

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

5:30 P.M. Tuesday
November 1, 2011

MINUTES

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

Also Present: Carol Ogilvie, Director; Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development; and Pam Brenner, Town Administrator.

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m.

Minutes:

Chair Smith noted the first item on the agenda was to review and approve the Minutes of October 25, 2011. A motion was made/seconded (Smith/Kellogg) to approve the minutes as written with correction of a typo. Ms. Chollet abstained, all others were in favor.

Chair Smith began by noting “we do not have any presentations tonight so we will go over the spreadsheet and do some prioritizing, at least for the year coming up (FY 13).” He also mentioned getting a head count for the Wastewater Treatment Facility tour tentatively scheduled for Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. Ms. Ogilvie noted that if members could not make it tomorrow she could schedule something for noon time in the future because of daylight savings time. Chair Smith replied “we will think about it and see what makes sense.”

Chair Smith suggested creating a work spreadsheet or table “to get a handle on what projects we have that are mandatory” citing the lease payment on the fire truck and debt service as examples. Ms. Chollet interjected “so to clarify we’ll work from the most necessary to the least?” Chair Smith replied “yes, for example the debt service must be paid; we have no choice in that.”

The members briefly discussed the Fire Equipment Capital Reserve and most agreed to place \$100,000.00 back into Fiscal Year 2014 with one member noting “we want to see *something* in there.” Mr. Kelly disagreed noting several other large ticket items in FY 2014. “I suggest we take it out” he said. A brief discussion about the CIP goal of prioritizing requests and evening out the fiscal years followed. Chair Smith concluded by noting “let’s just go through it department by department.” He began with the Union Street Bridge. It was noted the project was an 80%/20% funded project (Federal and Town/TIF funds). It was also noted that Debt Service “is a given” at \$54,000.00. Chair Smith asked “is there anything else that we know about that we have no choice? Is that it?” Ms. Ogilvie replied “for Fiscal Year 2013 I think that is it.”

The members added up the “must pays” taking any offsetting revenue into account. Ms. Lewis reiterated what Ms. Brenner had said at their first meeting about a budget goal noting “I am not

sure it is practical if it is all open-ended” adding “I think we should be working to some number, we should be aiming for something.”

Once again Chair Smith suggested the group “just go through the spreadsheets and discuss what the priorities should be for each department.” Before moving on Mr. Kelly asked for clarification on the 1.5 million dollar updated cost estimate for the Union Street Bridge Reconstruction.

Before continuing Ms. Chollet asked “can someone tell me what our recommendation was last year? Mr. Kelly replied “it was 1.214 Million” adding “and ended up at \$934,000.00” (after the budget and town meeting processes).

The members began their review:

OCD: No requests this year

Finance: The members discussed the tax and utilities software package. Ms. Chollet noted “it’s not quite a no-brainer but almost. I don’t see how you can take that out.” Ms. Stanbury agreed noting “that is critical” adding that “in reading the memo” (created by the Finance Director for her presentation) “it sounds like she needs more money than what is set to be put away each year.” She went on to note “it sounds like she needed to start to work on this earlier.” The members discussed whether or not the requested \$25,000.00 per year for six years would be enough to sustain the programs once the first phases were in place. Chair Smith noted “my sense is that it should be a priority, the question is should we try to allocate all the money in FY 2013 and 2014 and possible 2015?” He noted this will be a 2-3 year project to get the systems up and running, people trained and conversions done.”

The members also referred to the memo and a potential cost reduction if the town enters a partnership with the City of Keene in purchasing the software package. “But we don’t know about that yet” said Chair Smith. Ms. Stanbury agreed adding “yes that is my concern, this sounds like it is really time sensitive.” As the members briefly discussed an alternative plan to add \$100,000.00 to FY 2013 and 2014 as well as \$60,000.00 to FY 2015 to accelerate the request, Ms. MacDonald asked about the role of the town water and sewer users. She acknowledged the recent increases in both for operational costs “but they should pay a percentage for their portion.” The members reviewed the facts of the memo including the fact that the current software company will continue to support the software running on Unix, but there will no longer be any upgrades to the modules.” Chair Smith also explained his \$260,000.00 figure would incorporate other costs “if Keene does not join. I don’t know, that is just my sense” he said.

Ms. Chollet suggested “front-load it now” with Mr. Kelly asked “why are we front-loading and she (Ms. Vaihinger) is not?” Ms. Chollet replied “because sometimes we do that.” Chair Smith noted “Nancy is very conservative” with Ms. Brenner repeating “yes, Nancy is very conservative.” Chair Smith went on to say “if we were to ask her about her about our recommendation to do this she would be very, very happy.” Mr. Kelly suggested the members take a look at the numbers. He noted “without this (proposal) we are at 1.348 million” and asked “and now we are adding in more money?” Ms. Chollet noted “with all due respect there are a

couple of department heads we have to keep our eye on. They self-sacrifice and are just not good at taking good care of themselves.” Mr. Kelly replied “I am just trying to be realistic.”

