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CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE
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Minutes of May 5, 2025, Capital Improvement Planning Committee.
Meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

Members Present: Marc Strange, James Gennette, Luis Vitorino, Tony Sanches, Josh Carpenter, Chris Manfredi

I. 5:30 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance

II. VISITATIONS

- 5:30 P.M. – Tighe & Bond – Public Safety HVAC Project Scope Discussion

Mr. Gennette: We have a new member of the Capital Improvement Planning Committee from the School Committee. Newly elected Mr. Manfredi. We are here to talk about the public safety HVAC project and on the line we have Tighe & Bond, the engineers for the project, who have designed the scope.

Mr. Urso: My name is Jason Urso from Tighe & Bond. I believe Jason Curtis, my project director might be joining us.

Mr. Gennette: To give everybody a little bit of a background, originally in 2021 it was about \$270,000 HVAC roof replacement and Capital was OK to approve that but it escalated to about \$540,000 and this board decided to send it to the Board of Selectmen who was going to put in on ARPA. Once it exceeds the scope of what we wanted to pay ARPA it went out to bond and we've grown ever since then. It never came back to Capital. Capital never had an opportunity to review any of the additional parts of it and now because of the state of our budget for the town we're really concerned about a 4-million-dollar HVAC project at the public safety complex so we're in the middle of trying to get a better understanding of what's happening with the engineering and that's why Tighe & Bond is here. Jason, I'm going to turn the floor over to you and you can give us some background on everything that's happening.

Mr. Urso: A little bit about the history of the project, Tighe & Bond was brought in in 2022. The Town came to us with some concerns about the HVAC system. I know there were reports with failures of the rooftop unit, temperature control, a lot of long-standing issues with the system in general. We were brought in for a study of the HVAC system. Prior to the study we were made aware that the contractor gave a quote of \$180,000 to repair the control system. It's just the controls, not the air handling unit or anything else. No major equipment replacement; more so the controls. I don't recall the history of why Tighe & Bond was originally asked to get involved but I think it had something to do with that quote where they recommended that the air handling

unit be replaced. We did a condition assessment study on the HVAC equipment and electrical service and our assessment precluded that most of the air handling units on the roof were beyond their useful life. A typical life expectancy of rooftop equipment is 10-25 years. I believe 3 out of the 4 were 30 or older and I believe the other one was approaching the 25-year mark. There are control dampers throughout the facility above the ceiling that control the air flow. That equipment is more residential or light commercial style and very old. What's up in there now is obsolete. My understanding is it's very hard to find replacement parts. Long story short, our study identified that not only the rooftop equipment should be replaced but all of those dampers with different equipment. That's pretty much the major issues we found. Basically, an upgrade of the HVAC system because equipment is failing past its useful life. After that study, we had a code consultant involved and they identified code upgrades due to the cost of what the HVAC upgrades would be. If a renovation costs 33% or more of the assessed value it triggers code required upgrades. That included a new fire protection system and ADA compliant upgrades. This project triggered some code required upgrades from the Massachusetts Building Code.

Mr. Gennette: I don't understand a lot of the engineering involved here but if you're doing dampers on an existing system does that require any physical structure changes? Is there anything structural to that building at that point that's done?

Mr. Urso: With the addition of the new rooftop units, that requires structure reinforcement of the existing steel and required supplemental steel and new steel on the roof for one of the units. During the study, we hired a sub consultant to give an opinion of probable construction costs based on what was included in the study. That was limited mostly to HVAC improvements and electrical and that cost was about 2.4 million dollars based on what was in the study. Then we went into design and that included all of the HVAC improvements that were in the design documents. It included electrical system upgrades. The existing fire alarm system in the building could not accommodate any other new devices so the fire alarm panel is being replaced as part of this project. It also included the structural engineering and structural improvements that I talked about earlier. It included a bunch of architectural related items, removal and replacement of ceilings, demolition of existing shaft walls to accommodate duct work changes. It included changes to the toilet rooms and entry lobby for the ADA accessibility upgrades. It included architectural and plumbing improvements to the holding cells. The code triggered a new accessible shower in the holding cells as well. That's where that work came from. It included a new fire protection system. Code required it based on the level upgrades that we were designing in the building. I think that's the bulk of it. It did require some added duct work replacements and new dampers in the VAV boxes in the ceiling. It includes site work to get a new water line into the building for the fire protection system. It included a lot of items that were not necessarily covered in the study because that study was focused on the HVAC and electrical system improvements. Toward the end of our design project, we had another construction cost and that was in the order of 3.85 million. Toward to the end of the design phase I had noted to the town that they might want to be prepared based on the bidding environment that we're seeing today. Be prepared to see things that might come in higher than 3.85 million dollars. That's kind of where we're at right now.

