

TOWN OF AMHERST
CIP Committee

August 28, 2019

DRAFT

Members in Attendance: Danielle Pray, Rich Hart, Stephen Coughlan, John D'Angelo, Michelle Croteau, Brian Coogan.

Department Heads in Attendance: Police Chief Mark Reams, Fire Chief Matt Conley.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Danielle Pray at 4:04 P.M.

Chief Mark Reams discussed his department's upcoming capital improvement needs. He stated that this is the first CIP meeting that he has been invited to and is happy to explain his department's requests.

The Police Department has three (3) capital improvement requests for the upcoming planning process. The first is a request for the Safety Complex Communication Tower Replacement for FY 2022. The current tower was constructed in the 1980s to facilitate emergency communications with police officers in the field and evolved to serve as the primary radio communications dispatch tower for the town's Fire, EMS, DPW, and police services. It is a microwave network and operates through line of sight. Natural growth will obscure its effectiveness and the tower needs to be constructed higher. An evaluation has been conducted. The total projected cost is \$100,000 and a matching grant is anticipated for next spring in the amount of \$50,000 (Homeland Security). If no matching grant is obtained, the need will still be present to replace the existing tower.

The Police Department's second request is for a Safety Complex Communication Dispatch Console for FY 2023. The current radio console system (consisting of radios, computer-aided dispatch software and associated components) has a useful life of 15 years (per manufacturer recommendation). The equipment was purchased in 2005 and thus currently at 14 years in service. [Note: CIP Project Request Form states a 2008 date for purchase, but that date is incorrect.] There are two separate consoles. The total projected cost is \$100,000 and a matching grant in the amount of \$50,000 is anticipated, but not guaranteed, from Homeland Security.

The third project request from the Police Department is the Police Station Renovation. This is the third year of a funding strategy that has been implemented for the updating/renovation of the police station. The police station was built in 1980. This request is to complete the final phase to renovate the existing police and former EMS structure to provide additional space currently needed by the APD and provide room for growth for the next 20-30 years. Specifically, the additional request for this project will allow the unfinished 3rd floor of the building to be completed. The request is for FY2020. The total cost of the 3 year project is estimated to be \$600,000 with \$400,000 of that cost already approved by voters and placed in a capital reserve fund. This additional request is for \$200,000 to go before the voters in March 2020 with anticipated construction to begin in late spring/early summer 2020.

Fire Chief Conley next presented the committee with the Fire Department requests. There are five (5) total requests.

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1. This request is for FY2021 and is a capital reserve funding request for \$257,000 through a warrant article vote. The capital reserve fund is designed to adequately replace fire rescue vehicles and equipment when due for replacement. A capital reserve funding plan has been approved by voters in prior years and this continues that practice to have funds available in order to replace aging/inadequate vehicles and equipment.
2. The second request is to replace the 1991 fire engine and is a request for FY2021. Service life of a fire engine based on the NFPA standards is ten years of primary service and five years as a reserve apparatus. Amherst, being a small town has seen service life of 20 years. This engine is approaching that time limit for replacement. The total request for this project is \$575,000.
3. The third request is for \$35,000 for FY2022. The current vehicle is used as a forestry/brush truck and has a skid unit in the bed of the truck (water tank, pump and hose). This 4WD vehicle allows for deployment to roadside and off-road incidents involving forest and brush types of fires. The replacement date for this vehicle has been postponed by a couple of years as the shape of the vehicle has been sufficient for keeping the vehicle in service longer than expected.
4. The fourth project request is for \$230,000 for FY2024 for replacement of the 2010 ambulance. The service life of an ambulance is 10 years, providing five years of primary and secondary response vehicles. The department has been able to “stretch out” that time to well past the average service life and reliability is expected to become a factor in the future. The Chief is anticipating a need for three ambulances in service (adding a third ambulance in the future) for 12 years serving four years each as primary, secondary and tertiary roles. He believes growth in Amherst will necessitate this additional ambulance and especially in the southern portions of town. The south station currently does not have a standalone ambulance and the Chief’s thought process would add one there.
5. The fifth request is for FY2026 in the amount of \$595,000 for the continuation of the plan put in place in to fund fire engine replacement. This request is specifically geared for the replacement of the 2003 fire engine. The service life of a fire engine based on the NFPA is ten years of primary service and five years as a reserve. Amherst has been able to reach a useful life of 20 years. Note the current approximate balance in this capital reserve fund is \$1,038,000.

The Chief discussed his plans/goals for the South Station. He feels there will be a need in the not too distant future for updates to the station as the needs of the south part of town continue to grow. John D’Angelo requested that he create a plan for those needs so they may be included in a future CIP.

The next meeting of the CIP Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, September 3, 2019, at 4:00 P.M. at Town Hall.

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- 88 The meeting adjourned at 5:25 P.M.
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- 90 Minutes submitted by Danielle Pray, Chairman.