

# **Capital Improvement Plan FY 2022-2027**



**Town of Amherst  
New Hampshire**

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All Project Request Forms and supporting documentation are available on the [Capital Improvements Committee webpage](#) on the Town website at [www.amherstnh.gov](http://www.amherstnh.gov).

## **Executive Summary**

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a program authorized by State law to link local infrastructure investments with long-term planning including: master plan goals, land use ordinances, and economic development. The plan should be an annually evolving document, updated to reflect new information, project requests, and any changing conditions in the community. The CIP complements and supports the town-wide Strategic Plan process implemented by the Board of Selectmen.

The plan proposed by the CIP Committee avoids spikes in the tax rate for capital expenditures and is intended to ensure that adequate investments are made in capital improvements necessary to provide basic services to preserve the public health, safety and welfare. The CIP Committee supports investment in the fleet of Fire and DPW vehicles, and capital road improvements. The committee endorses annual contributions to Capital Reserve Funds (CRF) to maintain a stable tax rate and provide sufficient funding for investment in significant capital expenses.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction and Background**

### ***Section 1: Introduction***

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a program authorized by State law to link local infrastructure investments with master plan goals, land use ordinances, and economic development. By bridging that gap the fiscal realities of improving and expanding community facilities are realized.

As authorized by RSA 674:5-8 the CIP is the responsibility of the Planning Board or a formally appointed CIP Committee, to prepare and amend a recommended program of municipal capital improvements projected over a period of at least six years. The CIP is designed to be updated and adopted annually, to provide timely tool to the Board of Selectmen and School Boards in long-range planning of municipal expenditures. Without annual updates the CIP quickly becomes obsolete.

It is important to note that the Amherst Board of Selectmen has initiated a Town Strategic Planning process that complements the CIP, laying out a long-term plan for the Town of Amherst which is reflected in its annual budgeting process.

## ***Section 2: Purpose***

The CIP attempts to link, within a standardized framework, the provision of needed facilities, products, or services with the spending necessary to attain such items. The CIP must address the goals and intent of the Master Plan with fiscal realities. A well-supported and thoughtfully prepared CIP should provide the following benefits to the community (as noted in The Planning Board in New Hampshire, A Handbook for Local Officials, New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives):

- ***Preserving public health, safety, and welfare.*** Providing the basic services which ensure citizen health and safety is a fundamental responsibility of local government. Programs of regular facility maintenance, upgrades and expansion of government services to meet minimum federal, state, and local standards are essential to any community. The cumulative effect of deferring major maintenance expenditures and basic improvement of essential services is often an expensive series of stopgap measures which fail to address comprehensive long-term goals.
- ***Anticipating the demands of growth.*** When related to the master plan, the capital improvements programming process works to anticipate investments in community facilities which are needed to serve or shape the pattern of growth and development in the Town. The portions of selected capital improvement expenditures which are necessitated by growth may be eligible for funding by impact fees as authorized in RSA 674:21.
- ***Improving communication and coordination.*** Communication among the Planning Board, municipal departments, administrative officials, the Ways & Means Committees, the Board of Selectmen, the School Boards, and citizens can result in cost savings and avoidance of duplication of facilities and expenditures.
- ***Avoiding undue tax increases.*** Capital improvements programming is a means of avoiding the surprise of expensive projects generating large property tax increases. While cost impacts cannot always be precisely determined in advance, the CIP fosters discussion of the distribution of the tax burden of new capital expenditures over time. A consequential benefit of fiscal stability and sound community facility planning may be an improved bond rating.
- ***Developing a fair distribution of capital costs.*** The capital improvements programming process allows for a public discussion of the preferred means of distributing capital costs not only over time, but also among users of the facilities to be financed.
- ***Building a foundation for growth management and impact fees.*** The development and formal adoption of a capital improvements program is a statutory prerequisite to the enactment of growth management and impact fee ordinances. A properly constructed CIP is an integral part of a land use regulatory process which implements either type of ordinance.
- ***Identifying “scattered and premature” development.*** New Hampshire statutes allow planning boards to adopt subdivision regulations which provide against scattered or premature subdivision of land. The capital improvements program is one measure which a planning board may use to judge whether a development is scattered or premature based on

an absence of essential public services and infrastructure.

- ***Supporting economic development.*** Communities exhibiting sound fiscal health, and quality services and facilities are attractive to business and industry. New business investment and reinvestment may be influenced by improvements which enhance the quality of life for residents and labor. Private decision-making for investment is based not only on availability of utilities, but also on the quality of community schools, public safety facilities, recreation opportunities, and cultural amenities such as libraries.

The *Ten Key Master Plan Recommendations That Can Shape Amherst's Future*<sup>1</sup>, from the Master Plan are listed below. These are the overarching recommendations that all Capital Improvements Program projects should fit within to advance the community's stated Master Plan goals.

1. Ensure that new development and redevelopment respect Amherst's natural resources and complement the Town's existing character.
2. Preserve and protect historic and cultural resources throughout Amherst.
3. Continue to preserve Amherst's natural resources and rural landscapes including aquifers, prime agricultural soils, forests, scenic vistas, wildlife habitats, and water and air quality for the sustainable health, safety and welfare of current and future generations.
4. Protect Amherst's extensive water resources for the benefit of residents and the environment, including surface water features, groundwater, and aquifer areas.
5. Save open space in residential development.
6. Encourage redevelopment that enhances the appearance of existing commercial and industrial areas.
7. Improve the ease and convenience with which residents can walk and use bikes for recreation, shopping, commuting and going to school.
8. Provide educational facilities that support quality education for the town's students.
9. Recognize the importance of recreation for health by providing needed facilities.
10. Continue to develop greenways and trails in order to provide a town-wide and inter-town system of recreational trails.

For additional information on any one of the above listed goals the Master Plan is available on the Town's website (<http://amherstnh.gov/master-plan/>).

