

Residents weigh in on town budget, spending

By Bill Laforme

Lynnfield residents had the opportunity Wednesday night to weigh in on the budget in advance of the April 25 Town Meeting.

The town budget for fiscal year 2017 would spend \$53,212,989, with a small conservatively projected surplus of about \$18,000. Another \$1.54 million would go to the town's capital budget expenditures. At this point in the budget process, the respective town department heads have already made their presentations before the Board of Selectmen, and the town warrant has been closed, with 32 articles this spring, including the town

budget and capital budget. Monday night's forum was a joint hearing between the Board of Selectmen and the finance committee.

Much of the commentary on the budget came from resident Pat Campbell, who rose on several occasions to discuss line items ranging from an excessive number of school buses for the town, to her objections of the creation of a new position in the school district that she said would amount to a new \$120,000 deputy superintendent of schools. That said, she backed the district's request for a full day kindergarten program,

BUDGET | SEE PAGE 2

Town's buildings to be aging poorly

By Bill Laforme

The Town of Lynnfield's buildings are under increasing strain for space and also for general upkeep, selectmen were warned Monday night.

The chairman of the Town's Capital Facilities Advisory Committee, Ted Caswell, provided a rundown of its work over the past year and a half. The committee is tasked with assessing the uses and upkeep

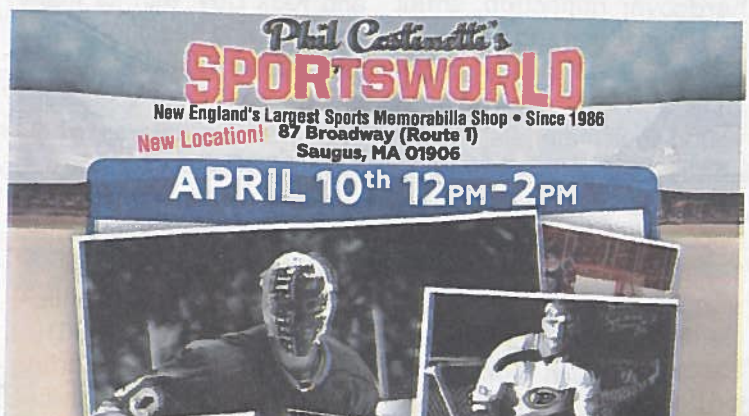
for the Town's various buildings.

Caswell reported that the Town of Lynnfield currently owns 13 buildings totaling 500,000 square feet. The four school buildings are the newest in town at 14 years old. After that, the drop off is steep – Caswell noted that the newest non-school building in Lynnfield is town hall, constructed in

BUILDINGS | SEE PAGE 4

Phil Costinetti's
SPORTSWORLD
 New England's Largest Sports Memorabilia Shop • Since 1986
 New Location! 87 Broadway (Route 1)
 Saugus, MA 01906

APRIL 10th 12PM-2PM



• TOWN'S BUILDINGS AGING POORLY | FROM PAGE 1

1964. Since then, he added, the town population has grown 40%, traffic on Route 1 has increased five-fold and some 1,200 new homes, apartments and condos have been built in the past two decades alone. "All this growth has happened without anything happening to the buildings," said Caswell, who added that many of the buildings were constructed to meet the town's needs of five decades ago.

"We don't have the answers; there are no answers at this point," said Caswell. "We do know there are things that are broken."

Both the police and fire departments have discussed the conditions of their respective buildings with residents in the past. Caswell provided selectmen with a roundup of the conditions affecting town safety personnel and their equipment, complete with photos. The police department was reportedly built to accommodate about a dozen employees, although today the staff is now closer to 30. Caswell noted that the Lynnfield Police are unable to use the firing range in their building and must therefore rent time from other towns. The training room also reportedly doubles as a kitchen; the only available space for juvenile offenders is a half hour away in Lawrence, and the holding cells date back to around the 1950s. Caswell also reported that the police booking room can only hold two offenders at a time; the corridors are not wide enough to meet the Americans with Disabilities



Lynnfield Police Headquarters has a number of space and infrastructure issues that have only become worse in recent years.

Act specifications; and a locked U.S. mailbox has been brought into service as the department's drug evidence room.

The fire department also reportedly suffers from facilities conditions that Caswell described as "deplorable." For example, he showed an area containing just one bed, even though a number of personnel reportedly sleep anywhere they can find space in the station during significant winter storms. "That's crazy and deplorable," said Caswell.

