

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

5:30 P.M. Tuesday
October 25, 2011

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Leo Smith, Vice Chairman Leslie Lewis, Leandra MacDonald, Gene Kellogg, Susan Stanbury, and James Kelly.

Also Present: Carol Ogilvie, Director, and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Welcome and Opening Comments:

Chair Smith welcomed the members. He noted the Town Clerk, Linda Guyette was present to swear them in as CIP Committee members. Ms. Guyette did so and the members thanked her for making the process so convenient.

Minutes:

Chair Smith noted the first item on the agenda was to review and approve the Minutes of October 18, 2011. A motion was made/seconded (MacDonald/Chollet) to approve the minutes as written with correction of two typos, with Ms. Stanbury abstaining, all others in favor.

Information Technology

Fash Farashahi began by noting the biggest change for his department was in the hardware being bought. He went on to explain printer and workstation needs to be replaced or upgraded every several years "but we are providing more service with less hardware and legacy applications by using virtualization technology." He went on to further explain virtualization adding "this allows us to cut down on the number of servers we use." Mr. Farashahi noted public access to the GIS software and Assessing Data Base as examples. He went to review the Technology Plan for 2013 through 2018 noting network improvements, server systems and specialty equipment and needs (citing the Police Department as an example). He also reviewed the staff computer program management list with the members.

"How many operating systems do you have?" asked Ms. Stanbury with Mr. Farashahi replying "mostly Windows 7 and XP for the desktops, Windows 2000, 2003 and 2008 for the servers and Unix SCO for the financials." Mr. Farashahi also noted consolidation of hardware by lending out laptops for low frequency needs (such as the Supervisors of the Checklist).

Chair Smith asked Mr. Farashahi to speak a bit more on virtualization noting "it is a tough concept if you are not working on computers" adding "and it does have a significant impact on your budget." Mr. Farashahi spent a few minutes describing the concept concluding "it is really

like a computer that lives within another computer but both are separate and distinct.” He added “it has reduced our hardware tremendously with less back-up time.”

Ms. Lewis asked Mr. Farashahi if he was responsible for the technology at the Wastewater Treatment Plant with Mr. Farashahi noting that IT would monitor their hardware and support/maintain the desktops “but the rest is done by consultants as it is very specific.”

Ms. Stanbury asked about consultant use by the IT Department with Mr. Farashahi replying “we have used them but very sparingly.” He went on to explain “Alex (Oakes) handles most requests and deals with the fire walls and I do the GIS. We have our own niches and most of the time we handle everything in house.”

Mr. Kelly asked “what kind of savings will we see with this investment?” Mr. Farashahi replied “the savings are primarily in efficiency” giving an example of how requests can be fulfilled in a matter of minutes versus a matter of days ten years ago. Mr. Kelly asked how that would reflect in terms of the budget adding “there is no financial benefit in terms of the budget.” Ms. Stanbury interjected “I am curious too” adding “how much is the operating budget for IT?” Mr. Farashahi replied \$153,000.00 minus the capital.” Ms. Stanbury asked “and is most of that for salaries?” Mr. Farashahi replied “no, not necessarily” adding “there is licensing for software, our Postini program, mail hops and other things besides salaries.”

Mr. Kelly interjected “I would like to see where the benefit comes from.” A brief discussion about the types of benefits generated by technology followed. Ms. Lewis noted “it is like buying a police cruiser. Police need it do their jobs but they wear out and break down and have to be replaced” adding “so you may not necessarily see a financial gain from buying a cruiser but the benefit is there.” Mr. Kelly seemed unconvinced, replying “technology is different, look at the jobs computers and the internet have eliminated around the world.”

Chair Smith asked how many computers were supported by the IT Department with Mr. Farashahi replying “88” Chair Smith went on to say “so you have 1.5 people managing that many computers. Measure that against the expense and it seems to me to be pretty reasonable.” Mr. Farashahi replied “we make sure everything is stable and working and upgrade the systems according to the plan. We try to do more with less.”

There were no further questions and the Chairman thanked Mr. Farashahi for coming in.

Finance

Finance Director Nancy Vaihinger began with “very rarely do I make capital requests.” She went on to explain her proposal to purchase and upgrade the town’s financial management program. She noted the current software was purchased in 1998 and that while the software company will continue to support the applications running on the Unix “there will be no future upgrades to the modules.” She briefly reviewed the two major financial management programs (Community Plus and Finance Plus) as well as the tax billing package. She noted that unlike the current software conversion, the new tax and utility software will be compliant with New Hampshire law. She concluded by noting “the finance management system is not just for the Finance Department, every department is using it one way or another.”

