibit A – 2024 Capital Request submitted by the Tucker Free Library).

Bill Marko summarized the request submitted. The Tucker Free Library (TFL) is looking for \$80K, there are three (3) components to the expenditure.

- Security System
- Public Restroom
- Replacement of Accessibility Lift

Mr. Marko advised that he was curious regarding the breakdown of those projects, and he asked if there was a way to look at that.

Fran Tain advised that the representatives of the TFL were confused on how to fill out the form properly. She noted that the representatives wanted the CIP Committees advice on how to fill out the form for future years.

Ms. Tain highlighted to the CIP Committee that they would notice that the TFL had only completed the form for 2024, since they were confused on how to represent the information in the future years.

Ms. Tain also stated that of the \$80K the TFL is only asking the town for \$30K. The remaining \$50K of the listed \$80K will come from utilizing Library Trust Funds, which is listed on page 2 of the request.

Mr. Marko asked if the \$30K would be coming out of the expendable trust fund.

Deb Kreutzer advised \$30K would be requested to go into the expendable trust fund.

Ms. Tain explained that the way they interpreted the form, admits the Library Trustees were confused, but what they are saying is if there was an \$80K expenditure for a project, \$30K we would be asking for from the Town and \$50K would be supplied by the TFL. The three different projects that we mention some are longer term things that we would need to be saving up for, and some are more immediate things that we could do in the shorter term. That is why we needed help in trying to forecast future years. We know we can't fund an elevator with an \$80K price tag. We obviously know for planning purposes that we want to show you monies to the 2029 horizon, and we didn't know how to do that, so we didn't. So that is why we put in our note that we don't know how to do this, but we don't want to miss the budgeting cycle for this year. We know we have short, medium, and long-term projects that all fit under the Safety and Accessibility rubric, which is the purpose of our ETF, expendable trust fund. I think it has something like \$50K in it. We are now hoping that we can get now both an infusion of money from the towns annual cycle to support some projects, but also to start putting some money away for the elevator issue. Obviously, that will take a longer runway to get there. We know that neither we nor the town has an appetite for a large ask later. What we are trying to do is be modest with our request. So, for this year for \$30K maybe we can tackle the security system or bathroom renovation for example. But knowing that some of these projects can not be completed with the \$30K.

Ms. Hooper advised that looking out to future years does not lock the Library Trustees into anything. She explained that the CIP Committee has worked to create a large master sheet, which is available on the CIP Town website, it maps out the department's equipment and vehicle replacements. She noted that the committee even added in a timeline for a new police department facility. The master sheet and appendices are evaluated every year since things change, needs and priorities change in departments, it does not lock the town into a purchase or replacement, it gives us a sense what might be coming in the future for expenses. She noted that the TFL was correct in indicating the use of other library trust funds, including the \$50K. She noted she will make a modification to the form next year, to indicate funds to be allocated and we can then put an expenditure line up under capital cost, so you see money coming in and money coming out.

Ms. Tain expressed that the change to the form would be great. She also noted that she did not know if 2029 is out far enough.

Mr. Marko advised that the committee has planned out to 2050. On this form the CIP committee only asks for five years out but we have gone out further. A lot of departments have large trucks that have a life span of 20 years and at the end of the 20 years it will cost

\$1.3M to replace. We account for those replacements. Ms. Hooper has gone out 40 years in our planning documents.

Discussion of the form setup and rationale for the five-year outlook ensued. It was noted the CIP plan does go out 40 years.

Ms. Tain advised that she was afraid to include it, as she doesn't feel 2029 is a realistic timeframe for an elevator.

Mr. Marko asked if the Library Trustees have talked about the elevator and if they have talked about when they could afford to put it in.

Ms. Kreutzer advised that these are the plans and designs that have been developed and reviewed over the last five or so years. Part of the plans we nixed and now that we have a reasonable plan for accessibility, but the elevator is the core of it. If it was installed last year, it would have been a \$2.5M elevator. Who knows what it will be, so say there is a \$2.5M elevator out there sometime. We know we can't go to the town and say let's get that next week. That's not going to happen. What do we put here, maybe it will be ten years, maybe we will be gifted funds. We really don't have any idea. These are plans that are sort of shelved, but they are not trashed. What do we do with that?