Mr. Manfredi: I'm not surprised that the cost would come in higher.

Mr. Gennette: The amount of time it's taken to get a good understanding of what the scope of the project is, I think is what hurt us. Had we originally found out what was going to happen I think we could probably have done a little better but we're here now. The additional structure for one of the units was that over, police, fire, together or separate?

Mr. Urso: There were 4 existing units, now there's 3; one on fire and two on police.

Mr. Gennette: You said one of these units needs new tonnage of steel to reinforce the weight of the units, is that over police or fire?

Mr. Urso: The fire station required steel tonnage on the roof for the new rooftop unit.

Mr. Gennette: Is that where the majority of the work is being done?

Mr. Urso: No, the whole building there's work on the entire building.

Mr. Gennette: I understand that, but if I had to make a decision about fire or police and if it could have been separated, would more work have been done on the fire side than on the police side?

Mr. Urso: I don't think so. I don't know what value is more or less. There is also structural framing for the police station as well to supplement the existing framing for the 2 new rooftop units on that side.

Mr. Gennette: It's pretty consistent throughout the project.

Mr. Urso: Yes, the same things are being done in police and fire. It's replacing the rooftop units, removing all of those obsolete control dampers above the ceiling that are not working properly or failing. There are architectural, structural, electrical and plumbing work being done on both the fire and police station.

Mr. Gennette: Is it 2 separate units or 1 unit with 4 HVAC units?

Mr. Urso: There's 1 new rooftop unit serving the fire station and 2 new rooftop units serving the police station.

Mr. Gennette: I'm probably not explaining myself here properly and I apologize. Is this system for the entire public safety complex one system or are there 2 systems?

Mr. Urso: There's 3 different systems. One serves the fire station and 2 serve the police station. For the police station one unit serves a holding cell area and some adjacent spaces and the other unit serves the rest of the police station.

Mr. Gennette: One of the problems that was expressed to us originally was that when everybody in the fire department in the middle of summer it gets hotter than hell in there.

Chief Pease: It fluctuates. We can't control the temperature.

Mr. Gennette: That would indicate to me that we're working with the same system even if there's 3 units. It's all one big, massive system and I'm trying to determine if there's a place where we can upgrade one system and improve overall and then maybe next year or the year after go for the other system. I'm trying to figure out different ways to fund this project and get it done, trying to find out all avenues here. Really just trying to get a better understanding of is all the duct work connected or does some go to 1 unit and the rest to the other 2 units.

Mr. Curtis: How I would respond to that question is that if you were to replace components of the HVAC system over time you would see improvements in the areas that are served by those HVAC units and the associated zone controls but you will still have comfort control issues in the areas you don't improve. You will not address comfort or controllability in the entire building until you have done what we've proposed, which is deal with the entire HVAC system.

Mr. Gennette: Is there a way to stage this out over 2-3 years?

Mr. Urso: Yes, that is possible. You can do the police station first or vice versa. The issue is as soon as we go past that threshold of 33% of the cost of the renovation over the assessed value it triggers the code required upgrades. The fire protection system is one of those upgrades. I believe that has to be installed in the entire building whether you want to do just the police or fire station first or second. If a brand-new fire protection system is going in the entire building you're going to be disrupting operations of staff in the building, you're going to be removing and replacing ceilings. I understand towns can't afford things all at once but cost-wise the town will be paying a lot more if you do it in stages. If you do the police station and install the entire fire protection system in the entire building and next year or the year after you want to do the fire station HVAC. It's going to be pretty disruptive to the staff again and all of the ceilings are going to have to come down again. Cost wise it makes sense to do it once but I understand you have a budget you have to live with.

Mr. Curtis: There may be a way to avoid disrupting ceilings multiple times. If you were to do the police station first, you could feasibly do that HVAC and not have to go back to it. Your overarching comment is accurate that the cost to have multiple mobilizations of construction in a facility is certainly going to drive up the cost over the life of the project.

Mr. Gennette: If we did it all at once, what would the life of the project be? What is your expectation for time?

Mr. Urso: I think we said substantial completion was fall of next year. That's our best estimate. If the contractor can get it done sooner that's encouraged.