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<sup>1</sup> Town of Amherst Master Plan 2010-2020, Ten Key Master Plan Recommendations That Can Shape Amherst's Future, Executive Summary, p. vii

**Section 3: Data and Trends**

The following tables provide a snapshot of Amherst's Population and Tax Rates. The most recent Census figures continue to show a declining rate of growth since the communities boom years in the 1960's and 1970's. The growth rate is projected to bounce around somewhat until 2040.

**Table 1**

<b>Amherst Population 1940-2040</b>				
Year	Population	% Change	Numerical Change	Avg. Annual Change
1940	1,174	-	-	-
1950	1,461	24.45%	287	2.44%
1960	2,051	40.38%	590	4.04%
1970	4,605	124.52%	2,554	12.45%
1980	8,243	79.00%	3,638	7.90%
1990	9,068	10.01%	825	1.00%
2000	10,769	18.76%	1,701	1.88%
2010	11,201	4.01%	432	0.40%
2020*	11,454	2.26%	253	0.23%
2030*	11,565	0.97%	111	0.10%
2040*	11,523	-0.36%	-42	-0.04%
Source: US Census and NRPC Population Projections*				

Over a shorter and more detailed time frame Table 2 reflects the changes in the Town's operating budget from fiscal year 2010 thru 2020. The table reflects the gross budget, dollar change and percentage change figures from each preceding year.

**Table 2**

<b>Town Operating Budget FY'10-FY'20</b>			
Year	Operating Budget	Dollar Change	Percent Change
FY-10	\$9,729,570.00		
FY-11	\$9,760,644.00	\$31,074.00	0.32%
FY-12	\$10,474,053.00	\$713,409.00	7.31%
FY-13	\$10,853,361.00	\$379,308.00	3.62%
FY-14	\$11,269,800.00	\$416,439.00	3.84%
FY-15	\$11,774,356.00	\$504,556.00	4.48%
FY-16	\$12,427,814.00	\$653,458.00	5.55%
FY-17	\$12,896,109.00	\$468,295.00	3.77%
FY-18	\$13,442,383.00	\$546,274.00	4.24%
FY-19	\$14,058,381.00	\$615,998.00	4.58%
FY-20	\$14,012,849.00	-\$45,532.00	-0.32%
Source: Amherst Town Reports			

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Table 3 and 4 reflects the changes in the Amherst and Souhegan School District's operating budgets from fiscal year 2010 thru 2019. The tables reflect the gross budget, dollar change and percentage change figures from each preceding year.

**Table 3**

<b>Amherst School Operating Budget FY'10-FY'19</b>			
Year	Operating Budget	Dollar Change	Percent Change
FY-10	\$23,215,002.00		
FY-11	\$23,371,144.00	\$156,142.00	0.67%
FY-12	\$23,964,120.00	\$592,976.00	2.54%
FY-13	\$24,339,744.00	\$375,624.00	1.57%
FY-14	\$24,358,572.00	\$18,828.00	0.08%
FY-15	\$24,709,808.00	\$351,236.00	1.44%
FY-16	\$24,734,732.00	\$24,924.00	0.10%
FY-17	\$23,967,926.00	-\$766,806.00	-3.10%
FY-18	\$25,427,899.00	\$1,459,973.00	6.09%
FY-19	\$28,779,100.00	\$3,351,201.00	13.18%
Source: NH DRA Form MS-26 (Report of Appropriations actually voted)			

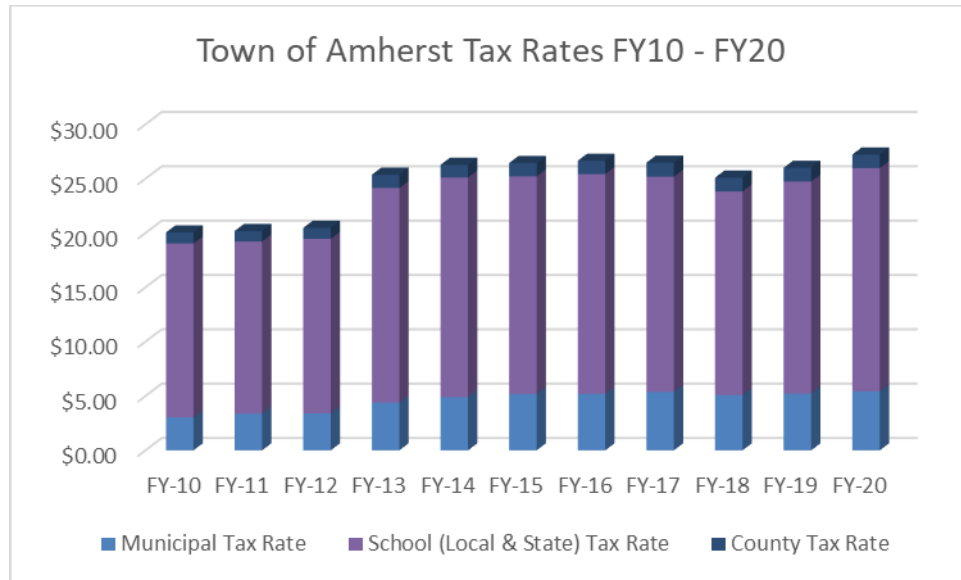
**Table 4**

<b>Souhegan School Operating Budget FY'10-FY'19</b>			
Year	Operating Budget	Dollar Change	Percent Change
FY-10	\$17,770,722.00		
FY-11	\$18,286,827.00	\$516,105.00	2.90%
FY-12	\$18,538,036.00	\$251,209.00	1.37%
FY-13	\$18,443,827.00	-\$94,209.00	-0.51%
FY-14	\$19,867,693.00	\$1,423,866.00	7.72%
FY-15	\$18,123,502.00	-\$1,744,191.00	-8.78%
FY-16	\$18,307,258.00	\$183,756.00	1.01%
FY-17	\$17,127,521.00	-\$1,179,737.00	-6.44%
FY-18	\$18,109,186.00	\$981,665.00	5.73%
FY-19	\$18,098,289.00	-\$10,897.00	-0.06%
Source: NH DRA Form MS-26 (Report of Appropriations actually voted)			

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Table 5 reflects the Tax Rate set for Fiscal Years 2010 thru 2020 for the Municipal, School (Local and State) and County Tax Rates, revaluations occurred in 2011 and 2016.

