

Thursday, September 14, 2023

Capital Planning

Agenda

7:30 PM	Call to Order
	Minutes of Previous Meetings
7:35 PM	Discussion and Recommendations - Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles 1 & 2
	Adjourn

Attendance:

S.Jelinek, E. DeLuca, D. Arsenault, J. Toole, M. Reed
D. Dembkoski, K. Downing, J Gleason, R. Perry, L Vivirito, Unknown-IPhone, L. Lavina

Minutes

May 13 2023 minutes:

Motion to approve - Reed, Deluca 2nd

Vote: Arsenault yes, DeLuca yes, two abstained. No quorum

Sept 7 2023:

Motion to approve - Toole, Arsenault 2nd.

Vote: passed unanimously

Discussion

Article 2 Library Renovation

Discussion

Dembkoski - new budget numbers are still under the \$2.5M request. \$11.1 is the latest estimate, there is contingent is already built into the \$11.1M number.

Motion Toole to recommend approval of Article 2. 2nd DeLuca

Discussion

Jelinek - I have supported the library for decades, and it is a focal point of the community. I am encouraged by the commitment to continue raising outside funds.

Toole - I felt the presentation was though, pleased with the efforts to reduce the costs and thrilled to hear that there three fund raising experts. It moves the library into the 21st century.

Costs have gone up over the last 18 months, unanticipated increases. Good faith effort, made to reduce the cost.

Arsenault - Agree, it has been a long road but it will be good to get it done..

Reed - Experience with the library is a good example the when it came in at 8M, we knew that it had to come in higher. It is encouraging to see that there is a commitment to see the project through to completion. Help Stow be a landmark, and get the town looking healthier. Very encouraged but the efforts to reduce the cost and not pass them to the tax payers

DeLuca - Supportive of the project. A cautionary take away that we don't want to bring capital projects to the town without construction documents in hand. This should not become practice. There will be some hard decisions coming to Capital Planning now that we have a \$200k/year commitment to support the Library.

Jelinek - we have been saying to for a number of years that things are going to be tight with the capital parts of the town budget. The ARPA funding has helped us get out ahead of some projects.

Vote: Toole yea, Arsenault yea, DeLuca yea, Jelinek yea

Motion Passed

Article 1

Jelinek - a lot of information over the years.

Dave - Reduced the cost in the library. They know what they need for a new high school what they want and what they need may be different things. Is there any place that we can cut costs in this project?

Downing - We are in a contract with MSBA, in anticipation of the activities, around geothermal wells. Construction managers interviews are looking at ways that they can cut costs. Using a manager at risk process has a chance to save some costs, this methodology is our best.

Jelinek - summery in a contract with MSBA, so can't modify the scope, but there is a level to reduce cost with the construction manager at risk process.

Downing - There are opportunities for rebates for the green constructions costs. Rebates can be used to reduce the principal off the bond

Jelinek - The library has cut about 8%, is there a chance of reaching the number?

Downing - We can't say at this time.

Reed - We are in a better place today then we used to be in Boston the code for energy is different, pricing contingency has been built in enough so that we wont be blindsided.

Downing- We have costed the the structure to support solar planning in the future. The stretch code associated costs are built into the price.

Reed - Are we buying a Cadillac or a Buick?

Vivirito - There is an article stating that the project is a Cadillac of the there are no facts that support. The committee and the owners project manager that the building is responsible. There is nothing that is not necessary, the building is tied to the educational program.

Downing - This is a 50-60 year solution, asking for the things that we need. The vast majority of the building space is supported by the MSBA. 95.5% of the projects square foot footprint is covered by the MSBA.

Jelinek - What is the 4.5% of the building that is not covered?

Downing - 9000 SQFT is not covered: theater space is over, PE space is over to seating the student body, robotics, tech ed wood and metal and computer science tech-ed.

Discussion of construction cost estimate vs state reimbursement.

Jelinek - There is \$8M dollars in the ineligible square foot, this is the part that the MSBA thinks is non-essential. (\$9000 sqft times cost per sq ft).

Downing - Without those sq ft we can't do the current program plan. That, the cost delta, is fair to say.

Vivirito - If we build the stage to the MSBA reimbursement stage it would be the size of the Hale stage, having the bigger space allows the ability to rent those spaces.

Toole - Are the groups renting space now?

Vivirito - Yes they are being rented, the fields are also rented. The funds goes into the operating budget.

DeLuca - Tall pole is the different in cost per sq ft estimate vs reimbursed. Are there things we can do with the building envelope to lower the difference?

Downing - Having people with experience on the building committee has lead to us having long discussions of the the finishes and elevations that are cost affordable and attractive at the same time. They will be priced out by the process, they need to last for 50 -60 years so the durability is the constraint, not the appearance.

