

## INTRODUCTION

In March of 1987, the Town Meeting authorized the Planning Board to prepare a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). Subsequently, several attempts were made at implementing that authority, but no plan was ever produced. In 2007, a warrant article was proposed which would have transferred authority for preparing the CIP to the Board of Selectmen. An amendment to the proposal was determined illegal by Town Counsel and therefore the proposed article was null and void, so authority for the CIP remained with the Planning Board. In response, the Planning Board, charged with the authority, created a five-person subcommittee charged with preparing a CIP for the Board's consideration. The CIP Committee, now in its fourth year, has again worked diligently to update its recommendations and consider those of the Town Administrator and Town Department Managers. This report represents the CIP Committee's effort to provide the Planning Board and the Town of Bristol with a road map to future capital spending which sets priorities and attempts to avoid the wide swings in capital spending which have occurred in recent years.

The CIP Committee is a significant tool in helping to bring about changes envisioned in the Master Plan in an orderly way. It must be emphasized the CIP Committee approved by the Planning Board is strictly advisory. Ultimate funding decisions are subject to the budgeting process involving the Budget Committee and final approval by the voters at Town Meeting. Inclusion of any given project in the CIP does not constitute an endorsement by the CIP Committee or the Planning Board. The CIP does attempt to set priorities and to coordinate major expenditures with the hope of stabilizing the impact of capital projects on the tax rate. The report includes recommendations for funding, such as the use of capital reserve accounts, issuance of bonds, receipt of grant money, etc.

Beginning in 2010, the CIP Committee defined a capital project as a tangible project or asset having a cost of \$10,000 or more and a useful life of three years or more. It should be noted that a number of projects which might seem to fall under this definition were excluded from consideration. The school budget was considered to be a separate entity and was therefore not part of the CIP process. Most of the capital expenditures of the Water & Waste Water Departments are directly offset by the revenues of those departments and were therefore not included. However, one major project, a study of a second water storage tank was included because a significant share of its cost would be paid by the Town. A new item, routine road improvements and maintenance were included starting in 2010. Such expenditures are part of the Public Works Department.

The CIP Committee's continuing task is to identify the Town's capital needs for the next ten years. The Committee sought out information from the Town Administrator, Department Heads, and ordinary citizens. Recent reports by ad hoc committees on building needs and Fire Department needs were reviewed as well. Historical records of capital spending for the last ten years were reviewed and updated. The CIP is an ongoing process. The Town Administrator and Department Heads have provided their updated capital requests and the CIP Committee has updated last year's plan. A major goal of the CIP Committee is to attempt to avoid sharp increases in capital spending in a single year while at the same time providing for long-term needs of the Town. This year, due to the economic climate, another goal was to keep capital funding increases within reason. The attached spreadsheet presents the Committee's recommendations for the period 2011 through 2020 and is followed by a section that explains the Committee's reasons for these recommended capital expenditures.