Mr. Vitorino: The presentation is a 2-year-old study and I was looking at some of the numbers. The total cost is 2.339 million. On the spreadsheet dates February 2025 is that the most accurate assumption or estimates?

Mr. Urso: The construction cost estimate that was done on that study was limited to the HVAC upgrades, the associated electrical. What was not done in that study was the cost for all the code required upgrades. We provided a ballpark estimate for the fire protection system in that estimate but the architectural allowance was included as well. That was not studied in depth by the cost estimator for a couple reasons. One is the code. We didn't design or study the code. That wasn't part of the study. There's a lot of cost associated with what was going to be required for the code required upgrades. In the study we didn't evaluate what structural components or scope would have to be included. We didn't evaluate all of the architectural items that would be related or plumbing or anything else. It was limited to HVAC and electrical. That's the 2.4 you referenced. The 3.9 million was based upon our 90-95% complete construction document that was completed in January of this year.

Mr. Vitorino: The 3.9 is the accurate budget.

Mr. Urso: That is the most recent cost based on the design documents. Based on today's bidding climate, changing prices and inflation we have seen projects come in higher than construction cost estimates that we received on other projects. I just want the town to be aware of that.

Mr. Vitorino: Is this cost estimate based on the same option? Option 3, the high efficiency option.

Mr. Urso: Our design was based upon option 3.

Mr. Vitorino: What's alternate 1 fire station?

Mr. Urso: We had the cost estimator break out the HVAC in the fire station separately.

Mr. Vitorino: Alternate 1 fire station that's only HVAC for the fire station, is that an easy way, I think the Chairman is trying to find a way to phase this so that we can do everything and not try to piece meal this knowing full well you have to do the security system, sprinkler system no matter what. You can't cheat by just doing 2 parts of it and saying you only did a small amount when in the end you're doing everything you're just trying to phase it. Is the \$910,000 just the HVAC for the fire station within the 3 million and that includes all the code requirements?

Mr. Urso: The 3.85 includes the fire station.

Mr. Vitorino: My question is 3-fold. What is the accurate number? And you've answered that. It's the February 10th, 2025, spreadsheet that is 22 pages long. It's summarized that it winds up being total estimated construction cost and I can see that it's broken out with HVAC. It's got everything in here for 2.96 million. Then it says alternate 1 fire station \$910,000. Both of those together are 3.8. If you only did the 3-million-dollar section that would get you all the police station and all the code requirements for the entire project as though you did the fire station. Then the fire station would be \$910,000 just for their HVAC.

Mr. Urso: That is correct. The \$910,000 would be the cost if you accepted that as one project. If the town decided to only move forward with the police station now and go out to bid at a separate time for the fire station that \$900,000 is probably going to be more. Now you're going back out to bid for a whole different project. Mobilization by the contractor, disruption, it's a brand-new project. I can say with confidence that that cost would be higher.

Mr. Vitorino: I couldn't figure out what that meant. I'm not sure why it was broken out that way. By what you just said it doesn't make sense to do that. It is one building. I know it's split into 2 but once you start touching it, it doesn't make a lot of sense to, the only thing you would do would be phase it. We're going to do the whole project but we're only going to work in the police station for the first 6 months then we're going to switch over to the fire station so we don't disrupt. In other words, the spreadsheet for February doesn't match the presentation so that was my confusion.

Mr. Urso: The project does include some pretty complicated phasing requirements. The intent is to do either the police station first and once all that work is complete then they move to the fire station. The reason an alternative was broken out is because that was a request by the town. I believe the procurement officer at the time brought up some concerns about funding. We broke up the alternate in the event that the town could only afford say the police station. The point of an alternate is the town can either accept or deny alternate in the bid. It gave the town an option to only go with the base bid, that being the police station and code required upgrades if that's all they could afford.

Mr. Manfredi: If that project is in phases we're definitely going to end up paying more. It's like building a house. You always say factor in 20% for other things that might occur.

Mr. Sanches: Can you explain the design and estimate contingency phasing and general conditions section? Page 6 of 22.

Mr. Urso: The estimator carries certain contingency and cost estimates. That's just a contingency for error in the estimating. They added 2.5%. They assume 3% of the total construction cost because of the phasing requirements, general conditions, not really material. Administration type stuff the contractor charges.

Mr. Sanches: Insurance and bonds explained themselves. What's OH&P?

Mr. Urso: Overhead and profit by the contractor and sub-contractors.

