

CITY OF SAINT PAUL LONG-RANGE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 13, 2025, 5:00 – 7:00 pm | North End Community Center

- I. Call to order at 5:19 pm by Chair Dees-Erickson
- II. Roll Call
 - a. Members in attendance: Demetrius Shaw, Makayla Cox, Liam O'Brien, Carl Johnson, Raymond Hess, Tim Marino, Nardos Ashenafi, Lauren Dees-Erickson, Darren Tobolt
 - b. Members absent: April Eh, Jes Braun, Pang Yang
 - c. City Staff in attendance: Nichelle Bottko Woods, Shannon Forney -Office of Financial Services, Alice Messer-Parks and Rec, Dan Niziolek – Department of Safety and Inspection
 - d. Community Members in attendance: no community members in attendance
- III. Approval of 10/13 Meeting Agenda- Hess moved to approve the agenda, Tobolt seconded, motion passed.
- IV. Approval of 9/8 Meeting Minutes – O'Brien moved to approve the minutes, Marino seconded, motion passed.
- V. Budget Amendments

- a) Office of Financial Services– RES PH 25-224: Budget amendment to reconcile current revenue, as presented by Nichelle Bottko-Woods. Amending the financing and spending plans in the 2022 Capital Maintenance Budget in the amount of \$300,000 to reflect a cancelled HRA Transfer.

Bottko-Woods affirms this is accounting clean-up and reconciliation of funds that affects contingency funds available. Motion to approve the budget amendment is made by Hess, seconded by Cox. No further discussion. Motion passes.

Contingency Update: - Bottko Woods provides a contingency status update, to demonstrate what funding is available. O'Brien mentioned that the market standard is to have a 20% contingency fund for a project.

- b) Department of Safety and Inspection– RES PH 25-228: Budget amendment as presented by Dan Niziolek. Amending the Capital Improvement Budget to the 2025 DSI Animal Services Building Project for \$860,000.

Niziolek described that once the project was started, additional needs were discovered in the Animal Control Services Building renovation, including an uncapped manhole, additional asbestos and a load bearing wall that needed to be replaced. Kennels were not a part of the original budget. The building is slated for a March 2026 public opening.

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Dees-Erickson noted that this project has already been the recipient of considerable contingency funding. She noted that wasn't a comment for or against the project, just reiterating that it spends down contingency funds to a remaining \$158,000 from \$1.3M.

Johnson noted that Dan gave a great presentation last fall on the needs for improvements to this same building, but expressed dismay at continuing to fund a building that has more and more needs without pre-design planning. There was further discussion on the practice of departments building funds in reserve before embarking on a project, but also the expense of the project going up over time. Bottko Woods noted that the reserve strategy is a good option for smaller departments, who may not have the capacity to launch a significant project without additional support.

Johnson noted his disapproval of awarding this project three quarters of remaining contingency, to an existing \$5.7M project.

O'Brien noted that it was critical for the project to reach completion, so there was no good alternative if the project wasn't funded through this budget amendment, using contingency. He reiterated the need for an all-project status report, all years, to avoid this type of project deferment and cost increase.

Tobolt noted that this building and its needed improvements have appeared before the CIB committee several times, and that the committee needed to support and trust the departments are making decisions in their best interest.

Johnson inquired if the commitment of these funds would truly finalize the project and bring it to completion. Niziolek affirmed that yes, the building was 95% completed.

Marino inquired what was the original contingency on this grant? Bottko Woods and Forney indicated they would get back to the committee with an answer.

Motion to approve the budget amendment is made by O'Brien, seconded by Tobolt. Votes not in favor of the motion: Johnson and Marino. No further discussion. Motion passes by majority.

- c) Parks and Rec– RES PH 25-226: Budget amendment as presented by Alice Messer. Authorizing the Department of Parks and Recreation to accept Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) Outdoor Recreation grant program funds and to amend the financing and spending plan in the amount of \$350,000 for a new city park at The Heights.

Motion to approve the budget amendment is made by Tobolt, seconded by Shaw. No further discussion. Motion passes.

- d) Parks and Rec– RES PH 25-225: Budget amendment as presented by Alice Messer. Authorizing the Department of Parks and Recreation to accept Parks and Trails Legacy Funds, enter into grant agreements, which include an indemnification clause, and amend the financing and spending plan in the amount of \$2,596,039.

Messer described these Legacy Funds would support Crosby Farm Long Range Plan, Phalen Picnic Area Construction, Como Shuttle, etc. Marino asked what the timeline was for Long Range Plan for Imniizaska. Messer replied about 9 months to a year. Johnson asked if this was for an additional shuttle? Messer replied no, this is for the annual cost of the existing shuttle. She also confirmed that the Phalen Picnic Space was existing but would be remodeled.

Motion to approve the budget amendment is made by Ashenafi, seconded by Cox. No further discussion. Motion passes.

Johnson noted again his disapproval for the Department of Safety and Inspection project using so much of the contingency funding. He reiterated disbelief that the project didn't have adequate pre-design planning or better costs analysis without using contingency funds. Bottko Woods noted that CIB bond funded projects can't support pre-design activities or design as part of eligibility. Johnson also mentioned discomfort with the project using Capital Maintenance dollars for what is essentially new remodeling.

Dees-Erickson inquires if the committee can recommend that projects build in a 20% contingency fund. Bottko Woods mentions that the recently developed Capital Status Update document and process will help give greater context and dimension to projects in process, completed, and needing more funding.

Marino mentions wanting to know more about the history and context of each project before it arrives as a budget amendment to the CIB committee. O'Brien asks if the committee could request a one-pager on each project coming before the CIB, that

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would present all information and previous resolutions, budget amendment or contingency use per project.

Marino asks if we have data on current deferred maintenance by department, and if that could be a regular reporting. Bottko Woods answered that there are only 2 projects not started, one by Fire (Hillcrest) and one by Library (SunRay concrete main entrance). This is captured in the current project status report.

Committee members generally agreed that more funding was needed for CIB processes. Bottko Woods noted that the annual CIB bonding amount has been unchanged since 1995. O'Brien advocated again for a one-pager for all budget amendments before the CIB.

VI. New Business

- a) Capital Maintenance Process update as presented by Shannon Forney. Forney shared that the program had received 38 proposals requesting \$8.8M for \$2.7M available.
 - i. Nichelle Bottko Woods shared the Capital Maintenance Status Update Document with the committee. She demonstrated how the sheet shows project status for all projects since 2020. It shows projects completed, in scoping/design, in progress and not started.
- b) Community Proposal Process Applications – Bottko Woods asked for feedback on the upcoming Community Proposal Process. The committee recommended that proposers be able to submit a pre-application via video. Marino said the application needs to be open for at least 6 weeks, and longer if possible. Bottko Woods asked about the tension of the committee wanting more information on each proposal vs. not burdening the applicant with too much detail in the application. All agreed there was a balance between the two. The committee agreed that generally, less detail could and should be accepted and considered as part of the process, in order to make the application easier to access.
- c) Community Proposal Sub Committee - O'Brien announced that this group had met once and was organizing to give a more robust committee update at the November meeting.
- d) Bottko Woods asked for recommendations for 2026 Meeting Locations. Committee generally supported Arlington Hills and North End Community Centers.

VII. Announcements

a. Upcoming Meetings:

- i. Monday, November 10 at Arlington Hills Community Center
- ii. Monday, December 8 at North End Community Center

b. October 22nd [City Council Budget Committee](#) presentation: Financial Services, Debt and CIB

Meeting adjourned at 7:21pm