Mr. Marko advised, what comes into the mix then is the idea of putting money away for something that we don't know the cost or when it is going to happen. Just tucking money away, you are taking money from the taxpayer. Saying we want you to cough up some money, we don't know how much we will need or if we have a good number or not, but we would like for you to take it. That is a hard thing to sell.

Ms. Kreutzer noted that the CIP Committee will battle that with the police department as well.

Ms. Hooper advised that we have already battled that for over the last few years. In the initial request for funding, we were able to provide the taxpayers with the reason for the new police department, estimated cost at the time which was based on what other communities were spending on new police building construction, noting things will increase with inflation. However, the biggest thing was getting it into the plan, so that we could shift and modify things so that we do not create a large fluctuation in the tax rate due to capital cost but meet the need when we think we might need it.

Mr. Trivellini advised, the key element of the police department is in your same wheel house, the safety of the building. Mr. Trivellini then explained the safety issues and concerns with the current police facility. He noted the library goes along way with their facilities assessment. He noted what would be helpful is making a list or appendix of all of the things in the report that have already been corrected, especially the masonry work. Your asset is the building, and we should plan out for the repair or replacement of the building as well.

Ms. Kreutzer noted that most of those items the TFL has been able to take care of on a sustained basis. Every year we do spend a certain amount on maintenance. The building itself is quite solid, stable, and functional if we keep up with the maintenance. We have managed to do that on an annual basis. Really the thing that is the outlier is the accessibility issue.

Mr. Trivellini agreed that it was one big project. He also advised that you have to look into the future if and what the community is going to be able to pay for with the maintenance of the facility with the intricate work involved in caring for a masonry building. At some point in time there will be obsolescence of the asset, where the main cost exceeds the value of the asset. Just like anything else, like trucks or squad cars, at some point in time this building will become obsolete. In many ways its obsolete for a 21st century library now.

Ms. Kreutzer asked Mr. Trivellini to explain what he meant.

Mr.Trivellini advised assessability is one issue, utilization and circulation is another. The design of this library is not one that you would design today.

Ms. Tain commented that she was not sure about that. She advised that she is not sure that it should be a standard the library is held to. You could say every building is outdated as soon as it is finished.

Ms. Kreutzer noted that the library building is historic.

Mr.Trivellini, noted that we have to plan for what future generations are going to be able to provide towards maintaining a building of this nature.

Ms. Kreutzer added that maintenance is probably a lot less than other building in town, for example the police station which is beyond obsolete. The library has been around 120 years. Yes, it requires maintenance, just like every building, but there is nothing about it that is falling apart or dysfunctional. If you look at our annual budget and what goes into building maintenance, it is pretty minimal.

Mr.Trivellini advised that he does not have those numbers.

Ms. Kreutzer advised that it is in every annual budget submitted to the town.

Mr. Marko advised, I think you nailed it when you talked about accessibility, that is your big problem. Whether the building is obsolete or not, the building is not capable of accessibility that we are looking for in the twenty-first century.

Ms. Kreutzer agreed advising that is the actual problem with building. That is a large expenditure. Todays standard of making it accessible we need to put in an elevator. But we are no way going to the town to ask for \$2.5M. I think we should have done that we it was free to borrow money and it could have been bonded.

Mr. Marko asked a clarifying question, you are using the term elevator, are we talking about a lift or an elevator.

Ms. Kreutzer explained that the library has a long-term plan for an elevator, which we have held public meetings and which many people support and do not support. We also have the replacement of the lift thing that we have found to be so problematic. So, we continue to study options to move people from low levels to higher level. So, this is why we ask, what do we put in there since we continue to look at options for different technologies.

Ms. Tain advised that the committee will notice that the TFL did not use the word "elevator" in there description, they used "other accessibility solutions." The TFL continues to investigate lifts, replacing the Gavanta, and elevators. We have not nailed down any

specific. We have a long-term goal, as Deb said in moving people in and out of the building, and up and down floors. We know if the town give us \$30K, we know that an elevator or other mobility solution is going to be more than \$30K. I don't think we are asking for an exorbitant amount, that it wouldn't be absorbed into a future project that we are thinking about. We also have shorter-term goals, so the security system, bathroom, they are goals. It is a package of long- and short-term things. Basically, as executors of the ETF, we can only use the funds consistent with the state purpose of the ETF, which is safety and accessibility improvement.