Mr. Sanches: And escalation allow for 6%.

Mr. Urso: That's assuming a start date of spring 2025.

Mr. Sanches: If the town said we are going to do the fire station you would say the \$910,000 plus these costs again.

Mr. Curtis: I would agree with that statement. You're going to be looking at those soft costs on top of that \$910,000 at those rough percentages. I think that's a fair assessment.

Mr. Gennette: When we pay a contractor for a project, isn't it broken off into 3 payments?

Mr. Vitorino: Some of that is negotiated or it's in the spec or it's an AIA standard. I'm sure there's an upfront cost but I'm not sure what it is.

Mr. Curtis: I think you're asking about how payment works and in this particular instance and most publicly bid projects the contractor is going to file monthly applications for payment and the statement about it being specified by the project manual. We have very clearly in the project manual what the application for payment policy and procedures will be including a specific form the contractor will fill out on a monthly basis. It's broken down by schedule of values and to a level of granularity that would be reviewed and approved by the owner and engineer. On a monthly basis they will apply for payment on a percentage completion by line item in the schedule of values.

Mr. Gennette: As far as free cash goes this year and certified next year, if we started this project in October and we're getting billed monthly and we started with a pool of free cash we would fall into the next year's free cash as well. Do you think we would be so strapped down at that point that we wouldn't be able to fund this out of capital?

Mr. Strange: Are you assuming the project is funded only with free cash or with free cash and a bond?

Mr. Gennette: Free cash only.

Mr. Strange: We would have to wait until July 1, 2026, to use the free cash.

Mr. Gennette: If we did an October start, we wouldn't get approved until October, right?

Mr. Strange: Once you go into the fiscal year all the free cash is frozen until it's recertified. It's possible we could have free cash certified by October Town Meeting, it's not likely. If we did have free cash certified by October then we could start using it before July 1. If it's not certified by October then we have to wait until July.

Mr. Gennette: What's the turn around time on receiving a bond.

Mr. Strange: I think there's going to be an issue in September. I think we can probably do one in the spring for a bond issue. It would be a short term so that money would be available immediately and the first payment would be due fiscal 27.

Mr. Gennette: Is it feasible to use our available free cash now on a monthly payment until spring and we determine where we are at that point and bond the balance?

Mr. Strange: We won't be able to use free cash unless it's certified by October.

Mr. Gennette: I'm talking about the existing free cash. We have certified free cash right now.

Mr. Strange: The short answer to that is no. We would have had to do an article for it. The article warrant has already been closed. If we could tack it onto an existing article but I had a conversation with counsel this morning about that and it doesn't look like we can do that and we can't add an article on the floor.

Mr. Gennette: We're looking at October either way.

Mr. Strange: The quickest way to do it would probably be a bond authorization at October Town Meeting. If you didn't want to bond it at all you'd have to wait. We could do the bidding process and time it such that shovels in the ground would be in the summer 2026.

Mr. Gennette: Free cash at this point is probably going to get put on a treasury until October.

Mr. Strange: Yes, but that's an investment piece. That doesn't have any impact on our ability to use it. That treasurer would be a 69 month note but that doesn't have any impact on whether we can use it, it has an impact on how much we have.

Mr. Sanches: For clarification, the 1.4 million that's leftover we can't touch?

Mr. Strange: Correct.

Mr. Sanches: Until you certify 26.

Mr. Strange: We have 3 million right now. We still have 3 million plus whatever interest from the treasury investments and whatever else. We've been certified between 4 – 4 ½. That's after a million-dollar balance after appropriations at Town Meeting. We're probably looking at 6 million or so.

Mr. Gennette: That's what I'm trying to figure out. Where we can get to the point of where we're not putting everything out on bond. I don't want to put this bond on operating expenses for departmental budgets. I want to stop doing that. I'm trying to find out what financial vehicles we have available to us to be able to do this project. Is there anybody dead set against that this project comes down to funding?

Mr. Vitorino: I'm in favor of the project. What was the initial financing plan for this? ARPA funds?

Mr. Gennette: That's when it was \$540,000. Then we put 4 million on the track & field.

Mr. Strange: Town Meeting has already authorized 2.8 million dollars for a bond for this. The ask in May was going to be another 1.1 million. You have the authorization already. We're going out for issuance in September so we do have access to that 2.8 million dollars.

Mr. Vitorino: So, there is money but it's locked up? Is there a way you could still go out to bid on this to get bids in and you know exactly what you have because you either are going to bond or are going to free cash or a combination of the 2?

