

Capital Planning Committee Minutes February 18, 2026 – Selectboard Meeting Room

Members Present: Michael Broad (at-Large), Ellen McKay (at-Large), Laura Soito (Finance Committee)

Members Absent: George Arvanitis (Finance Committee), Nate Longcope (School Committee)

Guests: Hayley Bolton (Town Administrator), Leonard Czerwonka (Fire Chief), Nettie Harrington-Pangallo (Town Moderator)

Called to order: 5:06 PM by Ellen McKay

Approval of Minutes

- Minutes for February 5, 2026 meeting approved with revisions.

Review of Town Administrator Request with Hayley Bolton

- Seeking funds to digitize files in town hall.
- Goal provided to Hayley by the Select Board.
- Will allow for better space utilization and increase office space.
- The M.N. Spear Library Reuse Committee has been identifying space needs.
- Mateo Pangallo has already done upstairs files, which reduces costs associated in the proposal.
- It is still unclear what is in some of the cabinets. In addition to documents there are also some floppy disks and uncertainty around what to do with them.
- In discussion it was noted that maintaining files in boxes carries risk of pests and mold, that Old Town Hall has a vault that is likely full, and that fire reports need to be kept forever and that given risks associated with the state system for fire reports these records are also kept locally.
- Request of \$26,850 will be reduced because of the upper floor files that have already been done.

Review of Town Moderator Request with Nettie Harrington-Pangallo

- Seeking funds for clicker voting system for town meeting
- Goal to ensure to improve accuracy, efficiency, and accessibility of town meetings.
- Patterns around who can't attend identifies ways that meetings are not accessible.
- Known barriers to town meeting include:
 - Childcare which is being worked on in a separate process with Finance Committee and following a model being used in neighboring town.
 - Meeting length has impact on voters with needs associated with care of small children, transportation, employment, and medical conditions. Using strategies of consent agenda and limiting time for debate without limiting robust debate to address.
- Connecting with other town moderators has identified efficiencies of using clickers for voting. For example auto calculation of quorum.
- Clickers have been used for decades and are currently used in over 70 towns in Massachusetts, including the nearby towns of Orange and Irving.
- This is not new idea for Shutesbury – there was a working group in 2022 to explore use of clickers.

- Town received OTI G-Series clickers from Amherst. These are out of production and no longer under warranty, but eligible for trade in credit. Did not include software.
- Purchasing K-series clickers after trade of the G-series would cost \$2,750.
- IT support for first year of use would cost \$2,983 – this includes primary and backup base stations, computers, up to 10 hours of professional service, delivery, and training for someone to operate the system in future years. With training, future years of annual service would be \$495 and includes software upgrades and tech support.
- Would need fewer vote counters, but would still need people to check in voters.
- An Echo360 quote equipment and tech support was \$18,000.
- There will be a mock town meeting on March 7 to try OTI – K series clickers. Town clerks and moderators will speak to their experiences. Shutesbury Elementary School students of developed articles to be voted on. An OTI rep will be available for Q&A.
- It was noted that some towns rent their system to other towns. Leverett has had interest clickers, but found it too cost prohibitive.
- Nettie indicated interest in hearing additional ideas for improving the meetings. Ideas:
 - Using a pre-town meeting to help people prep for the meeting.
 - Handouts to make issues less dense. Try to catch people 3 times in different mediums.
 - A screen would help with the amount of verbal information and seeing amendment language changes in real time. It was unclear whether a projector/screen is currently available and mentioned that lighting would need to be considered.

Review of Fire Department request with Leonard Czerwonka

- Proposal to replace Engine 2. It is a 1997 and runs great now, but there is no telling when it might have issues. The Finance Committee recommended submitting a Capital Planning request.
- The first option was quoted at \$776,000.
 - There is a slightly larger engine with 2,000 gallon capacity. It was noted that all trucks are getting larger and this one will still fit in the station.
 - It is factory built with 14 month delivery.
 - Florida, MA just bought the same one.
 - New Salem has a similar truck with less water capacity.
- The second option was quoted at \$915,000-\$930,000.
 - It would be more similar in size to existing engine and have 1,000 gallon capacity.
 - Added cost and time to be custom built.
- Towns of similar size have at least two trucks – two engines or an engine and a tanker
- We currently have one of the oldest Engines.
 - Montague has an older engine and Leverett is replacing a 2000.
- The NFPA recommends removing engines from front line service after 15 years and retiring at 25 years.
- Can seek additional quotes.
- Two years ago a quote for refurbishment was \$390,000, but without warranty and the truck would retain original wiring, engine, and pump.
- Could look for something used.
- Having two vehicles is important for safety.

- Makes it possible to get people to the scene quick as first vehicle can leave while additional personnel are arriving.
- Gets 4,000 gallon water to the scene with 10 to 15 minute response time.
- Mutual aid trucks from town with hydrants, such as Amherst and Orange don't carry sufficient water. Loss of Hadley fire staff also reduces mutual aid capacity.

Future meetings:

- Meeting with Highway Department on March 4th at 3pm
- Majority of the members will be present at the Fiscal Summit on February 23rd.
- Will schedule follow up for Elementary School when Nate is available.

Adjourned: 5:47pm