Mr. Marko responded, I think what we would still look for are numbers, projections, estimates of some kind. Even when department heads ask for a truck or something, they get a number for us to include on the master sheet so we can then add inflation each year so we can see what it might do to the tax rate in future years. As Tia said it is a valuable tool for the CIP Committee so that we can keep that tax rate level. We have worked with departments to even move equipment so if the truck can last that long we don't have a bump.

Ms. Petrowicz advised the committee that the library did submit the security camera project to the Town for ARPA funds. She noted that it is still sitting there, you have that information. I think the quote was \$29K.

Mr. Marko provided a brief overview of ARPA funds spent, noting the radio tower project and additional funds utilized due to cost increases.

Ms. Tain advised that part of the library's frustration as well is that every time quotes are obtained the price quoted is only for a short period of time.

Ms. Hooper noted that if you get a quote now, we will also build in the inflation rate. For road projects we also have a contingency included that can cause large fluctuations in cost such as liquid asphalt.

Mr. Marko added that when the pandemic hit it affected supply chains, which effected materials. So, shortage of materials caused an increase well beyond inflation. We are seeing now that supply chains are pretty much being filled. Departments had been at vehicles with 2-3-year lead times. Now they are getting delivery dates pulled way in.

Ms. Tain advised, the point that we are trying to make is that \$30K is not going to be a drop in the bucket, even when paying for the two shorter term projects, security system and the bathroom. We feel that \$30K in this case is very reasonable, it is not even going to touch what these things are going to total in cost.

Mr. Marko advised the Library Representatives that speaking on behalf of the committee, we would like for you to go out past the chart, break down these three projects into individual capital project, each project on individual sheets.

Ms. Tain asked how important the break down is.

Ms. Hooper explained that the library provides a great narrative that explains their expenses so CIP should be able to figure out what it is going towards.

Ms. Marko addressed Ms. Tain's question advising, if you have a construction project there might be planning, you want to include that, if you had quotes you should include it.

Ms. Hooper added that each year the CIP Committee goes back to review with the library to see if anything changed, needs to be updated, or included.

Ms. Kreutzer advised that they have a quote of \$2.5M for an elevator. We don't like it as much as others don't, but we have a quote for a \$2.5M, without all the other parts we have designs for. Just for the elevator it is \$2.5M, which the quote was quite recent. We would like to do something less than that. We continue on a monthly basis it seems, to explore if there are any different options for moving people from here to there. We do not stop discussing it. What do we do? Do we put in \$500K a year, we don't want to ask for that.

Ms. Tain: We don't want to give you a false impression that we want \$500K for the next five year. We want to work towards a goal, knowing that it might be 20 years or more into the future. I just don't know how to show you that on the form. If we fill out the form, we don't want to look at it like a demand for money. We just want to save for something.

Ms. Hooper advised the library representatives that, what you could do is to say this is the quote we have for one solution, one accessibility solution. We continue to explore other options, but the current price tag is \$2.5M for this particular solution. We are not satisfied with what we received. We are not looking for the town to provide \$2.5M, and say this a 20-year project, then we can go for there with an asterisk * continuing to explore options. We don't need to mark a \$2.5M expenditure in at the 20-year mark. We just put in a small amount each year to keep funding and moving you towards your goal.

Ms. Tain advised that she thinks that is what the library tried to do on the form. We would like \$30K to move us towards our goals.

Ms. Kreutzer added that this year they think \$30K is a tolerable amount from what we are guessing with what is going on in town. Next year, that might be a lot, or it might be a little. The long-term thing at \$2.5M is way out there if we don't find a better and less expensive solution. \$30K again is for this year. Impossible for what we think might be possible next year.

Ms. Hooper explained that things change and needs change within every department, there are also cost increases that need to be reviewed. She noted that the CIP Committee can take a look at the longer-term plan and see what the \$30K does to it, see where peaks might be to make sure the tax rate impact from capital stays flat. The other thing to keep in mind is the town only has a percentage of what they can borrow based on the towns assessment, we know the PD will be one of those bonds and we have to take out additional funding for wastewater.