Mr. Strange: I'd have to verify this but I don't think we can award a contract unless the money is not appropriated. We could award a contract for 2.8, even though we know we're going to have free cash that hasn't been certified so it's not technically available.

Mr. Vitorino: You could do it as the alternate. You could award it as the main project at 2.8 and make the fire station the alternate and not award it but when you back out to refresh the price it may go up.

Mr. Gennette: 2.8 million is already approved. We're looking for another 1.2. If we went out in October for this project and all of a sudden the free cash from this year becomes available because we don't have to wait for next year's free cash to hit. So, once we're in October where we can get the 1.2 out of available funds to be able to finish.

Mr. Strange: Only if free cash has been certified by that time. And it's not likely.

Mr. Vitorino: What is the problem with us going out to bond now for 4 million?

Mr. Gennette: It's on the operational budget. We only have 2 ½% on every budget year to be able to finance departments. If we put everything out on a bond and we take out of that pool of money then we start tightening a noose around our neck. If we had narrowed it down I believe we could have put a bond on an enterprise fund. In which case we have the ambulance subscription fund which brings in a million a year.

Chief Pease: The ambulance subscription fund brings in a little over \$100,000/year. We don't have an enterprise fund for the ambulance revenue. The ambulance revenue is about 2 million. That goes to the town's general budget. The subscription fund is dedicated to buying new ambulances. If you wanted to take the \$100,000 that generates a year I'm still going to need to buy a new ambulance.

Mr. Gennette: Any recommendation on funding at this point?

Mr. Strange: It's up to you guys and the Chief's. You have 2.8 million at your disposal. We should have sizable free cash available in fiscal 27.

Chief Pease: The 2.8 is not going to go away at any time, right? If we were to wait until next May to kick this project up we would have the free cash certified by then and you'd be able to bond for your 2.8 and be able to add enough free cash without bonding for the entire scope of the

project; however, how much is the project going to go up in a year. I'm under the guise that the project should be done at one time for the cost of the town to save some money on it because you're mobilizing a lot of resources going in there and the project has to be phased. If we can't do it now all at once and the 2.8 isn't going to go away and the system is maintained until then, what's another year at this point? At some point this whole system is going to have a catastrophic failure; however, I think we can make it through another year. What Jason didn't include is all the heaters downstairs. The portable gas heaters in the garage are being replaced too. We've been maintaining them as we go along.

Mr. Gennette: I don't think anyone is trying to get out of helping the public safety complex. This is something everybody is interested in doing we just have to figure out how we can afford it because we keep putting everything out and we just don't have the money.

Mr. Manfredi: In 2023 it was 2.3 million and currently we're at 3.9. The project scope has increased.

Mr. Gennette: Once they started reinforcing roofs and they hit a certain dollar amount, then they had to bring everything up ADA compliant.

Chief Pease: Contractors are currently bidding on this thinking this project is going to go through and if it's not we should let them know. I don't know if there's any associated costs with delaying this project.

Mr. Urso: If this is delayed, unfortunately the costs of things are not going down especially with the tariffs. I would suspect the cost is going to increase. You might want to consider getting an updated cost estimate and we can look to a different party to do that. We're going to have to repackage and rebid it again. We were out to bid and terminated last week so we're going to have to go out to bid again. The phasing is pretty complicated. We hadn't anticipated that when we gave our initial proposal. I would recommend more construction oversight from us during construction than we included in our original proposal. I think there's going to be additional engineering costs as well. No matter what the cost estimate comes in at I highly recommend the town carry your own contingency.

Mr. Gennette: All the questions we're asking wasn't to say it necessarily had to be phased but we're trying to get a better understanding of what our options are. If our options are to do it all at once and everybody agrees, it's fine. The problem is if we don't have the money we don't have the money. If we can figure this out then we can get it done over the next year or 2 years and we'll be happy. We're trying to figure out what the best way is to fund this without tying ourselves down with extra budget restrictions.

Mr. Vitorino: Now we have the 2.8 million bond available that we could do now and that wouldn't affect the operating budget?

Mr. Strange: It would. The interest payment for fiscal 26 was going to be about \$80,000 out of 4 million and the bond payment is going to be about \$300,000. It would be about \$60,000.