**Table 5**



## ***Section 4: Financing Methods***

There are a number of different financing methods available to municipalities, which were contemplated by the CIP Committee in their evaluation of project requests. The following is an outline of the various funding methods.

The CIP Committee's financing strategy follows three strategic points when evaluating project requests:

1. A capital financing strategy should limit the cost of providing capital infrastructure and equipment while meeting the community's needs by using a variety of financing methods.
2. A capital financing strategy should ensure financial strength and flexibility in the future.
3. A capital financing strategy should strengthen the Town's standing with the bond rating agencies, bond buyers, regulators, and the local community.

### **One-Year Appropriation:**

The One-Year Appropriation is the most commonly used financing option and refers to those projects that are to be funded by property tax revenues within a single fiscal year. Funds for projects that are financed using this method, are most often included in the Town's operating budget, but can appear as individual warrant articles to be voted on individually.

*The CIP Committee generally utilizes this funding mechanism for projects with a life expectancy of at least three years and an initial cost of up to \$200,000.*

### **Capital Reserve Funds:**

Capital Reserve Funds fall into the category of pay-as-you-go financing. A Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) is a non-lapsing savings account, separate from the General Fund, into which the voters can deposit funds with approval of a warrant article, with the intent of withdrawing the funds to be used for the specific purpose or purchase for which the account was established. CRFs can be earmarked for the purchase of a single item such as an Assessing Revaluation Fund or can be more general, such as the Highway Equipment Fund.

The advantages of pay-as-you-go financing include:

1. Allowing local governments to avoid both interest and other debt-issuance expenses;
2. Expediting inexpensive or recurring capital projects;
3. Preserving flexibility in the annual operating budget;
4. Avoiding the need to become involved with bond and debt markets; and,
5. Allowing the town to improve its financial position.

*The CIP Committee generally utilizes this funding mechanism for projects with a life expectancy of at least five years and with an initial cost of between approximately \$25,000 and \$300,000.*

### **Lease Purchase:**

Lease purchasing an item allows a community to spread the cost of that item over a period of years, generally no more than seven. A municipal lease typically allows for Town ownership at the end of the lease term and usually enjoys lower tax-exempt interest rates. Unlike a bond or loan, a municipal lease has a "non-appropriation clause" which allows the town to cancel the lease if the annual payment is not appropriated. The Town then loses the equipment that was

financed. This is a rare event, however, and municipal lease financing is a viable method for stretching the payment period over the useful life of the item financed.

*The CIP Committee generally utilizes this funding mechanism for projects with a life expectancy of between three and ten years and with an initial cost of between \$50,000 and \$175,000.*

**Bonding:**

Bonding allows the town to negotiate the purchase of goods or services (in the case of the construction of a building) at a set price, and then pay for that item or service over a period of time. Bonds, unlike CRFs, allow the town to utilize the item being purchased or the building being constructed while payments are being made.

The most important part of a bond transaction is the promise of the town to repay the debt with interest. In its most basic description, bonding allows for the payment of an item over its useful life and by the individuals who use it over time. This principle of having the present and future users of goods or services pay for those goods or services is one of the major advantages of bonding. This form of financing avoids the inherent dilemma of collecting money for a purchase from today's residents only to have the purchase utilized by tomorrow's residents - who may not be the same people.

A major disadvantage of bonding is that in addition to the purchase price, interest is charged on the funds bonded.

*For this reason, the CIP Committee finds that bonding is generally not utilized unless the purchase has a life expectancy of at least twenty years and a minimum initial cost of \$200,000.*

Types of projects generally financed through bonding include buildings or infrastructure that benefit the general public: town buildings, schools or college buildings, public safety facilities, libraries and other cultural facilities, and parks, recreation centers or facilities, and open space.

There are two major types of bonds - general obligation and special revenue.

**General Obligation Bonds:** General obligation bonds generally have lower interest rates than other types of long-term debt. The necessity of obtaining voter approval for the issuance of a bond can indicate citizen support for a project or purchase. And general obligation bonds usually cost less to issue than other types of local government debt.

The disadvantages of pursuing general obligation bonding include the chance that voters might not support a specific program or purchase. Also, because bonds require a higher positive vote to pass, it is usually more arduous and lengthy to gain authorization for this type of debt. Since Amherst operates under the provisions of SB2, passage of a bond issue requires a positive vote of at least 60% of the voters. Most bond debt entered into by the town or local school districts is of this type.

**Revenue Bonds:** Revenue bonds rely on a set revenue source or sources, as security for the bond. Local governments most often issue revenue bonds for self-supporting local projects.

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Revenue bonds are most appropriately used in situations where the local government can identify the user of the bonded item or service and they then become the payers for the project or system costs. This is the type of bonding the town utilized in developing the sewer project at Baboosic Lake.

To strengthen the Town's overall financial position the Town should utilize a variety of financing options.

## ***Section 5: Process***

The Planning Board is charged with directing the capital improvements planning process, based upon the Town's adopted master plan goals and recommendations. The CIP process begins in late spring of each year with a request for project submittals distributed by the Community Development Office to the school districts and all Town departments, commissions and boards. In 2004, the Town of Amherst voted to authorize the Board of Selectmen to appoint a capital improvement program committee pursuant to RSA 674:5, consisting of at least one member of the Planning Board, the Ways & Means Committee, or the Board of Selectmen to prepare a recommended program of municipal capital improvement projects over a period of at least six years.