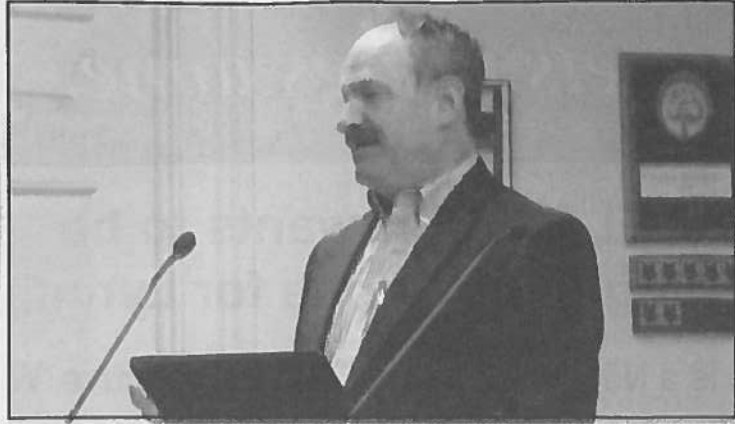
Caswell showed photos of a cramped and outdated decontamination area and gear storage area, and he described how the fire trucks have grown considerably over the years to become barely capable of fitting



Constructed in 1964, Town Hall is the newest non-school building in Lynnfield, Capital Facilities Advisory Committee Chairman Ted Caswell told selectmen Monday night.



Committee Chairman Ted Caswell told selectmen Monday night.



Capital Facilities Advisory Committee Chairman Ted Caswell gave selectmen a report on the ongoing effort to determine the town's current building and space needs.


into the 1950s-era fire station. Personnel also reportedly make do with just one short-lasting hot shower, and they also apparently make do without a women's locker room.

The town's building issues don't stop with its public safety facilities. Much has been written over the winter about the library's plan for a new facility down the street next to Reedy Meadow Golf Course. A couple of warrant articles at the spring Town Meeting will potentially help bring that vision closer to reality. For now, Caswell noted that the library suffers from problems like insufficient parking, dangerous access walking in from across

the street, and constant water problems in the basement. Other issues include a sorting room where staff can't fully stand upright, a lack of public meeting space, and staff spaces where there is no room for all employees to sit. In contrast, Caswell said that he and other committee members believe the library should be a "crown jewel" of Lynnfield.

If the library does end up at a new facility down the street, the existing library building would likely be repurposed by the Town for a use to be determined later.

Steps away from the library, Town Hall has its own issues. Departments have been



cramped into one outdated space or another in the building for years, and along with space issues, other problems are electrical, mechanical and technical in nature. Handicap access at town hall is generally poor, he added, and there is also a lack of storage space.

While the schools are much newer than these previously mentioned buildings, Caswell warned that after 14 years, some of them are at risk of potentially expensive repairs beginning around 2020 – especially because some maintenance investment has been deferred over the years. “Certainly we’ve got some major, major replacements that are going to need to happen in about five or six years,” said Caswell.

Selectman Tom Terranova urged Caswell’s committee to focus on a preventative maintenance plan to help prolong the life of the school buildings and to head off any major repairs. Selectman Chris Barrett agreed with the call for a maintenance plan, and also noted that some of the Town’s space needs could be resolved if the library ends up moving down the street.

Along with examining the state of the Town’s current buildings, the Capital Facilities Advisory Committee will also take a look at some of the needs of the various Lynnfield

organizations (his committee counted 23 of them) with an eye on future possibilities, such as a community center and a town cultural center. Caswell also noted that looking ahead, the Town has very few options when it comes to buildable new space. He cited 2.2 acres around the South Fire Station, seven acres in the front portion of Reedy Meadow where the new library would be, as well as 40 acres of usable land that is currently the golf course.

For the Town's current space needs, the Capital Facilities Committee estimates 37,300 square feet of total new need. Specifically, the police station currently has 5,372 square feet, but requires 12,000 square feet, a 120% increase. The fire department currently has 6,600 square feet at its center station and 4,692 square feet at the south station, but needs to have 15,000 square feet at the center station (125% increase) and 6,100 square feet at the south station (30% increase). The library currently accounts for 14,000 square feet and planners are seeking to bring that up to 28,000 square feet. For town hall, the current 10,200 square feet available would need to grow by about two-thirds to meet its estimated need of 17,000 square feet.