Mr. Vitorino: If this project was sitting here at 2.8 million we wouldn't be struggling. We would just say it's 2.8 let's move forward, correct? If you're going to delay the project and it's going to cost you more money and we're already out to bid now, if your bid comes in at 2.8 million for the base not the alternate for the fire station, why not allow the bids to come in? You've already asked for the bids and they come in and by magic they're at 2.8 million you could bond for that and wait to do the alternative and say no we're not going to do the alternate. Now you're going out to bid next May for just the fire station.

Chief Pease: We've got no problem with that if that's what we had to do to get it done. The increase on a million dollar alternate right now is going to be a percentage of that million but if you go to a 4-million-dollar your percentage is going to be higher. We're going to spend a lot more money for a 4-million-dollar project than I think we are for a 2.8 plus a 1.

Mr. Carpenter: You could have the free cash certified by then. If I knew we had the 2.8 already approved, you knew capital for fiscal 24, you didn't know it was going to come in at 5 million but you still had 3 million leftover, you had plenty of time to put another article together to offset the difference because you have 3 million that we can't touch now. Had we looked at that before I think we could have touched that.

Mr. Strange: There was an article in the warrant for the additional 1.1 million. Because we're having such a difficult time for fiscal 26 budget, the Board looked at everything, all the departments voluntarily made cuts and one of the expenses they looked at was the interest payment for the 4-million-dollar bond. That's why they voted to take it out. Regardless of whether we had the 2.8 or not the scope of the project was the 4 million. The likelihood that the bid without the alternate is going to come in around 2.8 is highly unlikely. They would have had to rescope the bid. There was no intention to phase or use the 2.8, the intention was to do the whole project at one. Tighe & Bond would have to rescope it and phase it. Instead of it being just fire at \$910,000 they would have to put in multiple alternates to get to that 2.8 realistically.

Mr. Vitorino: It's broken out completely including the markup.

Mr. Strange: The scope minus the alternate is the scope that the contractors are bidding on and that estimate is 3 million. It is possible that it could come in at 3.8. The other complication is we already pulled the bid. They were due Wednesday. We talked to counsel and Tighe & Bond and the ethical thing was to pull the bid.

Mr. Gennette: Do you agree with that Jason?

Mr. Curtis: It was a little hard to catch all of that, if we could get a cliff notes version we can respond.

Mr. Strange: The question from Mr. Vitorino was before he knew that we pulled the bid, could we accept the bids and take a look at what the bids were for the main scope excluding the fire department alternate and if that main bid was 2.8 million dollars or less would we be able to do

that piece of the project considering Town Meeting has previously approved the 2.8 million dollar bond for the project.

Mr. Curtis: We think you could have presumably done that.

Mr. Gennette: Would you rescope that work for the 2.8 without the alternate?

Mr. Urso: The purpose of the alternate is to get a price for the base bid and a separate price for the alternate. That was part of the exercise we did earlier this year was to modify the documents, specs and drawings in order to communicate that through the contract. I don't think we'd have to rescope it again. If you didn't want the alternate in the document anymore then yes, we would have to modify the documents again and remove all of the language for the alternate.

Mr. Vitorino: Let's assume the bid wasn't pulled. Right now, they would give you the base bid and they would give you the alternate. There is no requirement for doing the alternate. If you don't do the alternate it doesn't change the base bid.

Mr. Urso: That's correct.

Mr. Vitorino: I don't know if it's too late. You unring the bell by saying we don't want the bids. If you say they were due Wednesday I would say every contractor is pretty close if there was an extension.

Mr. Urso: Final bids were due this Wednesday and general bids were due on the 21st. If the Town didn't have money appropriated for the base bid then cancelling the bid was the right decision.

Mr. Strange: It's possible it could have come in under 2.8. It doesn't sound like it was likely considering the estimate was 3.

Mr. Urso: I personally feel it's probably going to be higher than 2.8 based on what we're seeing in today's bidding climate. Now everybody is worried about tariffs so everyone is increasing their prices prematurely. I'm relatively confident it's going to be more than 2.8 million.

Chief Valadas: During the contractor walk through the comments we received from some of the contractors on the cost of what the scope of the whole project is, they weren't optimistic. Their comments were that's not a lot of money for the scope of the work we're supposed to be doing. Mr. Urso made comments to the Fire Chief and I that this could substantially be higher.

Mr. Gennette: We don't know what the future holds. Is the timing for this project off?

Chief Valadas: It sounds like the Town is in an advantageous position with free cash after July 2026. Even if it goes up a certain percentage it's more advantageous for the Town.