Mr. Trivellini advised that he might not be hearing it correctly and wants to make sure he understands. The long-term goal is an elevator, but the interim while we are putting money away we still have to move people. If the goal is to get to the elevator, what are we doing in the interim are we continuing with the Garaventa that may or may not operate or are we looking to financing a replacement for that.

Ms. Tain advised we have other solutions, but they are not as good.

Ms. Kreutzer in response to Mr. Trivellini advised, last year we thought it might be possible to replace, at first, we were told it was not possible, then told maybe we could replace with a

different model. That became a nightmare solution, which I think would have resulted in an expense beyond \$2.5M, so that is out. So again, we continue to look for other possibilities.

Mr. Tain advised that, our work around are not mobility solutions. We offer to deliver books to your home, we offer curbside service, we have digital product. We have not found a solution we have found work arounds that do not include being in the building.

Mr. Trivellini then asked, how the work arounds have been working.

Ms. Tain advised, it's okay but if we found a grant and it requires ADA compliance, we are not eligible for certain opportunities. If is not just those in a wheelchair but some might have a broken leg or have a stroller.

Mr. Trivellini advised, since we are talking about it and confused it me. In your February minutes, this year, there was a table in the minutes which talked about the usage of the library and it had the term e-content and term about taking out from the library. On that chart it showed 11 items used in the library and 20K being used from electronic content. Next to that was a 2022 total, the numbers seemed odd. I wish I would have brought it.

Ms. Kreutzer explained that on average we have about 20% digital check outs,

Mr. Trivellini, asked for Ms. Kreutzer to take a look at the 2022 chart and the one on the webpage and send him an email. He noted the 2022 total on the website did not seem to line up.

Ms. Tain advised for 2023, year to date over 21K physical materials taken from the library. For e-content we have 8,500 approximately. So, we are 2.5X, people check out physical to digital content. We have already exceeded year to date totals for 2022 door count. More people have come to the library already compared to last year. We are exceeding all 2022 numbers.

Mr. Trivellini asked Ms. Tain if she had her 2022 February minutes there for reference.

Ms. Tain asked why it was relevant.

Ms. Hooper advised that she wanted to get back to the CIP discussion about accessibility and needs.

Mr. Marko, I think it would be easy to pin down numbers for security systems and bathroom so that we can put it on the sheet. In reference to the elevator project. I don't know how to lay it onto the CIP chart, but I know if we have this expense the people should know about the possibility. Give us another separate form with the elevator on it.

Ms. Hooper added that she will put in bold red letters, with an asterisk that this is for planning purposes and that the library is not asking for \$2.5M. CIP will add inflation to the current number they have of \$2.5M.

Ms. Kreutzer agreed that they could do that.

Ms. Kreutzer noted that four years ago the cost of \$2.5M, which included the elevator, remodel of the third level, fire suppression was all included. Now this \$2.5M is only to move people.

Mr. Marko advised CIP is not here to make judgements on the capital expenditures we want a number on the chart so we can accurately convey to the taxpayers what the costs may be.

Ms. Hooper, added from an economic standpoint we want to keep the rate flat, it is attractive to companies who are looking to develop.

All parties reviewed their action items.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Library to provide the CIP Committee with three (3) separate forms, one for security system project, one for the bathroom project, and one for the mobility project.**
- **Also include a narrative for the projects explaining any details that you would like to include.**
- **Include also any quotes or supporting documents you may have.**
- **Include any funds you will use from Trust Funds or Grants, so CIP can include in the fund flow.**

Ms. Hooper thanked the representatives from the Library for attending.

Review of department submissions, balances from Finance Director.

The Committee then reviewed the submissions received from the Rescue and Wastewater departments. They also reviewed the balances of ETF and capital funds provided by the Finance Director. It was noted the committee is still missing filings from Police, Fire, and Town Buildings.

Heidi Aucoin made a motion to adjourn. Bruce Trivellini seconded. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Exhibit A – Original 2024 Capital Request submitted by the Library that was discussed at the November 16, 2023 Meeting.