The 2022-2027 CIP Committee was comprised of:

1. BOS Member – John D'Angelo
2. Souhegan SB Member – Steve Coughlan
3. Amherst SB Members – Elizabeth Kuzsma & Terri Behm
4. SAU Representative – Michele Croteau
5. Ways & Means Rep – Danielle Pray
6. Planning Board Member – Brian Coogan
7. Citizen Member – Jullie Patterson

The CIP Committee began meeting in June of 2020. The CIP Committee heard presentations as needed from department heads and representatives of the boards and commissions that submit project requests<sup>2</sup>. The Committee generally follows a basic four-step process in accumulating, analyzing, evaluating, ranking, and allocating project requests to appropriate years in the upcoming six-year time frame, with the intent of balancing needs and costs with Town financial constraints and reasonable and logical implementation timeframes. A more detailed description of the Capital Improvements Plan process is as follows:

**Step 1:** The Office of Community Development transmits project request forms to all applicable department heads, commissions, and the School District's SAU office. Each project is also to have a Justification in addition to the Description. The Justification enables the CIP Committee to understand why the project is required for continuation or increase of Town services and the impact of delaying or not accomplishing the project and documents the real need for and cost of the project. Additionally, the Project Request form seeks project rationale and justification based on a series of factors used to evaluate.

The specific project request addresses whether it:

- a. Removes imminent threat to public health or safety,
- b. Alleviates substandard conditions or deficiencies,

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<sup>2</sup>A Project Request is eligible for inclusion in the CIP if the total cost is a minimum of \$75,000 and is reasonably expected to have a useful life of at least five (5) years. Project requests under \$75,000 were also considered if the project would have a significant impact on the department's budget, however were not required.

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- c. Responds to federal or state requirements to implement,
- d. Improves the quality of existing services,
- e. Provides added capacity to serve growth,
- f. Reduces long-term operating costs,
- g. Provides incentive to economic development,
- h. Is eligible for matching funds available for a limited time,
- i. Is a continuation of an existing project,
- j. Addresses public demand,
- k. Extends the useful life of the current facility or equipment, and,
- l. Any “other” if there are additional extenuating circumstances justifying project inclusion in the CIP.

**Step 2:** The CIP Committee reviews project requests, and schedules a meeting with the respective department, as needed, to discuss each project.

**Step 3:** The CIP Committee studies projects individually and through group discussions. Evaluation includes review of the level of preparation applied to the requested project. The CIP Committee may utilize a policy that a minimum of a conceptual drawing or architect's rendering is required for any facility which is expected to be placed in the next three (3) year “window”. Not all projects submitted each year are recommended for inclusion in the CIP Plan. This may result if the Committee determines that a project has not established sufficient need or if it is unlikely to achieve support to implement during the plan years. The Planning Board can bring a project back into the CIP during its review at the public hearing process.

**Step 4:** Using the requestor's recommendation as a starting point, the CIP Committee discusses and develops a consensus on the recommendation for the year in which the Project should be placed on the Town Ballot either as part of the operating budget or a warrant article. For projects requiring bonding, the tax impact is noted the year after the warrant article is presumed to pass. The CIP Committee adjusts recommended project request funding years to smooth the fiscal impact and maintain a reasonable debt level each year. The Committee considers the overall debt load from all bonded or lease purchase acquisitions by the Town and the School District.

Upon completion of the four-step process, the CIP Committee:

1. Prepares a report with the assistance of the Office of Community Development;
2. Schedules a public hearing date with the Planning Board;
3. Presents the CIP Plan at a Planning Board meeting for the required public hearing and adoption;
4. Distributes copies of the final report to department heads, the Board of Selectmen, School

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Boards, the Ways & Means Committees, and the Planning Board.

## **Chapter 2: FY2022-2027 Project Requests**

### **Capital Improvement Project Descriptions and Committee Recommendations**

Project request forms were submitted by Town Departments and Board, the Amherst School District and the Souhegan School District for inclusion in this year's CIP. A brief description of each project and the CIP Committee recommendation follows below. It is important to note that individual Committee members may or may not support the actual project(s), however, the role of the CIP Committee is to place all projects (if properly presented with adequate information and justification) in the six-year capital improvements plan with the purpose of presenting a tax rate increase with a minimal amount of yearly fluctuation, if all projects designated for a certain year are funded.

#### **Placeholder and On the Horizon Projects**

When reviewing projects and placing them in the CIP Estimated Tax Impact Table, the CIP Committee also considers whether the project is a placeholder project request or “On the Horizon”. A project that is considered “On the Horizon” is a project that does not yet have either a well-defined description or scope for implementation. However, the CIP Committee, based on information presented, feels the project will likely be required either within or just beyond the six-year capital improvements planning cycle and thus needs to be included for planning and budgeting purposes. These projects, when known, are included in the CIP to identify major capital expenditures that need to be considered in long range planning and funding efforts.

## Section 1: Town Project Requests

### 1. Communications Center - Communications Fund CRF - \$25,000

#### **Project Request - FY2022 - FY2027**

**Project Request Description** - Add \$25,000 each year to the Communications Fund CRF to fund projects for the Communications Center.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2022 - FY2027 Funding:** The CIP Committee supports funding the Communications Fund CRF.

### 2. Communications Center - Safety Complex Communication Tower Replacement - \$110,000

#### **Project Request - FY2024**

**Project Request Description** - Replacement of primary emergency communications tower used to dispatch Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Police, and communicate with Department of Public Works.

**Project Request Justification** - The tower was constructed in the early 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. Minor structural improvements were made during ensuing years, and the tower is currently in serviceable condition but tower height is an increasing concern as foliage growth continues, and compromised line-of-sight microwave communication interference is inevitable. The tower currently serves all Amherst public safety services, and is utilized by the Amherst Public Safety Communications Center which is staffed 365/24/7.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2024 Funding from CRF:** The project cost of \$110,000 may be offset by grant funding of \$55,000. The CIP Committee recommends funding the project in 2024 from the Communication Fund CRF.

### 3. Communications Center - Safety Complex Communication Dispatch Console - \$100,000

#### **Project Request - FY2025**

**Project Request Description** - Replacement of dispatch center's communications consoles used to dispatch emergency services.

**Project Request Justification** - Replacement of dispatch radio console consisting of radios, computer aided dispatch software and associated components. Life expectancy is 15 years, equipment was purchased with grant funding in 2008 with a projected replacement in 2025. Previous replacement date of FY2023 was anticipated, but replacement of computers that support the console system was completed in FY2019 which is expected to extend the overall life to at least FY2025.

***CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2025 Funding from CRF:*** The project cost of \$100,000 may be offset by grant funding of \$50,000. The CIP Committee recommends funding the project in FY2025 from the Communication Fund CRF.

**4. Fire Rescue - Vehicle and Equipment Purchase and Repair CRF Funding - \$257,000**

**Project Request - FY2022 - FY2027**

**Project Request Description** - To adequately replace fire rescue vehicles and equipment when due for replacement, the Capital Reserve Fund will have the needed funding without having to have an additional warrant article to pay for it.

**Project Request Justification** - In order to continue with the capital replacement plan, this funding is required to pay for the replacement at the year it is due and not have to put out a warrant for the full replacement cost at one time.

***CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2022 - FY2027 Funding:*** The CIP Committee supports funding the Fire Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Purchase and Repair CRF.

**5. Fire Rescue - 1991 Fire Engine - \$575,000**

**Project Request - FY2021**

**Project Request Description** - Service life of a fire engine based on the National Fire Protection Association is ten years of primary service and five years as a reserve piece of apparatus. Being a smaller town, our experience is that we can get 20 years of service. 20 year replacement schedule is common in New England. This truck is now 29 years of age and it is very much outdated. It was bumped from being replaced before our 1994 Engine, which has bigger issues with rust and decay on the bottom side of the truck.

**Project Request Justification** - Based on the National Fire Protection Association consensus standards a fire engine service life is 15 years. We stretch this life to 20 year or more based on the size of Amherst, the number of calls we answer, refurbishing them at ten years of age and keeping them in good working order. Based on the current size of Amherst (12K population, 34 sq. miles) four fire engines are adequate to maintain a fair Insurance Service Office Fire Suppression Rating. Our current Public Protection Classification (PPC) is class 4 if within five miles of a fire station or class 8 if you are beyond five miles.

***CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2021 Funding from CRF:*** The CIP Committee recommends funding the replacement of the 1991 Fire Engine in 2021 from the Fire Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Purchase and Repair CRF.

**6. Fire Rescue - 2006 Pick Up (Forestry 2) - \$40,000**

**Project Request - FY2022**

**Project Request Description** - This vehicle is used as a Forestry/Brush Truck. It has a skid unit in the bed of the truck (water tank, pump and hose). This 4-wheel drive vehicle allows for roadside and off-road incidents involving forest and brush types of fires.

**Project Request Justification** - We have pushed out the replacement date by a couple of years as the shape of the vehicle is still sufficient to keeping the vehicle in service longer than expected. This is a versatile vehicle allowing for small incidental response types to be handled, allowing us to keep our larger apparatus in quarters.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2022 Funding from CRF:** The CIP Committee recommends funding the replacement of the 2006 Pick Up (Forestry 2) in 2022 from the Fire Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Purchase and Repair CRF.

## **7. Fire Rescue - 2010 Ambulance - \$230,000**

### **Project Request - FY2024**

**Project Request Description** - The service life of an ambulance is ten years, providing five years of primary and secondary response vehicles. We have stretched ours out well past the average service life to where reliability becomes a factor.

**Project Request Justification** - The thought process here is to have three of these vehicles in service for 12 years serving four years each as a primary, secondary and tertiary role. Within the first four years of service in Amherst the mileage is between 88,000 - 100,000. Even though there is a good service plan in place there is still a lot of wear on them. By reducing the role of these vehicles the reliability stays high and should one go out of service at any point we have a back-up vehicle in place. The call numbers for our ambulances continue to go up, thus putting higher mileage on them.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2024 Funding from CRF:** The CIP Committee recommends funding the replacement of the 2010 Ambulance in 2024 from the Fire Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Purchase and Repair CRF.

## **8. Fire Rescue - 2003 Fire Engine - \$595,000**

### **Project Request - FY2026**

**Project Request Description** - Service life of a fire engine based on the National Fire Protection Association is ten years of primary service and five years as a reserve piece of apparatus. Being a smaller town, our experience is that we can get 20 years of service. 20 year replacement schedule is common in New England.

**Project Request Justification** - Based on the National Fire Protection Association consensus standards a fire engine service life is 15 years. We stretch this life to 20 year or more based on the size of Amherst, the number of calls we answer, refurbishing them at ten years of age and keeping them in good working order. Based on the current size of Amherst (12K population, 34 sq. miles) four fire engines are adequate to maintain a fair Insurance Service Office Fire Suppression Rating. Our current Public Protection Classification (PPC) is class 4 if within five miles of a fire station or class 8 if you are beyond five miles.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2026 Funding from CRF:** The CIP Committee

recommends funding the replacement of the 2003 Fire Engine in 2026 from the Fire Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Purchase and Repair CRF.

**9. Fire Rescue - Tower 1 - \$1,300,000**

**Project Request - FY2026**

**Project Request Description** - Service life of fire apparatus based on the National Fire Protection Association is ten years of primary service and five years as a reserve piece of apparatus. Being a smaller town, our experience is that we can get 20 years of service. The intent for this piece of apparatus was to be in service for 30 years. Seeing the truck was built in 1997 we are coming up on the 30 year mark and the planning for the replacement is on our radar.

**Project Request Justification** - The service life of this vehicle is planned for 30 years, this is based on the size of Amherst and the number of calls we answer. The Tower is an exception to our fire engine replacement timetable of 20 plus years as it was purchased to go 30 years of service. Based on the current size of Amherst (12K population, 34 sq. miles) four fire engines are adequate to maintain a fair Insurance Service Office Fire Suppression Rating. Our current Public Protection Classification (PPC) is class 4 if within five miles of a fire station or class 8 if you are beyond five miles.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2027 Funding from CRF:** The CIP Committee recommends funding the replacement of the Tower 1 in 2027 from the Fire Rescue Vehicle and Equipment Purchase and Repair CRF.

