

## **Article 21: Appropriate for General Fund Cash Capital**

**6/8/2020**

**Article 21, page 38, Energy Efficiency Upgrade Improvements. Are all municipal buildings in scope? Is there a connection at all to Needham's recent Green Community designation? Is the budget allocation sufficient to allow Needham to identify enough energy efficiency projects to meet its obligations under the Green Community program?**

The intention of the article is to include all municipal buildings as well as Schools (except for the newly built Williams School, and the anticipated Public Safety Headquarters & Fire Station 2). This is connected to Needham's Green Community designation. Results of the anticipated study funded through this article will be used to recommend projects. The Town will then use these recommended projects to request future additional Green Community funding as well as future funding through the Energy Efficiency article.

**6/8/2020**

**Article 21, specifically in regards to the \$33K for firearm replacement: In light of recent events that should have us all questioning policing norms, why does our police force believe they need to be armed at all?**

**What is the specific problem with the current set of weapons? The description says they are 8 years old. But what does that mean in practice is the issue?**

**How often annually are police firearms a) drawn and b) discharged in Needham? For what purposes? What are the racial figures in connection with this usage?**

#1 immediate defense of life when no other reasonable means exists. This includes both a citizen's life as well as the police officer's life. The preservation of human life is the highest priority of the Needham Police Department. Unfortunately, we live in a world where horrible acts of violence happen daily and the officers of The Needham Police Department have a duty to serve and protect our citizens. We are fortunate to live in a community where extreme acts of violence are not our norm however, they have happened. This is why NPD commits to training our officers to the best of our abilities. NPD has also collaborated with Needham Emergency Management, Needham Fire Department and Needham Public Schools to prepare for the worst case scenarios such as Active Shooter Hostile Events so the loss of human life can be reduced to the greatest extents possible. We carry firearms as defensive, not offensive tools.

#2 NPD's current duty handguns are over 8-10 years old. They are metal and plastic mechanical devices that are exposed to all types of weather and abuse during firearms training. Like all mechanical devices, they are prone to breakage and inoperability when exposed to such conditions. Our current firearms are no longer under manufacture warranty and approximately 10 firearms have had to have replacement parts installed due to breakage. It has been the practice of NPD to replace duty firearms approximately every 10 years or as needed for some other reason. (SW 459, SW Sigma, SW99, SW M&P... 4 firearms replacements in 25 years). Over half of our patrol officers have recycled firearms that were issued to officers that have since retired or transferred to other departments. Based on a study conducted by the FBI and research done by our firearms instructors we would replace the Smith and Wesson 40 caliber with a Smith and Wesson 9MM firearm. The 9mm firearm has shown to be similar in its ability to stop a threat but the research has shown that officers ability to use and function at a higher level with the smaller caliber handgun.

#3 Officers who perceive a substantial threat to their personal safety may draw firearms. This most often occurs during nighttime hours during incidents such as building/ home burglar alarms where a subsequent search of the premises is required. Bank alarms which are quite common are also a reason that an officer would have their firearm drawn.

In going through 2019-2020 use of force reporting we did not draw our firearm in response to a perceived threat by an individual nor did we discharge our firearm.

**6/8/2020**

**With respect Article 21 and in particular the \$50,000 allocated to Traffic Improvements, the description of the warrant article provides that the request will be used to fund projects recommended by TMAC: (1) How will TMAC determine projects to fund? (2) Will TMAC hold a Public Hearing to hear from the entire community concerning the community's funding priorities for traffic improvements.**

The Traffic Management Advisory Committee meets monthly to hear and make recommendations on issues and concerns related to traffic raised by residents and neighborhoods.

The TMAC often makes recommendations to the Select Board and the Department of Public Work relative to the installation of stop signs, yield signs, lighting improvements, curb installation, and the like.

The funding in this article is used to implement those recommendations.

All TMAC meetings are held in public.

Larger scale traffic improvements are discussed by the Select Board in the context of the Capital Improvement Plan.

**6/5/20**

**Who is proposing the amendment? Why is it being made and what are the reasons behind the motion to amend?**

Response:

The Select Board is proposing the amendment. The intent is to remove two items at the request of the Library Trustees.

**6/4/20**

**Several of the capital expenditures are for the replacement of existing items that might or might not have residual value (including, for instance, AEDs, police firearms, school staff laptops, library computers, copiers, and the fleet items). What is the town intending to do with the outdated items that are being replaced?**

Response:

AED Machines – The AED machines are out of date and are no longer supported by the manufacturer. They will be phased out of service as they are beyond their useful life. Due to the age of these machines and unavailability of parts and equipment, they no longer have any trade-in value and will be disposed of.

Police Firearms – The old firearms will be traded in and a credit will be reflected in the final cost for the replacement of the new firearms.

School Staff Laptops – Before being recycled, school technology devices, including laptops, are repurposed to lesser uses until they are at the end of their useful lives. For example, a laptop used for high end graphic arts design could be repurposed to less intensive office use, followed by an additional assignment as a loaner device, or use as parts. Hard drives are removed before devices are recycled.

Library Computers – The Library computers that will be replaced will be retained and used for spare parts.

Copiers – Hard drives are removed from the copiers and then are destroyed by a third party. The copier(s) are removed by the vendor from who we are purchasing the new equipment. The age and use of the old copier will determine if any credit towards the new purchase is applied.

Fleet – Most vehicles being replaced will be disposed of by trade (included in the bid specification) or by auction.

**6/4/20**

**One of the items listed for fleet replacement is a new sidewalk snowplow. Will the intended new machine include a snowblower? In my**

**view, the sidewalk snowblower the town currently has is far more effective than the standard sidewalk snowplow.**

Response:

The sidewalk tractor will be a track machine equipped with the 2 plow blades, a snowblower, and a material spreader/hopper. The existing sidewalk tractor will be retained as a backup.

**6/3/20:**

**I have a question regarding the General Fund Fleet Replacement program. Have the vehicle requests been reduced at all taking into the account the tough budget future of the town? This seems like business as usual fleet replacement, when it certainly is anything like business as usual. Although I have no doubt that these fleet replacements would be a good investment long term, I question whether it would be sound to delay these purchases for a year, as this money could be better spent on the multitude of budget needs or shortfalls which could come up. Much like most families who were planning to replace a vehicle in 2020, only to put it off to maximize cash on hand, perhaps we should consider the same path with town finances. I have a hard time justifying \$1.26 million for new vehicles with some much up in the air in the next year.**

Response:

The vehicles scheduled for replacement in FY2021 are those which previously were determined needed to be funded this fiscal year. Several vehicles include specialized equipment which adds, months not weeks, to the lead time to obtain. Delaying the appropriation will increase the length of time before the equipment will be delivered and operational and will bump up against the replacements needed in the following year. The funding was specially targeted to vehicles and would not be used to fund operating expenses. Every year, the Town's scheduled capital equipment and vehicle requests are reviewed so that existing equipment which can be retained longer is, postponing the investment. The requests this year were reviewed and scaled back during the process.