Chief Pease: We have the 2.8, why don't we give it a good run again next May and try to do it all at once.

Mr. Gennette: That's a great idea, understanding we're coming back to the table to get that project done I'm willing to make that kind of commitment.

Chief Valadas: Mr. Vitorino, I agree with Mr. Strange, I don't think it was going to come in under 2.8.

Mr. Gennette: That brings to mind the maintenance for the existing systems. Mr. Alves and I have been talking and he's chasing the maintenance side of it.

Mr. Strange: We're waiting for quotes.

Mr. Gennette: We're waiting for quotes right now to maintain the existing system because right now there is no maintenance system in place. We understand that's probably going to have to come as well. We're going to try to work with you guys but let's see what 2026 holds. If you wouldn't mind do the capital plan to make a note on the project and let's make sure we start talking about it for 2026.

Chief Pease: We do appreciate the town's concern and willingness to help out with this and understand that we all have financial constraints and there's a price to everything and we're willing to work with everybody to get what the public safety complex needs.

Mr. Gennette: That's the case. You guys are critical infrastructure and we recognize that. Jason & Jason, thank you for your time. We appreciate everything. We hope that we can call you back if we have more questions.

Mr. Curtis: Thank you for taking the time to meet with us and hopefully we'll get this project to move forward.

III. New Business

- Strategic Committee Discussion

Mr. Gennette: At the last Board of Selectmen/FinCom meeting we discussed creating a strategic financial team. This committee right now operates as short-term and long-term capital. We see the existing annual outlay of free cash. We talk about things that could go out to bond, we make recommendations to the Board of Selectmen and to FinCom and we are represented by the big boards. It was my recommendation to create a strategic committee out of this board that would meet right after capital. It can't be out of capital because we have bylaws associated with it but if you wanted to organize as a strategic committee I would want to add another member of the Board of Selectmen, another member of FinCom and ask for a volunteer secretary for meeting minutes, agendas and stuff like that. We would meet right after capital ends. This board wouldn't change. It would close its meeting and we would reorganize into a strategic team and I was wondering if you guys were interested in doing that. If not, we can create a strategic team outside

of this committee if you don't want to go that far but I just wanted to check to see what you guys wanted.

Mr. Carpenter: It would be us 5 plus an add on from Selectmen and FinCom?

Mr. Vitorino: The purpose or charge would be to make recommendations?

Mr. Gennette: We lack strategic oversight. We have a lot of moving pieces that nobody talks about. An example is our properties that are assessed by the State lose value every year and those are assessed by the State. It's those kinds of things. We're talking about running up our operational expenses and we are decreasing our operational revenues. That's the overlying scope. We may be able to get to a point where we can give department heads like Marc and the School Committee and other departments a little bit of a heads up about what funding is coming their way. Right now, we're just shooting from the hip. All this discussion would be part of the strategic meeting and we would be developing a strategy in full.

Mr. Carpenter: Didn't we have a subcommittee like that? Wasn't it long range planning?

Mr. Gennette: That's part of this. We talk about 5 year out on capital and that's long-range planning. This is those 2 boards combined. We had to send a request to long range planning about whatever we were going to do in the short term so I literally had to send a letter from myself to myself and a month later send it back so 2 months later we could actually make a decision for short term.

Mr. Carpenter: My only suggestion would be, we're supposed to have a member of DPW but DPW is now you guys, so maybe another community member or maybe our Town Accountant or Treasurer/Collector.

Mr. Gennette: Do you remember the master plan committee from 2004-2007. We had a master plan created. We spent money for it and we ended up with almost 20 members on that and it completely failed. All that money spent to come up with a master plan, which is still there.

Mr. Carpenter: Maybe adding alternate members.

Mr. Gennette: If we added in another resident as a member I would want to add somebody from the Board of Assessors. Because they have inside knowledge about the assessment of property. We could call people in from different boards too. If we need the accountant to come in we could ask but that typically would go through Marc. I would recommend that if we call in any one of Marc's department heads that we bring Marc in. The reason I say the Board of Selectmen and FinCom is because they're overarching. I think the Board of Selectmen are making the final decision and they're going by the recommendations of FinCom. I think those 2 are the big pieces that need to have a majority of influence on that board.

Mr. Carpenter: I'm open to discussion I'm just worried about the breakdown. I feel like 7 is not enough and 9 might be too much.