**10. Parks and Recreation - AMS Tennis Courts Replacement - \$85,000**

**Project Request - FY2023**

**Project Request Description** - Resurface the AMS tennis courts located at the Amherst Middle School. Once resurfaced we plan to install basketball hoops and have the primary painting of the court be basketball with tennis as the secondary sport.

**Project Request Justification** - The AMS tennis courts are in need of replacement surfacing. The courts were originally installed using Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) money. Since LWCF money was used the courts must always remain courts and be open to all public. By taking the LWCF funding the town also acknowledged they would keep the courts open and maintained.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2023 Funding from Revolving Fund:** The CIP Committee recommends funding the project in FY2023 from the Parks and Recreation '02 Revolving Fund with no impact to taxes.

**11. Parks and Recreation - Athletic Field Construction at Buck Meadow - \$315,000**

**Project Request - FY2022**

**Project Request Description** - The ARD would like to put athletic fields on the property

using the plan set forth by Meridian.

**Project Request Justification** - Amherst has a lack of fields for the amount of field time needed for all sports in Amherst. By purchasing Buck Meadow we now have the space to grow our field space. The plan is to apply for a Land Water Conservation Grant to pay for 50% of the project.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2022 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding the project with \$157,500 matching grant from the LWCF; \$10,000 from donations/bequests/private funding; \$25,000 to come from the Parks and Recreation '02 Revolving Fund with no impact to taxes; and \$122,500 as a warrant article for construction in FY2022.

## **12. Parks and Recreation - Community Center - \$8,010,000**

### **Project Request - FY2023 and beyond**

**Project Request Description** - Amherst Parks and Recreation is planning the construction of a community center for the Town of Amherst.

**Project Request Justification** - Amherst has a lack of indoor space for activities to happen during school day times as well as a need for court space in the evenings. The school facilities are great when available but that availability seems to be shrinking more each year. We also have a real lack of senior programs due to this indoor facility problem. By building a community center the department will be more able to meet the needs of all Amherst citizens at all times and days of the year.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2024 Start Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding the project with a 20-year bond for \$5,000,000 beginning in FY2024. It is anticipated that \$10,000 will be used for planning and feasibility analysis from the Parks and Recreation '02 Revolving Fund with no impact to taxes and that \$3,000,000 will be raised in private donations and bequests, leaving \$5,000,000 to be bonded.

## **13. Police Department - Police Station Renovation - \$750,000**

### **Project Request - FY2022**

**Project Request Description** - Renovate existing police and former EMS structure to provide additional space currently needed by APD, and provide room for growth and expansion through at least the next 25 years.

**Project Request Justification** - The existing APD (and former EMS) structure was built in 1980, with major additions and renovations in 1996. The need for additional APD space has developed over the last 20+ years, and the occupation of both levels (and completion of the unfinished third floor) will accommodate current and future needs. A Police Station Renovation Committee was formed in 2018, and the contract for renovation architectural services was awarded in early 2019. A rough estimate of \$600,000 was proposed for the

project based upon pre-bid estimates from several builders. As of March 2020, \$600,000 has been raised and appropriated to the Police Station Renovation Capital Reserve Fund through voter support of warrant articles of \$200,000 each over the course of three years. Three construction bids were obtained on April 15, 2020, and all substantially exceeded the \$600,000 estimate, due at least in part to roughly \$150,000 previously undiscovered HVAC issues and the need for an addressable fire alarm system (in lieu of a more costly sprinkler system) costing roughly \$40,000. On May 11, 2020, the Board of Selectmen rejected those three bids, and put the project back out to bid with some acceptable changes in project scope. Final project bids are anticipated on or about June 15, 2020.

***CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2022 Funding:*** The CIP Committee recommends a warrant article of \$175,000 in FY2022 to add to the existing Police Station Renovation CRF of \$600,000 +/- for funding the project.

**14. Public Works - Continuous Roof over Transfer Station sorting tables and walkway deck - \$125,000**

**Project Request– FY2022**

**Project Request Description** - Continuous carriage shed type (truss) metal or fiberglass roof over the complete deck protecting employees, users, and the products being trashed or recycled. Protecting the deck and creating a better means of lighting it (in winter months) creates a safer environment for everyone.

**Project Request Justification** – The Transfer Station was renovated in 2008. The deck walkway is deteriorating and the most common complaint is a slippery deck in the rain and snow. A pedestrian walkway roof would reduce the chance of a slip/trip/fall in inclement weather, reduce the labor/cost of clearing the existing deck and potentially reduce the cost of disposal. The deck is an inferior material for the purpose. The proposal is to replace it with ADA compliant steel gratings. We pay by weight, wet materials weigh significantly more than dry materials.

***CIP Committee Recommendation – FY2022 Funding:*** The CIP Committee recommends funding this project with a warrant article in 2022.

**15. Public Works - Reconfigure the Transfer Station layout to make drive for drive-through trash - \$125,000**

**Project Request - FY2022**

**Project Request Description** - Reconfigure and relocate the existing trash compactors so that it is segregated from recycling and allow drive through trash disposal.

**Project Request Justification** - The current Transfer Station layout is inefficient. The sorting deck is 180 feet long and regardless of the material being disposed of or recycled the vast majority of patrons walk the length of the deck several times. The average time a vehicle is parked in one of the designated parking spots is nearly five minutes. This

disincentivizes recycling and increases wait times. The wait times affect safety to the point that vehicles stack up on Rt. 101 which is a 50 mph state road. The proposal is to move the trash compactors and locate them in a manner that allows pull through side dumping followed by the option to go to the existing recycling areas. This will also allow residents to more easily bring trailers to get rid of trash and recycling, lowering the number of periodic trips they may have to make presently due to limited vehicle cargo space. This will not affect or be affected by the other CIP request for a continuous truss roof and deck replacement. We could do more recycling with the extra space.

***CIP Committee Recommendation – FY2022 Funding:*** The CIP Committee recommends funding this project with a warrant article in 2022.

**16. Public Works - Bridge Repair and Replacement CRF - \$200,000**

**Project Request– FY2022-FY2027**

**Project Request Description** - Level funding at \$200,000/year for both state aid bridges and town water crossings as per the plan presented last year.

