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Change in funds request at TM

By Arthur Katz

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The campaign for a new DPW building took a dramatic turn this week.

In a meeting Monday evening, representatives of the Permanent Building Committee, the Board of Selectmen, the Appropriation, Capital Expenditures and Energy committees, Town Manager Carl Valente and DPW Director William Hadley agreed to ask the special Town Meeting on Dec. 6, only for funds to complete planning and construction drawings for the new building.

Article 2 on the Dec. 6 Warrant, which asked for construction funds, will be withdrawn.

The amount needed to take the project through the stage where constructions bids can be solicited is currently estimated to be about \$1.3 million.

Hadley said in an interview on Tuesday, "We really listened to what people were saying and the questions which were being asked. We realized that we needed to answer those questions if we hope to get the money to go ahead with the building.

"Everyone involved felt that this is the right project and the right building, but we need to come back in the spring with the right numbers."

The Capital Expenditures Committee (CEC) released a report on Monday that recommends that Town Meeting "appropriate only enough funds to complete the Construction Drawings through 'bid ready' for the project, with the intent of appropriating construction monies at a later annual or special Town Meeting (subject to referendum)."

In its report, the CEC praised the Permanent Building Committee "on its efforts to deliver a sustainable design that meets the needs of the community, particularly the neighborhood contiguous to 201 Bedford St.; that meets the DPW need for consolidating staff; and for the projected combined facilities staff for school and town buildings.

"The facility will protect the town's capital investment in DPW vehicles and replaces an overcrowded and unsafe facility."

The report goes on to agree that 201 Bedford St. is the proper location (versus moving to the town owned land on Hartwell Avenue) and that the proposed building is "functionally correct" and meets the needs of the community.

"We are confident," the report goes on, "... that the present facility is the proper scope. Further, in spite of the high cost, we believe it is the most cost effective facility for the DPW."

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Jeanne Krieger, chairman of the Board of Selectmen, commenting on the change in plans, said, "We have heard what people are concerned about, and this will give us the time to address those concerns."

As the CEC said in its report, "CEC believes that [to] appropriate funds for Construction Drawings through 'bid ready' is the proper course to pursue. While it will result in a slightly longer schedule and possible increase in construction costs, it will also allow all parties ... to better evaluate the project's scope, goals and costs."

The complete report is at www.lexingtontmma.org/Documents06/ACReport06STM2.pdf.

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