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*Town of Ludlow, Massachusetts*  
*Capital Improvement Planning Committee*

Minutes of February 12, 2024, Capital Improvement Planning Committee.

Meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

Members present: Marc Strange, James Gennette, Tony Sanches,  
Ron Saloio, and Luis Vitorino

Members absent: Joshua Carpenter

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First Order of Business: Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Gennette: Good evening, everyone, welcome to the February 12, 2024, Capital Improvement Planning Committee. Alright, well we are missing Mr. Carpenter this evening but we've got some impending snow, so we are going to be out of here relatively quick tonight. Why don't we just go real quick over the, what we went through. I'm just going to read it off. If anybody has any concerns or they thought about any questions or anything like that, bring it up. This is what we recommended to the Board of Selectmen. Is this on the next agenda or is it,

Mr. Strange: No, it is not on February 20<sup>th</sup>, I think it might be March 5<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Gennette: March 5<sup>th</sup>?

Mr. Strange: Yes, that the Board is supposed to approve.

Mr. Gennette: Alright, so before our next meeting, these are going to go up. So, the Board of Selectmen backup generator for town hall is the 25% grant/cash match for \$120,000. The fire tower, this is the truck, right?

Mr. Strange: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: Yes, so this is the ladder truck. Can we just put in there that it's a vehicle?

Mr. Strange: Fire tower truck?

Mr. Gennette: Yes, or ladder truck or whatever. I don't know that anybody is really going to go what fire tower?

Mr. Strange: Yes, okay.



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Mr. Gennette: \$335,000 out of free cash. Fire, new ambulance the first year of a four-year lease for \$100,000. That's coming out of the ambulance subscription funds. We normally try to renew/cycle through our vehicles. The DPW Volvo compact excavator, \$66,079 free cash. That wasn't a lease, was it?

Mr. Strange: No. That was a one timer.

Mr. Gennette: That was a one timer, okay. DPW F-350 Super Duty pickup with plow, \$59,382 out of free cash. DPW Volvo L60GP Wheel Loader first year of a three-year lease, \$68,624 out of free cash. That's probably what I was thinking of right there. Council on Aging StarCraft lift van \$35,000 out of free cash. The Council on Aging already has \$75,000 towards that vehicle. We are just topping them off to make sure that they can get it. Hubbard Memorial Library historic windows repair \$219,540. Hopefully, we can finish up with that this year. The schools, LHS, replace the main gym HVAC, \$85,000. Schools, LHS main gym HVAC, both units, \$85,000 each. Schools, East Street School, fire replacement panel, \$115,000. Schools, East Street School, parking lot and sidewalk replacement, \$53,185, which I think is a great price by the way for that parking lot. It's actually a sizeable parking lot, isn't it. I think the fire panel, anyhow. Schools, new pickup truck to replace the 2011 Chevy Silverado, \$48,000 out of free cash. Schools, LHS rear wall repair, \$500,000. We are setting this to the side. We don't know what the estimates are coming in yet, but we don't want to get caught next year unprepared. So, we are putting \$500K to the side to soften the blow for when it comes through. I have a sneaky suspicion that it is going to come in higher. Westover Golf, clubhouse kitchen upgrades \$60,000 from their retained earnings. Westover Golf, golf cart fleet second year of a four-year lease, \$73,428 out of the golf operating budget. Westover Golf, Green Master 3150Q, \$63,257 out of retained earnings. Westover Golf, Ventrak second year of a three-year lease, \$16,127 out of retained earnings. Westover Golf, SandPro 3040 second year of a three-year lease, \$9,439 also out of retained earnings. Total expenditures this year are \$2,247,061 of that \$1,679,011 is out of free cash, \$345,799 is out of the ambulance subscription fund, \$73,428 is out of the Westover Golf operating budget, \$148,823 is out of the Westover Golf retained earnings. Anybody have any questions, points of interest, information, anything? Alright, it looks like we are sending it up. Alright, so the five-year plan as presented by our Town Administrator, I thought it looked pretty good the last time we took a look at it. Has anybody had an opportunity to review, do they have any questions on it or anything? We made a few statements at the last meeting. The OPEB total is \$539,955?

Mr. Strange: Yes.



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Mr. Gennette: And we're looking at still contributing another 250?

Mr. Strange: Our outstanding liability is \$92 million.

Mr. Gennette: I get it. We are never going to get there. I'm just wondering with recent legislation and conversations and stuff like that, will we be able to get this money back out if they decide the OPEB is not a necessary entity anymore?

Mr. Strange: I don't see that happening. I think they're going to go the other way. So, the Governor proposed an OPEB commission at the state level. The speculation amongst sort of the municipal community is they're going to try and find a source of funding to help support communities because there's a lot of communities that are way underfunded.

Mr. Gennette: Like us.

Mr. Strange: Like us, right. We are one of the lower ones, but also, I think they're going to start encouraging towns to contribute more. So, I wouldn't and there was \$100,000 in the operating budget that we took out to close the budget gap. So, I wouldn't want to decrease that anymore than we have to. Bond rating agencies like to see you contributing a little bit. We just started, obviously \$540,000 so.