Town of Henniker, NH
Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Committee
2024– 2029
Project, Vehicle, and Equipment Request Form

EXHIBIT A - 2024 CAPITAL REQUEST
SUBMITTED BY THE TUCKER FREE
LIBRARY

Department: Tucker Free Library Priority 01 of 01

Project Title: Library Accessibility and Safety Project Expendable Trust Fund

Est. Total Cost: \$80,000 Est. Useful Life: Life Previously Submitted ☒ Yes ☐ No

Type of Project: (check one)

Primary effect of project is to:

- ☒ Replace/repair existing facility/equipment
☒ Improve quality of existing facility/equipment
☐ Expand capacity of existing service level/facility
☐ Provide new facility/service capacity

Service Area of Project: ☐ Region ☒ Town ☐ School District ☐ RV ☐ CV ☐ Neighborhood ☐ Street
(check at least one) ☐ Other – Please specify _____

Project Description:

This project includes multiple short- and medium-term works including (1) installation of a modern security system to monitor the premises 24/7 and send alerts in the event of break-ins, fire, and other types of emergencies that could cause damage to the building or harm to patrons and staff; (2) incorporation of a handicap accessible public restroom closer to the building's main entrance, circulation desk, and library stacks; and (3) replacement of the existing, aging accessibility lift with another accessibility solution to provide access to service for mobility-impaired patrons (bringing the building closer to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act).

Rationale for Project:

(check those that apply- elaborate below)

- ☒ Reduce long term operating costs ☒ Health or Safety ☒ Continuation of Existing Project
☒ Reflects Master Plan ☒ Expand Public Demand ☒ Reduces Liability

Narrative Justification:

Please see attached for narrative justification.

Please also note that the Trustees would enjoy meeting the CIP and getting further guidance on how to complete the Cost Estimate worksheet below for years beyond 2024.

COST ESTIMATE:	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	TOTAL
Capital Cost:							
Planning/Design/Engineering							
Land/Site Improvements							
Construction							
Equipment Cost							
Other Cost							
TOTAL CAPITAL COST	80,000						80,000
Operating Budget Impact:							
Salaries/Wages							
Fringe Benefits							
Contracted Services							
Expenses							
Other Cost							
TOTAL OPERATING COST							

PROPOSED SOURCES OF FUNDING	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	TOTAL
Expendable Trust Fund (tax rate)	30,000						30,000
Sewer Fund							
Capital Reserve Fund							
Revolving Fund							
Bond							
Grants							
Other Library Trust Funds	50,000						50,000
TOTAL SOURCES OF FUNDING	80,000						80,000

Form Prepared by:


Signature

Chair of the TFL Trustees

Title

November 1, 2023

Date

While the CIP committee has previously questioned the rationale for supporting library accessibility and safety works, we hope you will consider and recommend this year's modest request for funding, to be allocated to the Library Accessibility and Safety Expendable Trust Fund (ETF). As stewards of a public building, the library Trustees have an obligation under Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines to try to maintain basic accessibility for patrons and employees. We also must address legitimate safety issues identified in recent assessments. We understand the committee's concerns about a comprehensive renovation and have, for the time being, shelved plans for extensive renovations to the library's grounds, entryways, third floor attic space, and other areas until the fiscal environment is more conducive and/or funds can be secured for these projects through a mix of public/non-public means. However, higher-priority accessibility and safety improvements are still needed in the short- and medium-term, including (1) installation of a modern security system to monitor the premises 24/7 and send alerts in the event of break-ins, fire, and other types of emergencies that could cause damage to the building or harm to patrons and staff; (2) incorporation of a handicap accessible public restroom closer to the building's main entrance, circulation desk, and library stacks; and (3) replacement of the existing, aging accessibility lift with another accessibility solution to provide access to service for mobility-impaired patrons.

The above three projects are all consistent with the purpose of the existing Library Accessibility and Safety Project Expendable Trust Fund, are worthy of long-term planning and investment, and could be achieved through a combination of ETF, grant, and library trust fund monies. Combined with grant and library funds, a modest 2024 Town allocation to the Library Accessibility and Safety ETF would help the library make potential improvements in the coming year and/or increase funds available for projects over the coming five years.