

2024

Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Committee wrapped up its work on October 25th, 2023 with a total project funding for 2024 of \$635,000, a \$95,000 increase from the 2023 schedule. New Boston's CIP Committee works to develop a six-year schedule of capital projects and purchases that reflect the town and school needs as well as the taxpayers' ability to afford. Using Capital Reserve Funds (CRFs), taxpayers have supported yearly allotments for the future purchase of fire and highway vehicles and equipment as well as bridges, preventing huge spikes in the tax rate for the year these expensive items need to be purchased.

The CIP schedule represents projects and purchases that cost \$20,000 or more. Unless there is an unforeseen emergency, any new project comes onto the schedule six years out. It is expected that the Select Board will bring forward to the March 2024 ballot the CIP items scheduled for that year. Voters are encouraged to consider these requests carefully.

Fire Department Vehicles CRF

This yearly CRF includes both replacement and mid-life refurbishment of all Fire Department vehicles except the ambulances, which are purchased through a separate ambulance revolving fund that derives its revenues from user fees not taxes.

The vehicle roster includes two front-line pumpers and a backup pumper, a tank truck, a forestry truck, a light rescue vehicle and a command vehicle which was added by the Fire Wards three years ago and is expected to be placed on the Town Warrant for 2024.

These vehicles are extremely expensive, with pumpers expected to cost over \$980,000 in the next purchase cycle. With a midlife refurbishment, these pumpers generally have a 25-year life cycle. The other vehicles also have 15 to 30-year cycles. While this is good on one hand, it makes projecting future costs problematic.

The CIP Committee carefully reviews this vehicle schedule annually, attempting to account for any known increases in vehicle costs and has recommended a deposit into the CRF of \$200,000 each year for the next six years. This is an increase of \$25,000 over the amount requested in previous years primarily due to the continuing increases in costs of replacement Fire Department vehicles. For example, in 2020 the Town ordered a new pumper at a cost of \$671,000. The next new pumper purchase, scheduled in 2026, is estimated to cost \$980,000.

Fire Station Bond

This item has been removed from the CIP schedule due to the Department of Defense grant received for the construction of the Fire Station.

Emergency Management CRF

In 2020 the town voted to establish an Emergency Management CRF for the collection of funds to maintain the Emergency Services communications and related systems. The CIP Committee is continuing to request a \$20,000 annual deposit into this fund to meet the needs of the communication system maintenance scheduled in 2027.

Highway Trucks CRF

This CRF now covers two full-sized 6-wheel dump trucks, one smaller 6-wheel truck (F-550) with plows, and five 10-wheel trucks. There is also an F-250 4x4 pickup truck with a plow and a Chevy Silverado 1500.

Four of these vehicles are scheduled to be replaced in the next four years. The cost of new 10-wheel trucks with plows is currently \$260,000. As a result of the replacement timing the CIP Committee recommends a \$175,000 CRF deposit in 2024 and 2025 and increasing to \$200,000 in future years. This is an increase of \$25,000 in years 2024 and 2025 and an increase of \$50,000 a year for the remaining years to maintain balances in the fund needed to purchase these vehicles.

The road agent is seeking a grant to purchase three of these vehicles and, if successful, next year the CIP Committee will adjust the schedule of deposits accordingly.

Highway Heavy Equipment CRF

The CRF previously covered the replacement cost of the grader, loader, and backhoe. In 2022 the Town voted to add a vibratory roller and an excavator to the roster of heavy equipment. Adding these pieces to the repurchase schedule, and recalculating the schedule based on current replacement costs, increases the recommended on-going deposit from \$45,000 to \$65,000 into the CRF.

Road Improvements

This yearly funding of roadwork is one of the things that have prevented New Boston from needing multi-million-dollar bonds to repair severely deteriorated roads. These repairs often include extensive tree trimming and drainage repairs.

The CIP committee recommends increasing this amount from \$85,000 (which has been the annual request since the early 2000's) to \$100,000 to begin to account for increased costs related to road projects.

Projects currently scheduled include Beard Road in 2025.

Bridge Repair/Replacement CRF

This yearly CRF will remain at its current funding of \$40,000. Previously approved projects to be funded by this CRF in 2024 are replacements for Tucker Mill Road Bridge (2023 Warrant Article# 11) and Gregg Mill Road Bridge (2023 Warrant Article# 12) for which the Town will only be responsible for 20% of the engineering costs and Federal and State funds will cover the balance.

Property Update/Reval Funding

The State Department of Revenue Administration and the Town auditors has advised the Town that this item does not qualify for the CIP schedule since it is not an asset of the Town. The CIP Committee has removed the item from the schedule but notes that there will continue to be an ongoing CRF to raise funds annually for this recurring (every 5 years) expense.

NBCS Addition Bond

SAU 19 Business Manager, Scott Gross, re-presented the 4-classroom addition project with an updated cost of \$3.4 million. They requested the bond amount for the project be pushed back again on the schedule until 2029 since NBCS enrollment has not yet approached the 600-student level.

Transfer Station Food Waste Composting System

Transfer Station Manager Gerry Cornett expressed a desire to postpone the institution of a mechanical food waste composting system project that would cost approximately \$150,000 citing ongoing developments with these systems and the increased interest of private groups. The CIP Committee felt that the project should remain on the schedule as a placeholder and pushed back the collection of the funding until 2028.

Transfer Station Trailer

The Transfer Station waste trailer, which had previously been on the CIP schedule at a cost of \$100,000 is now expected to cost \$140,000 when purchased in 2027. As a result of this increase, the requested amount over four years has been increased from \$25,000 to \$35,000 beginning in 2024.

Library Expansion

Due to the increase in participation in children's programs (2,260 children participated in 2011 and 3,590 in 2021) the Library Trustees believe an expansion of 25% to 30% is necessary. The Trustees estimate the cost of an addition to be approximately \$525,000 and intend to raise \$375,000 of this amount privately. The CIP Committee recommended placing the \$150,000 balance on the schedule at \$75,000 per year in 2027 and 2028.

Library HVAC System Replacement

The Library Trustees anticipate the need to replace the current HVAC system (which was installed in 2010) at the end of the 20-year life. The Trustees are interested in replacing the propane furnaces with electric furnaces, and increasing the number of solar panels in the existing field to generate the required electricity. The Library Trustees currently have not received any estimates for the cost of more solar panels, nor have grant or rebate opportunities been explored yet. As a result, the CIP Committee recommended placing this project on the schedule with an initial request of \$75,000 in 2029 as a project placeholder.

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission presented a project to correct the grading of the Rail Trail at Parker Road by adding a pedestrian tunnel under the roadway. The CIP Committee added this project to the schedule with a start date of 2029. No money was assigned since the actual costs, including grant opportunities, have not yet been explored.

CIP Committee

Fred Hayes, Chairman, At-Large

Ken Lombard, Finance Committee Representative

Donna Mombourquette, Selectman Ex-Officio

Matt Beaulieu, At-Large

Jennifer Allocca, At-Large