

## **Report of the Capital Improvements Planning Committee**

### **Introduction**

The Capital Improvements Planning Committee is charged with reviewing “proposed capital outlays, projects and improvements involving major tangible assets and projects” with a view to recommending and prioritizing those capital improvement projects which should be undertaken over the next five years. These assets and projects are defined as those costing over \$25,000 and having a useful life of five years or more. Our charge is to prepare a capital budget for the next fiscal year, considering the relative need, impact, timing and cost of the various requested expenditures, as well as to project a capital program for the next five years. The following narrative and the chart at the end of this report outline the FY 2025 capital budget, as well as projections for the capital program for the next five years, through FY2029.

### **Summary**

If all of the FY 2025 requests are approved, we will spend a total of \$2,486,217 on new and existing capital expenditures (including regionally assessed debt). For FY 2025, this spending breaks down as follows:

- \$850,006 in general fund debt payments
- \$840,000 on Town projects funded by CPA
- \$796,210 in tax levy, free cash or redirected prior appropriations

### **Policy**

- The Town and the Select Board shall adhere to the Capital Improvement by-law, by ensuring that all capital spending requests are placed on a Town Meeting warrant only after they have been evaluated and prioritized by the Capital Improvements Planning Committee.
- The Town’s capital improvement program shall provide for consistent debt service and capital spending that is as close to level as possible over time, so that taxes do not fluctuate excessively due to capital spending.
- The Town and the Finance Committee shall support maintenance budget lines adequate to maintain the value and condition of the Town’s buildings and equipment in a proactive manner.
- The Facilities Maintenance Program shall incorporate energy efficiency as a central part of its mission and shall work in concert with the Energy Committee to carry that out.

### **Recommendations**

The Committee recommends that the Town continue the ongoing work to improve the Facilities Management Program, by ensuring that the implementation phase is adequately staffed and funded going forward. The Committee would like to recognize the diligent work of Louis de Geofroy, our Facilities Consultant, who has worked to document and organize our facility maintenance, as well as helping Joe Tierney, our Building Inspector, with the actual routine in-house work involved. The Committee recommends that the

Town continue the feasibility, design and planning work with the Council on Aging and the two other member towns for a future home for the Council on Aging, while also managing the town's debt costs. Further, that the use of Community Preservation Historic funds be pursued as part of the funding if appropriate.

#### **Recent Events Affecting the Capital Program**

- The new dump truck for the highway department and new police cruiser were delivered just before this writing.
- The new Tri-Town Ambulance building in Chilmark was completed in the summer of 2023. West Tisbury has agreed to bear up to one-third of this facility's ambulance-related debt cost; this cost will begin to be included in the Tri-Town budget/assessment in FY 2025.
- Progress has continued on catching up deferred maintenance on town buildings, and prioritizing and implementing a long-term facilities plan. The Facilities Management committee has been meeting regularly to move this process ahead and to develop and prioritize the upcoming town-wide facilities maintenance needs. Going forward, only incidental maintenance and custodial expenses will remain in the individual departmental budgets.

#### **Requested Capital Projects FY 2025 – FY2030**

A chart with accompanying notes for the FY2021 items follows. The Committee has set priorities for the capital requests using this coding:

<u>Priority Code</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
1	This project <b>must be completed</b> , as it is necessary for public health and safety, to meet our legal obligations or for reasons of fiscal prudence.
2	This project <b>should be completed</b> to maintain or expand our existing assets.
3	This project is <b>useful but not essential</b> at this time.

(Please note that projects are rated according to their present priority, so may get a higher priority as time goes by.)

Affordable Housing. The Affordable Housing Committee is working on developing the next project at the intersection of Lambert's Cove Road and State Road, with a focus on housing residents over 55 in nine rental units plus a shared community space. This \$4.95 million project will be funded by a variety of funds, including a request for West Tisbury Community Preservation Funds at the April 2024 Annual Town Meeting, as well as similar requests from other island towns and other sources of funding. The committee is also developing a new pilot program to help fund and encourage increased development of affordable accessory apartments.