Ms. Vaihinger spent some time reviewing the handout she had created but noted “I will not read the whole thing because it is boring...well I don’t think it is boring but everyone else might.” She went on to reiterate that the current software will not receive new upgrades and that the tax software is extremely outdated. She noted there was one gentleman in tech services that knew the system inside and out and “if he leaves we are in trouble.” Ms. Stanbury asked about state requirements that the town must follow with Ms. Vaihinger replying “the state dictates how we track a variety of things” adding “as well our chart of account and recording methods.” She went on to note “our financials are dictated by the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB).”

A brief discussion about training followed. Mr. Kellogg asked if the conversion would be outsourced or done in-house with Ms. Vaihinger replying “it is outsourced and then we check it.” Ms. Vaihinger went to explain that the town was attempting to partner with the City of Keene as they use the same (current software) system for a cost savings “but either way we definitely have to do something.”

A brief discussion about the time sensitivity followed with Ms. Vaihinger noting the tax package was most critical and should be done next year “but that is a large expenditure for one year,” she said “so we turned to the CIP.”

Chair Smith noted “the current system certainly is a challenge.” Ms. Vaihinger replied “going forward with the lack of support from the software provider is going to be an issue. They will never say they will not support us but it is frustrating when you try to fix a problem and it just messes it up more.” She once again noted the one gentleman in tech support that really knows the system noting “who knows what happens if he leaves.” She concluded “whether we partner with Keene or not we need to start putting money aside for what the eventual decision will be. Start putting the money in now so that when it goes down or crashes, we will be ready.” Chair Smith interjected “my question is about the risk” referring to the fact the system could potentially crash at any time. Ms. Stanbury agreed noting “it makes me nervous to go that long.” Ms. Vaihinger replied “we would like to do it now but it is too much money” adding “the software is expensive, conversion is expensive and training is expensive.”

Ms. MacDonald asked about a standard software package from the state with Ms. Vaihinger concluding “they will not do it. If they did make a package mandatory they would have to pay for it and they will not do that.”

Highway

Chair Smith began by suggesting “we’ll just start at the top and work our way down.”

Main Street Bridge Construction - Mr. Bartlett reviewed the figures of \$825,000.00 to rehab the bridge versus the multimillion dollar price tag to do a total rebuild. He noted the importance of getting the project placed back on the State’s 10 Year plan to secure the funding. He added “if successful we will be the third municipal bridge to be funded by the federal program. He added “and again placing us at Fiscal Year 2016/2017, the state of those funds is uncertain.”

Route 202/Pine Street Sidewalk – Mr. Bartlett stated “the bridge is a separate project from the retaining wall and again the uncertainty of those funds is a real thing.” He told the members he was still waiting to hear back from Federal Highway and NH DOT noting “we have to wait for those pieces to fall into place.” A very brief discussion about the plans for the Main Street/Concord Street intersection followed. In reference to a roundabout Mr. Bartlett noted “it is the one solution that increases traffic efficiency and traffic calming.” He added “if a roundabout is approved then we will determine if one fits.” Ms. MacDonald interjected “you cannot design until they make up their minds.” Mr. Kelly clarified “so you do not have to have a design before they approve it.” Mr. Bartlett agreed concluding “it is a delicate area; there are a lot of unanswered questions about a roundabout or an intersection, we are going to have to go through the process.”

Union Street Bridge – Mr. Bartlett noted the engineering was due to start by Fiscal Year 2013. He noted the cost increase and added the CIP amount of \$37,000.00 “will bring us up to our estimated 20% share.”

Union Street Reconstruction – also slated for Fiscal year 2013. Mr. Bartlett described the infrastructure improvements to the road, sidewalk and drainage system. There was a brief discussion about the proposed expansion of the West Peterborough TIF District and the potential of using those funds to help offset the cost.

Downtown Stormwater Separation – Mr. Bartlett explained the goal of separating the stormwater catch basins from the existing sewer on Grove and Main Streets as well as the reconstruction of storm drain pipes, manholes and catch basins to prevent premature pavement failure and erosion issues.