Mr. Gennette: The Board of Selectmen are going to decide to either create this committee or not. I just need to know if you guys are interested in participating in it. We're going to talk about it tomorrow night and if you are interested I'm going to say I already have the majority of this board already made. I don't want to create more committees on more nights so we have to try to share information. That's part of the reason I thought this board would be great for that. It would be monthly. On capital we only went through capital requests but this might change what we do on capital. We may open and close a capital meeting really quick and then go into another one if there's no work to be done but that would probably end up making capital meetings monthly. The 2nd Monday of every month.

Mr. Manfredi: I could do it after this.

Mr. Gennette: If the Board of Selectmen did approve this we would have to send a letter to the School Board to make sure they were OK with you staying. Is that a yes Mr. Carpenter?

Mr. Carpenter: Sure.

Mr. Sanches: I'm in.

Mr. Vitorino: I'm a maybe. I'd have to see what the charge of the committee is. You can't agree to serve on a committee when you don't know what the committee is about.

Mr. Sanches: Right now, capital does do a 5-year plan but that's just the capital part of it. You're looking at a 5-year plan for the Town. Having a resident is important. You're looking at the fiscal responsibility. Then it creates transparency for the residents as well.

Mr. Vitorino: The Finance Committee doesn't do that?

Mr. Sanches: Finance Committee is looking at it from a monetary point of view. We're a recommending body but it's based on the information that's in front of us.

Mr. Gennette: At some point we're going to need a new high school. Is that 50 years from now?

Mr. Vitorino: I'm not opposed to serving on a committee like that. What typically happens is I've served on plenty of committees, but when you get on to these committees you need to focus on what you're really doing then you have to go before a board to get it approved. I don't want to see us create another committee that we're going to talk about things that never get done. This is a good example. We've been talking about the police and fire station for as long as I've been here. Now it's at that point that you can't live with it. I'm not sure a strategic committee would have solved that problem, based on my experience with being on town committees. I'm never reluctant to serve to try to make things better but it has to be precise and focused. I just met somebody who is on the Safety Committee. I'm not sure what they do but I know if you have a project you have to go before the Safety Committee but what other things do they do? Do they recommend things?

Mr. Sanches: You being a member get to drive that. Your passionate discussion is probably why you should be on it.

Mr. Vitorino: I'm not reluctant to serve on boards, I'm reluctant to serve on boards or committees that don't have a finite, clear direction. We can all talk for 3 hours and have great ideas that never get done.

Mr. Gennette: I'm getting mostly positive.

- Committee to approve and sign Minutes from Meeting of March 10, 2025.

Motion made by Mr. Carpenter to approve and sign the minutes of the March 10 meeting with all members present. Mr. Manfredi was not on the board. **Mr. Vitorino second. Motion passed 4-0.**

IV. Old Business

- Update for the Ludlow Boys & Girls Club Pool

Mr. Gennette: We sent our recommendations and we had submitted what we denied. We don't normally do that but from the board's perspective it was nice that they got the opportunity to see what didn't go so they could make an alternate objection to it or ask why. I thought it was a good step in the process. Mr. Alves said it looks like everybody had a little bit of love and why didn't the Boys & Girls Club get anything. It wasn't too big a project for the Boys & Girls Club pool. Anyway, the board ended up approving the pool. I wanted to let you know they overturned our denial.

Mr. Carpenter: Did we deny or push off because it came in so late.

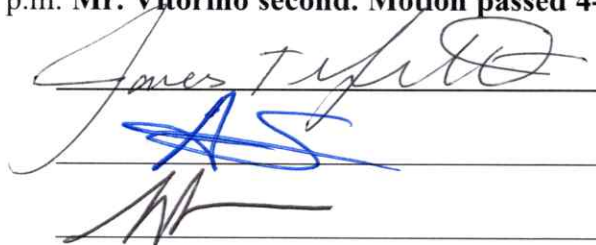
Mr. Strange: That was a deferral.

Mr. Carpenter: The Veteran's Center truck was one that came in around the same time.

Mr. Gennette: He said what's the point? You have the money; it was \$38,500. The next time we meet is going to be the 2nd Monday. Will we have anything to discuss?

Mr. Strange: You could do a debrief from Town Meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Carpenter to close at 7:00 p.m. **Mr. Vitorino second. Motion passed 4-0.**

Three handwritten signatures are written on a horizontal line. The top signature is in dark ink and appears to be 'James T. Vitorino'. The middle signature is in blue ink and is more stylized. The bottom signature is in dark ink and is also stylized.

Christoph Manfredi

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