# 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 FY2024 capital budget, as well as projections for the capital program for the next five years, through FY2029.

**Summary**

If all of the FY2024 requests are approved, we will spend a total of $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on new and existing capital expenditures (including regionally assessed debt). For FY2024, this spending breaks down as follows:

* $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in general fund debt payments
* $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ on Town projects funded by CPA
* $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 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 process that will result in a formal and permanent Facilities Management Program, by ensuring that the implementation phase is adequately staffed and funded going forward. The Committee recommends that the Town continue the feasibility, design and planning work with the Council on Aging and the other two member towns for a future renovation of the Howes House, while also managing the town’s debt costs. Further, that the use of Community Preservation Historic funds be pursued as part of the funding for renovations. To that end, there is a request for $523,000 to pay design, engineering and project management costs to the completion of bid documents at the 2022 annual town meeting.

### Recent Events Affecting the Capital Program

* 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 FY2024 – FY2029

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

Priority Code Meaning

1 This project **must be completed**, as it is necessary for public health and safety, to meet our legal obligations or for reasons of fiscal prudence.

2 This project **should** **be completed** to maintain or expand our existing assets.

3 This project is **useful but not essential** 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, using funds already appropriated to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

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 Up Island Regional School is planning for a renovation to upgrade the West Tisbury School with respect to energy to reach 100% renewable status by 2040 It is likely this renovation will also include an addition for operational needs.

Fire Department. There will be a $100,000 FY 2024 request to add more funds to the Fire Equipment Stablization Fund, in preparation for the replacement of a tank truck and the chief’s command vehicle over the next 3-5 years.

Highways. There will be a $70,000FY2024 request to purchase a new pickup truck for the department, to replace the existing aging one.

The Planning Board has formed a subcommittee to work on the Town’s participation in the State’s Complete Streets program. A Complete Streets Policy was adopted in 2017 and a prioritization plan was completed in the spring of 2018.  They received $125,000 in CPA grant funding at the October 2020 Town meeting for matching funds to complete an engineering study for a shared-use path along Old County Road. The Town has submitted its third request for state funding of this project.

Mill Brook Watershed. The Mill Brook Watershed Study Planning Committee published its final report and presented it at a public meeting in June 2018. The report’s key findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Select Board now form the basis for continued data collection/monitoring and a management plan funded through CPA; that monitoring and data collection work is now ongoing

Police. The police have adopted a program of replacing one vehicle every 18 months. The FY2024 $42,500 request continues that program.

Schools. An effort is underway for several alternatives to repair, upgrade and renovate or replace the high school building. The school has thus far been unable to secure MSBA (state) funding support for this work. An effort is underway to secure island-wide support for this project, in order to secure MSBA support. While the future cost of such a project is not quantified at this time, it is certain that it will be a very big and costly one.

Sheriff’s Communication System. The island-wide E-911 communication system has been undergoing major upgrades and maintenance over a period of 3-5 years; the island towns have agreed to pay a proportionate share of this expense. The FY2024 request is for West Tisbury’s share of the year of this new arrangement.

Town BuildingsThere will be a $150,000 FY 2024 request to continue thework of ongoing maintenance and repairs to buildings on a coordinated town-wide basis.

The Howes House Building Committee is in the design and planning phase for a full renovation and expansion of the facility which houses the Up-Island Council on Aging. There will be a FY2024 request for $485,000 to compete the design phase through final bid documents.

Tri-Town Ambulance. 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 FY2024. The ambulance service goal is to purchase a new ambulance every five to six years thereafter.

The project to construct a new building to house the Ambulance administrative office and equipment barn in the Town of Chilmark is currently on time and on budget. West Tisbury has agreed to bear up to one-third of this facility’s cost, the total cost for which is currently estimated at $5.8 million. These costs may be reduced somewhat by future ambulance receipts.

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) Clark Rattet (Finance Committee)

Bruce Stone (Town Accountant) Joseph Tierney (Building Inspector)