Roadway Repaving – Mr. Bartlett noted “this program had held at \$300,000.00 and needed to be expanded to \$450,000.00 to restore the structural integrity to failing pavement sections. He specifically noted the success of completing Four Winds Farm and Cornish Roads. “We regraded, reclaimed, added additional drainage and swales and then repaved” he said. He also spoke briefly about the shimming and sealing program. Ms. MacDonald asked about the road program for next year and Mr. Bartlett reviewed it. That discussion included East Mountain Road, and Grove, Main and Elm Streets. Mr. Bartlett mentioned the Safe Route to School project where the town “could tap into grants for construction up to \$250,000.00 to improve school sidewalk and road configurations.

Road Construction Debt Service – Chair Smith interjected “that is from last year. It is a given, next.”

Sidewalks – Mr. Bartlett reviewed the problem with the bricks shifting from moisture getting in. He noted half of the repair would be paid for by the general fund and the other half would be paid for by the Greater Downtown TIF District.

Buildings & Grounds

Transcript Dam – Mr. Bartlett began with “rehabilitation or breach.” He went on to speak about the positive aspects of breaching the dam but added “from a historical value there is not a map or picture that doesn’t have the dam on/in it.”

North Peterborough Dam – Mr. Bartlett noted “if you have not done so go and see the Wilder Thermometer Park.” He then went on to the structural evaluation and repairs that would be needed to keep the dam from failing. He also reviewed the presence and importance of the north aquifer and wetlands upstream of the dam.

A brief discussion about input from the state as well as the low-hazard consequences associated with a dam failure followed with Mr. Bartlett confirming “the general review of our dams is that even with a catastrophic failure there is a low percentage for loss of life. We maintain the dams as best we can and will continue to do so in the future.”

Painting the Town House – Mr. Bartlett noted “the Town House should be painted in 2013” but went on to note “if it were to hit in 2013 or 2014 it doesn’t matter.” He noted the last time the building was painted was in 2008 and “it should be painted every 5 years.”

Public Works Facility – With a smile Mr. Bartlett told the members “this will continue to show up until a decision is made about a municipal facilities complex.” Mr. Bartlett also noted the new Wastewater Treatment Plant and the potential for the Public Works Department to co-locate at that facility.

Ms. Lewis asked about the status of the lagoons (specifically for the Recreation Department’s use for athletic fields). Mr. Bartlett replied “we will be getting to that process” and briefly explained the plan for the closure of the three lagoons throughout 2012 and 2013. He pointed out the “best fitting” areas for athletic use (the most westerly lagoon) as well as the other two lagoon’s proximity to the Contocook River. He noted “they are in the 100-year flood plain all the time.” He also pointed out the area ear-marked for wetland mitigation “now and in the future.” Mr. Bartlett concluded by noting other issues such as seasonal changes that create temperature changes in the water “mean there is still potential for odors.” Ms. Lewis asked “so *one* of those lagoons can be used as a field for somebody?” with Mr. Bartlett replying “most likely” adding “the only competing thing is a solar array.” A brief discussion about the economics of solar power followed.

Recycling

No CIP requests from this Department

Equipment Replacement

Mr. Bartlett noted “the sweeper needs to be replaced at this point, we are getting quotes.” The members went onto briefly review the equipment.

Water/Wastewater

Mr. Bartlett reported “nothing here except the usual request for ongoing operations.” He encouraged the members to stop by the facility for a tour.

Mr. Kelly asked about the increase in the CIP from prior years and asked “is that a realistic thing for us to be thinking it fits?” Mr. Bartlett explained that the projects to date have had an outside source of funding. He went on to note “when we start talking about roads and dams we are talking about projects with limited or no funding available.” Mr. Kelly asked “is that realistic?” and went on to ask about ranking or prioritizing projects “how do we do that?” he asked. Chair Smith replied “we measure projects against the health and safety of townspeople, the return on investment, things like that.” Mr. Kelly asked “does Rodney come back to help us or do we do this ourselves?” Chair Smith replied “we review the projects and ask additional questions. If we find ourselves caught up on anything we ask the Department Head back.” Ms. Stanbury added “we try to find a balance.” Ms. MacDonald noted “our job really is time shifting, we have to recommend what goes forward.” Chair Smith agreed adding “and we have heard some requests for 3 or 4 years in a row. It is almost like a tier or mezzanine approach.”

A brief discussion about the budget process followed. Ms. Lewis noted (in reference to Pam Brenner’s address) “we were asked to make the recommendations we feel are appropriate” adding (in reference to last year’s budget) it is hard to look at last year and do that.” Ms. Lewis concluded with “and next year we will be dealing with a bond for the pool.”

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton,
Administrative Assistant