As you know from this year’s budget presentations, our current telephone system is sorely in need of an upgrade/replacement. To that end, we solicited proposals from vendors. Approximately 15 vendors attended a meeting on May 24th and we received five responses last week, which I reviewed with our two telecommunications consultants, Chambers Advisory Group and the Upton Group.

Our consensus recommendation is to award a contract to Metropolitan Telephone of Walpole. They are the current vendor for the existing system at the high school and have a strong track record. We are in the process of negotiating some minor details with their proposal (such as quantity of strobe lights in gymnasiums, auditoriums and cafeterias) so the final cost may change slightly, therefore we recommend approving no more than $75,000 for this project.

A new telephone system will essentially create a unified campus, where anyone can directly dial anyone else using only a four-digit extension, rather than dialing ten digits, which should also provide savings on our telephone invoices. Work will be completed this summer to be ready in time for the start of school in September.

The source of funding is unused capital funds from the previously-approved (but ultimately not needed) sewer line project at the middle school. The sum of $150,000 remained unspent from this project and the committee voted last fall to transfer this amount back to the general fund. Given that a properly-functioning telephone system is a significant safety issue, we feel it is appropriate to repurpose those funds for this important project.

**MOTION:** To award a contract not to exceed $75,000 to Metropolitan Telephone for the upgrade/replacement of the telephone systems at the middle school and high school.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.