**Project Request Justification** – The plan was presented/formulated in 2018 to provide funding for state aid bridges as they become scheduled and for town water crossings.

***CIP Committee Recommendation – FY2022-2027 Funding:*** The CIP Committee supports funding the Bridge Repair and Replacement CRF.

## Section 2: School Districts Project Requests

Capital improvement projects proposed by the School Districts are included in the Town's Capital Improvements Plan in order to present a comprehensive overview of all potential large capital expenditures that may need to be funded in the six-year capital improvements plan. The Board of Selectmen, the School Boards, and their respective departments and commissions, continue to cooperate in projecting and timing major expenses so to avoid dramatic jumps in the property tax rate. The Capital Improvements Program Committee reviewed School District project requests with this in mind.

### 17. School District - Contribution to Expendable Trust Fund - \$663,000

#### **Project Request - FY2022**

**Project Request Description** - Annual contribution to expendable trust fund to develop a funding plan for future capital projects.

**Project Request Justification** - Investing in a funding plan to support future capital projects reduces spikes in tax rates to pay for these projects and supports planning to ensure safe and adequately maintained facilities. Funding plan for future capital purchases; \$500,000 for ASD and \$163,000 for SCSD.

**CIP Committee Recommendation – FY2022 Funding:** The CIP Committee supports funding the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

### 18. School District - Contribution to Expendable Trust Fund - \$676,260

#### **Project Request - FY2023**

**Project Request Description** - Annual contribution to expendable trust fund to develop a funding plan for future capital projects.

**Project Request Justification** - Investing in a funding plan to support future capital projects reduces spikes in tax rates to pay for these projects and supports planning to ensure safe and adequately maintained facilities. Funding plan for future capital purchases; \$650,000 for ASD and \$26,260 for SCSD.

**CIP Committee Recommendation – FY2023 Funding:** The CIP Committee supports funding the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

### 19. School District - Contribution to Expendable Trust Fund - \$689,785

#### **Project Request - FY2024**

**Project Request Description** - Annual contribution to expendable trust fund to develop a funding plan for future capital projects.

**Project Request Justification** - Investing in a funding plan to support future capital projects reduces spikes in tax rates to pay for these projects and supports planning to ensure safe and adequately maintained facilities. Funding plan for future capital purchases; \$605,000 for

ASD and \$84,875 for SCSD.

***CIP Committee Recommendation – FY2024 Funding:*** The CIP Committee supports funding the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**20. School District - Contribution to Expendable Trust Fund - \$703,581**

**Project Request - FY2025**

**Project Request Description** - Annual contribution to expendable trust fund to develop a funding plan for future capital projects.

**Project Request Justification** - Investing in a funding plan to support future capital projects reduces spikes in tax rates to pay for these projects and supports planning to ensure safe and adequately maintained facilities. Funding plan for future capital purchases; \$675,000 for ASD and \$28,581 for SCSD.

***CIP Committee Recommendation – FY2025 Funding:*** The CIP Committee supports funding the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**21. School District - Contribution to Expendable Trust Fund - \$717,653**

**Project Request - FY2026**

**Project Request Description** - Annual contribution to expendable trust fund to develop a funding plan for future capital projects.

**Project Request Justification** - Investing in a funding plan to support future capital projects reduces spikes in tax rates to pay for these projects and supports planning to ensure safe and adequately maintained facilities. Funding plan for future capital purchases; \$675,000 for ASD and \$42,653 for SCSD.

***CIP Committee Recommendation – FY2026 Funding:*** The CIP Committee supports funding the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**22. School District - Contribution to Expendable Trust Fund - \$732,006**

**Project Request - FY2027**

**Project Request Description** - Annual contribution to expendable trust fund to develop a funding plan for future capital projects.

**Project Request Justification** - Investing in a funding plan to support future capital projects reduces spikes in tax rates to pay for these projects and supports planning to ensure safe and adequately maintained facilities. Funding plan for future capital purchases; \$675,000 for ASD and \$57,006 for SCSD.

***CIP Committee Recommendation – FY2027 Funding:*** The CIP Committee supports funding the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**23. Souhegan Cooperative School District - Souhegan HS Smoke/Fire Detection System**

**Upgrade - \$99,985**

**Project Request - FY2022**

**Project Request Description** - Replace Simplex FACP and devices.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate level of safety and compliance with regulations.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2022 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**24. Amherst School District - AMS Rooftop Air Handling Units - \$123,463**

**Project Request - FY2024**

**Project Request Description** - Replace 5 rooftop units.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate level of safety and compliance with regulations.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2024 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**25. Amherst School District - AMS HVAC Distribution System - \$579,637**

**Project Request - FY2024**

**Project Request Description** - Replace HVAC distribution system.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate level of safety and compliance with regulations.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2024 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request with \$369,821 from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects and an additional warrant article of \$209,816.

**26. Amherst School District - AMS Lighting Upgrade - \$579,637**

**Project Request - FY2024**

**Project Request Description** - Upgrade to high efficiency lighting.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate level of safety, compliance with regulations and cost efficiencies.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2024 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**27. Amherst School District - AMS Roof Replacement - \$580,310**

**Project Request - FY2024**

**Project Request Description** - Replace roof tar and gravel.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate level of safety and compliance with regulations.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2024 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**28. Amherst School District - Clark School Lighting Upgrade - \$307,468**

**Project Request - FY2026**

**Project Request Description** - Replace lighting with high efficiency lighting.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate level of safety, compliance with regulations and cost efficiencies.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2026 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**29. Amherst School District - Clark School Exterior Vinyl Walls - \$92,333**

**Project Request - FY2026**

**Project Request Description** - Replace exterior vinyl walls with cement fiberboard.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate level of safety, compliance with regulations and cost efficiencies.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2026 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**30. Amherst School District - Wilkins School HVAC - \$614,937**

**Project Request - FY2026**

**Project Request Description** - Replace HVAC distribution system.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate level of safety, compliance with regulations and cost efficiencies.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2026 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request with \$364,937 from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects and an additional warrant article of \$250,000.