Mr. Vitorino: Question about that, does money come out of it or are we just funding it just in case.

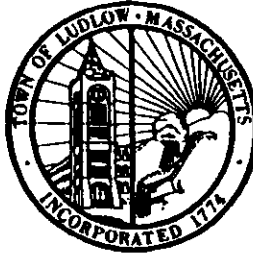
Mr. Strange: Yes, it's kind of like a stabilization fund,

Mr. Vitorino: It's kind of like an odd number that's in there, \$539,955. So, I'm assuming that money has gone in there and now you're drawing on it but you're,

Mr. Strange: We are not drawing on it. That might be a result of interest. I'm not totally sure. We pay as we go so there are two-line items in the budget for health insurance. That's the \$10 million bucket. So, out of that is current and retired employees. So, we didn't break those out.

Mr. Vitorino: Okay. So, this is really a just in case. So, theoretically at the end of five years, you could have \$2.5 million in there and still have \$2.5 million in there.

Mr. Strange: Yes.



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Mr. Vitorino: That's what you're talking about, then they'll say oh, let's just keep that for something else.

Mr. Gennette: Yes.

Mr. Strange: Right. It's kind of like the stabilization funds, you know for OPEB. Like we put in \$300,000 into stabilization and it will be \$6.7 million plus interest at the end of you know, fiscal 25.

Mr. Gennette: So, like stabilization and OPEB, your saying interest, are they just in an interest-bearing account or are they invested?

Mr. Strange: I'm not sure about that. I don't think the funds are invested because of our investment income, I'm trying to access the sheet in my brain, it's not that much every year. Last year it was like, it was a good year and it's typically not more than \$25,000 or \$30,000.

Mr. Gennette: Yes, I think as these pools of monies start growing, it might be worthwhile to get into some safe investments.

Mr. Strange: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: Talk to an investment strategist to figure out how we can capitalize on the money we are saving.

Mr. Strange: I agree. Absolutely.

Mr. Gennette: Alright, any other questions? Building infrastructure article. What's that one? Oh, that's just our regular infrastructure, yeah, okay. And our, the funds that come out of, what is the account that we use throughout the year?

Mr. Strange: 40R.

Mr. Gennette: Yes, 40R, do we have money going into our 40R this year already figured in?

Mr. Strange: There will be, once the state certifies the units at Mill 8, we will get an additional payment for that.



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Mr. Gennette: Alright. Excellent. Alright, I'm good with this, everybody good with this? Alright, so moving on. So, I had some thoughts on our bylaws, and I know it's kind of messy and everything like that but what I was thinking of doing was a bullet point list and maybe, and Marc you can kind of guide us in the right direction here. Maybe it would be worth putting something together and submitting it to the Charter Commission. So that if they decide to go through with the Charter Commission that maybe the Capital Improvement Planning process is included in it. Maybe they can adopt it as part of their packet rather than trying to fight and get everything on the warrant this year and arguing over the nomenclature. Do you think that would be a better avenue?

Mr. Strange: It's a good question because I've been battling with that myself as to you know, we've had some department heads who wanted to have bylaw changes put on the warrant. It will come before the Board and obviously you guys will have that discussion, but it's a good question. Is town meeting going to have an appetite for bylaw changes when there's going to be a charter coming down the pike? The charter, isn't necessarily, by operation of law doesn't change the bylaws. So, we'll have a charter and then we'll have our existing bylaws, and those bylaws have to be re-written. So, I'm thinking out loud here, if town meeting approves the bylaw changes for the Capital Improvement portion of the bylaw, you know those bylaws could be absorbed into a new ordinance, Cities have ordinance's; as long as it's in line with the charter. It can't hurt. I mean the worst the town meeting can say is no, particularly if they're reasonable and well thought out.

Mr. Gennette: So, even at that, if we put something together and presented to the charter commission and they decided to not do anything with it, or just hold it until afterwards, when they have to go through and do bylaw review at least we'll be ahead of the curve and say this is our submission for what we'd like to have for the bylaws.

Mr. Strange: Right.

Mr. Gennette: Alright, so I don't think we really need to chase that tonight.

Mr. Saloio: So, either way it has to be looked at if the charter changed...

Mr. Gennette: Yes.



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Mr. Strange: I think they're planning on bringing in committees and boards and department heads to talk through some of this stuff so.

Mr. Gennette: Alright, so I need a motion to approve the minutes of December 11, 2023, all members present.

**Moved by Mr. Vitorino to approve and sign the meeting minutes of December 11, 2023, with all members present, seconded by Mr. Saloio. Vote 4-0. All in favor.**

Mr. Gennette: Alright, so I don't think we have any new business to talk about. Does anybody have any old business? Any closing comments?

**Moved by Mr. Vitorino to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Saloio. Vote 4-0. All in favor.**

*James T. Saloio*  
*[Signature]*  
*Russell Murray*