Energy Committee. In response to the passage of the 100% Renewable by 2040 resolution at Town Meeting, the Energy Committee is working on a 5-10 year plan to renovate our municipal buildings so that they are more energy-efficient and ready to be converted to meeting all their energy needs

with electricity generated from renewable sources. The intent is for the cost of additional solar arrays and battery banks to be funded by grants or developers, but the cost of making town buildings ready for these installations will need to be borne by the Town.

As part of this effort, the Public Safety Building (PSB) Space Needs Committee will consider upgrading the PSB by considering placing Solar panels on the roof and battery storage located on site and the installation of either Level 2 or Level 3 chargers adjacent to the building for use by future electric and/or hybrid public safety vehicles.

In addition, West Tisbury, as part of the Commonwealth's Green Communities Program, requires a 20% reduction in energy use in the town's buildings over the next few years. For our town, this will primarily focus on significant energy reduction initiatives and upgrades at the West Tisbury School.

Fire Department. There will be a \$100,000 FY 2025 request to add more funds to the Fire Equipment Stabilization Fund, in preparation for the replacement of a tank truck and the chief's command vehicle over the next 3-5 years. Funding for a new fire hydrant tank on Tiah's Cove Road will be requested at the Annual Town Meeting, at a cost of \$75,359.

Highways. There will be a \$45,000 FY 2025 request to purchase a new pickup truck for the department, with a plan to replace the oldest pickup truck for the department and purchase a second pickup truck over subsequent years.

The Planning Board's Complete Streets Sub-Committee was granted funding from Mass Trails in June, 2022 in the amount of \$115,000. These funds paid for a design to create connector paths along Old County Road, which was completed in June 2023. Preparation for public meetings to publicize the design and take comments is under way.

Library. The HVAC system in the library has failed only nine years into its expected 15-year life, but the manufacturer is out of business. \$1.2 million was approved for borrowing at the 2023 town meeting; the project specifications have been finalized and it will soon be put out to bid. An additional \$1.8 million in borrowing will be requested at the 2024 Annual Town Meeting and on the ballot, due to escalating building costs and larger than anticipated scope.

Police. The police have adopted a program of replacing one vehicle every 18 months. The FY 2025 \$30,000 request continues that program.

Schools. The high school has secured MSBA approval to proceed with a major renovation of the school building. The MSBA-guided feasibility study is under way to determine the scope, rough design and cost of the project.

Both of the Up Island elementary schools are beginning to plan for energy upgrades to meet the goal of using 100% renewable energy by 2040. These will be large projects themselves, but has also brought forward a discussion about what other upgrades may be needed.

Town Buildings. There will be a \$100,000 FY 2025 request to continue the work of ongoing maintenance and repairs to buildings on a coordinated town-wide basis.

The Howes House Building Committee is in a hiatus phase, while the governing board is reconstituted and works on strategic planning and hiring a new director. It is hoped that the Visioning project planned for April 2024 will inform the future of this building project as well.

In addition, a Public Safety Building Space Needs Committee has been appointed by the Select Board to work on the intersection of several projects at the Public Safety Building, including the need for sleeping quarters for EMTs stationed in West Tisbury, planned installation of EV chargers, repair or replacement of heating for the apparatus bay, a new roof, and the installation of solar panels and connected battery storage for resilience.

Tri-Town Ambulance. This is the first year we will be paying our one-third share of the new Tri-Town Ambulance building in Chilmark, There are three Tri-Town ambulances, one stationed in each town. A portion of the ambulance service receipts are designated for and are expected to fund the purchase of the next ambulance, which will likely be purchased in FY 2025. The ambulance service goal is to purchase a new ambulance every five to six years thereafter.

The Committee thanks the Town departments and regional entities for their assistance and input. We are still missing one At-Large member, and encourage any interested parties to contact the Select Board's Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry Schubert (Assessors)	Matthew Merry (Planning Board)
Richard Knabel (At-Large)	Cynthia Mitchell (Select Board)
Kathy Logue (Treasurer/Collector)	Clark Rattet (Finance Committee)
Bruce Stone (Town Accountant)	Joseph Tierney (Building Inspector)
Richard Andre (Energy Committee)	