Arsenault - I like the idea of spreading out the costs, that seems to save money. You need to present the justification to the town. Small savings add up. Have done your due diligence, maybe some people think it is not enough.

Vivirito - Bringing the building into the 21st century, it provides tremendous value to the community. It elevates the status, it will start a new new chapter in the community. They are the beginning. The building builds the program and inspires the program. The facility matters. The solution is green, there will be reimbursements. Value engineering all the way through. This is a \$60+M investment for Stow. It will become a magnet for the area.

Perry - I have lived through multiple building projects, I appreciate the work the building project has done If the information exists. There is a slide deck on existing condition. What are the educational and pragmatic issues. Why can't you just do repairs?

Downing - Base repair does what you talked about, \$110 -120M to fix, but doesn't help the with the educational program roughly 2/3s of the proposed cost. A major issue is that we can't change the classroom sizes in the current building, and the current sizes limit the number of students that can attend each class. This is why the renovation was not suggested. Add- Reno would have been \$25M more than current project. The MSBA has agreed with our assessment.

Jelinek - Is there a place where this is discussed.

Downing - Public forum number three - fall of 2022, that has the details of the multiple objects that were examined.

Perry - what besides class size requires new construction?

Downing - The welded steel construction is not consistent with the code, may have to address if; the windows are foundational structures; the oil heat tank is old and near end of life; the current water source is inside the building.

Perry - Why the school won't be accredited or be able to teach students effectively.

Downing - Educational program, need to be able to deliver project based learning, team work and innovated design, the space does not allow for these projects to move forward. Example is the robotics team. The science labs are deficient eight of the classes rooms don't have the correct ventilation. This has an impact on the schedule the school can. The class sizes are pressing the which has impact in the cost of proving the educaiton. If you need to teach more small classes, there will be a need for more staff.

Perry - Will operating costs go up for the the new building?

Downing - The staffing will not increase except for the pre-school, but those are tuition students, the staffing will change as a result of the demographic changes.

Votes

Motion to recommend approve article 1 DeLuca , 2nd Toole

DeLuca - The discussions were very informative. I support the project.

Reed - The facts are well presented - this is who we are, not a fancy town, it is hard as a tax payer, I support the project.

Toole - I appreciate the effort and the work, I have serious concerns. I took the opportunity to tour the high school. I looked for specific things, there were not stress cracks etc. the building seems to be solid. There are a number of people very concerned about the cost and the impact of the costs on there assessments. I didn't hear the effort to look for outside grants when the elementary school was built there was a fund raising effort that was successful.

Arsenault - I have reservations about items. I understood what Perry was saying. The cost is divided by three, so that takes away a bit of the hurt. I know that there are going to be cost overrides.

Jelinek - I wish the project could be cheaper, it is a large number, have heard concerns about the lack of community input - focusing on the state of the building and the programs are the driver, there are concerns from people who were not consulted but they will have to pay for it. It is a big pill for the tax increase. Where is the value? I have heard in our discussion and statements concerning about Minuteman how much is focused on that. How much of the project is designed to keep Stow kids from going to Minuteman? I am less worried about that than I was. You are maybe improving the home values investing that money. If I take \$1.5K and invest it, will that be equal to the increase in the house investment? What is best for the town? The library project delayed used to be 2.5M back when it was competed against Pompo. Waiting may not result in savings. I will vote to support with reservations.

Toole - If the project is approved, 70cents of every dollar is going to education, we will likely be looking at 2.5 overrides for the other services in town for years to come. That is a concern. I have never thought I would vote against something for education.

Reed - The timing is hard, our downtown area is not contributing to the tax base. Need some none residential tax burden. That is also on peoples mind in Stow.

Vivirito - I wanted to say that we need a tax base that can be diverted. I am willing to help there as well. As noted, this project is not going to get cheaper.

Votes: DeLuca yea, Toole yea, Arsenault nay, Jelinek yea

Motion passes 3-1

Last item of business

Attendance at town meeting - all.

Presentation at town meeting:

DeLuca Article 2 Library

Jelinek Article 1 NRSD Building Project

9:07

Motion to adjourn - Deluca, 2nd Arsensult

Passed unanimously

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Meeting recording is available at:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/IT-](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/IT-s7Y21WLzQZ5YARsZtZOroPul87m6igXLBxZedPtl3cmHNo_5BhLaAL44IEee.6wx4TTi5ETgwkMI9)

[s7Y21WLzQZ5YARsZtZOroPul87m6igXLBxZedPtl3cmHNo_5BhLaAL44IEee.6wx4TTi5ETgwkMI9](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/IT-s7Y21WLzQZ5YARsZtZOroPul87m6igXLBxZedPtl3cmHNo_5BhLaAL44IEee.6wx4TTi5ETgwkMI9)

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Respectfully Submitted,

Ed DeLuca, Clerk