**31. Amherst School District - Wilkins School Lighting Upgrade - \$614,937**

**Project Request - FY2026**

**Project Request Description** - Replace lighting with high efficiency lighting.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate level of safety, compliance with regulations and cost efficiencies.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2026 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**32. Amherst School District - Amherst School Building Construction - \$35,000,000**

**Project Request - FY2022**

**Project Request Description** - This is a place holder for future work to be determined. Funding will be used for expansion and improvement of educational facilities through renovation of existing facilities and/or new construction.

**Project Request Justification** - The conditions of the current facilities and anticipated growth in the community necessitate a plan for building renovation or replacement to accommodate educational needs. Will extend the useful life of the current facilities only if the determination is made to renovate versus replace.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2022 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request with a \$35,000,000 general obligation bond.

**33. Souhegan Cooperative School District - Souhegan HS Building Construction - \$5,000,000**

**Project Request - FY2023**

**Project Request Description** - This is a place holder for future work to be determined. Funding will be used for construction/renovation at the HS.

**Project Request Justification** - The conditions of the current facilities necessitate a plan for building renovation to accommodate educational needs.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2023 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request with a \$5,000,000 general obligation bond.

**34. Amherst School District - Amherst Middle School Roof Replacement - \$380,464**

**Project Request - FY2027**

**Project Request Description** - Replace roof PVC membrane.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate level of safety and compliance with regulations.

**CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2027 Funding:** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**35. Souhegan Cooperative School District - Souhegan HS Crack-fill, Sealcoat & Re-stripe - \$83,236**

**Project Request - FY2027**

**Project Request Description** - Repair and maintain tar surfaces every five years; crack-fill, sealcoat, and re-stripe.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate

level of safety and compliance with regulations.

***CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2027 Funding:*** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**36. Amherst School District - Amherst Middle School Movable Wall Partitions - \$118,245**

**Project Request - FY2024**

**Project Request Description** - Replace / upgrade aging wall partitions. The Capital Needs Assessment includes 30 partitions estimated at approximately \$3.9k each.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging systems insures an appropriate level of safety and compliance with regulations.

***CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2024 Funding:*** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**37. Souhegan Cooperative School District - Souhegan HS Classroom Furniture - \$121,720**

**Project Request - FY2024**

**Project Request Description** - Replace / upgrade classroom furniture. Capital Needs Assessment (CNA) projects 10 classrooms at \$12,172 each.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging furniture insures an appropriate level of safety and support of an educational environment for students and staff.

***CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2024 Funding:*** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request from the expendable trust fund for school capital projects.

**38. Souhegan Cooperative School District - Souhegan HS Turf Field Replacement - \$100,000**

**Project Request - FY2026**

**Project Request Description** - Replace / upgrade turf field. There is approximately \$38k in a separate fund to support this project.

**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade of aging turf field insures an appropriate level of safety and support of athletic programs.

***CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2026 Funding:*** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request with \$38,000 from the field usage fee account and an additional warrant article of \$62,000.

**39. Souhegan Cooperative School District - Souhegan HS Annex Renovation - \$430,000**

**Project Request - FY2022**

**Project Request Description** - Renovate and upgrade the Science wing in the HS Annex.

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**Project Request Justification** - Planned upgrade and renovation of the Science classrooms to meet educational program needs.

***CIP Committee Recommendation - FY2022 Funding:*** The CIP Committee recommends funding this request with a warrant article in 2022.

### **Section 3: Major Town Projects on the Horizon**

The CIP Committee received information about one capital improvement projects that is considered to be “On the Horizon” and thus not included as projects planned for the six-year CIP time period of FY2022 through FY2027. However, these projects are identified so that prioritization, planning, and funding can be considered in the next several years.

#### **40. Fire Rescue - Paramedic Response Vehicle - 2028 - \$50,000**

## **Chapter 3: Additional CIP Committee Recommendations**

The Capital Improvements Plan Committee annually discusses with Department Heads, Committee Chairs and between themselves, when reviewing projects, how projects are formulated, funded, and prioritized. Discussion often focuses on the ability of the Town to fund all project requests, and the potential tax impact of such requests, if they were all placed either on the warrant or within departmental budgets. Funding specific projects or all projects in a given year may be financially impracticable or constrained by specific Town circumstances that may impose an additional or unrealistic tax burden upon the property owner.

The CIP Committee strongly supports the use of capital reserve funds for CIP projects with annual contributions to eliminate the need to pay interest on projects, vehicles, or equipment.

The CIP Committee commented that the Plan of 2022-2027 does not reflect any impacts from the pending housing developments before the Planning Board. The CIP Committee also expressed support for the Planning Board continuing to require impact studies from developers to evaluate the impacts from proposed housing developments.

It should be noted that this plan includes two possible futures for the schools. It is widely recognized that the current schools are inadequate for current educational needs and standards, so there are placeholders in this plan for large school projects to replace and extensively renovate various buildings. If these are implemented, the large maintenance and replacement equipment projects will no longer be required. If these plans are not implemented or progress slowly, the current schools will require the extensive repairs and replacements, and those projects will be necessary. The CIP Committee chose to present all possible futures in this plan, knowing *some* of them will not be implemented depending on the choices of the Boards and voters, rather than predict a single specific future.

## **Chapter 4: Estimated Tax Impact Table and Plan Recommendations**

The CIP Estimated Tax Impact Table on the next page presents the recommended schedule for project requests reviewed by the CIP Committee for the period of FY2022 - FY2027. The intent of the CIP Committee is to prioritize projects for funding, looking at all projects submitted. Based upon the information presented to the CIP Committee and subsequent discussion, projects were placed in a manner to address the most urgent (FY2022) Town capital project needs. Projects for subsequent years were placed to try to keep the overall debt service, existing and new, as level as possible.

Final decision-making on which projects will move forward and which will be delayed, rests with the Board of Selectmen, the School Boards, and ultimately the voting public.