Chair Smith suggested the members “take the information and try to make a good decision in terms of the given year and where things are placed.” The group continued to discuss what several members referred to as “the high degree of risk” in waiting. In conclusion Ms. Lewis noted “in some ways James is right. She (Ms. Vaihinger) is a department head, who are we to say *oh no!*” She went on to add “she is supposed to take care of her department, we should not second guess her, but maybe there is a way to split the difference.” Chair Smith added “we can leave it, split the difference, add it up and divide it by four – whatever. I think we should ask Nancy to come back.” Ms. Stanbury agreed and added that more information about phasing of the modules and when they arrive would be helpful to “figure out how much money she needs, when.”

“We work under the concept of the best interest of the town, we will have her come back and clarify the questions of money and timing” concluded the Chairman. Mr. Patten reiterated Ms. MacDonald’s concern of the role of the town Utility Departments and their financial responsibility in the cost. “We need to clarify what will be picked up by water and sewer” he said. Ms. Brenner estimated their responsibility to be 10-20%. She went on to note “this is a necessity but it is not sexy. It is not a fire truck, it is not a physical thing” adding “the prudent thing to do may be to take it slow which keeps things piecemeal.” Mr. Patten recalled the current software’s age and the fact that it is out of compliance. He asked “can this be a lease-purchase?” Ms. Brenner replied “probably it could.” Mr. Patten concluded by noting “that is a good question for Nancy.”

Fire Department: The members noted the two big ticket items were the Parking Lot Reconstruction and replacement of the Command Vehicle. Ms. Chollet noted “we should ask the Chief – as we should ask every department head...out of all the things they have on their sheets, *what they could live without?*”

Ms. MacDonald suggested the members keep the parking lot reconstruction on the CIP “as long as it is contingent on being in the TIF District” and asked “can we do that?” She went on to note the Greater Downtown TIF Committee has already recommended expanding its boundaries to include the Fire Station and they had voted on spending TIF dollars to reconstruct and repave the lot for municipal use before they realized the station was not within the TIF boundary. One member asked about the amount of money in the Downtown TIF with Ms. Brenner replying “about \$75,000.00 in revenue right now.” Mr. Kelly interjected “yes, let’s do it.”

Chair Smith asked the members “do you feel this is a priority?” Ms. MacDonald replied “if it is funded by someone else yes” adding “if it is funded by us I would say it is not.”

Ms. MacDonald also noted the Granite Block and potential hotel “may be counting on the parking as well in a couple of years. We don’t want to look like we are not supporting the downtown businesses.” Ms. Chollet suggested “if they felt it so important perhaps they could fund it.” Ms. Brenner took a few moments to explain how the warrant article for the TIF would work.

The members moved on to the Command Vehicle. Ms. Lewis asked “we passed over this last year right?” Mr. Patten interjected “we voted it out” adding “to quote Gordon Kemp this is fleet creep.” Ms. Lewis clarified that the new vehicle would go to the Chief and his vehicle would be passed down for the Officer’s use. Chair Smith noted the justification sheet reported the Officer’s vehicle would be 12 years old with over 100,000 miles on it by FY 2013 and added “but a vehicle with 100,000 miles on it isn’t a rare thing these days” Mr. Patten told the members that the wear and tear comes from engine hours, not necessarily the amount it is driven. “They go to a scene and the vehicle sits and idles for 15 minutes or 10 hours” he said “that is where the wear comes from.”

Ms. MacDonald stated she felt the explanation on the justification sheet was confusing with Chair Smith replying “we can have him (Chief Lenox) come back as well.” Mr. Patten suggested the Chief send an updated justification sheet that shows the intent of the new vehicle and what happens with the oldest vehicle (current Car 2).” The members briefly discussed the revenue the current Car 2 may demand.

IT: “Any questions or concerns about technology?” asked Chair Smith. The members reviewed the justification sheets and noted replacements every four, five or six years, depending on the server. Ms. Stanbury asked “can some of them go another year? Perhaps a workstation or a file server?” Ms. Lewis cautioned the other members noting “we have to question what realistically he can put off doing and what the consequences in the long run will be” adding “it is really like the roads in a way. “I’m leaving that one alone” said Ms. MacDonald. Ms. Chollet agreed noting “I think we have to trust Fash to accurately depict his needs. Chair Smith suggested seeing what Mr. Farashahi’s reaction might be “if we gave him a target of \$48,600.00” (\$10,000.00 less). Ms. Stanbury agreed noting “to see what is essential and what is not.” Ms. MacDonald asked “what did we do last year?” with Mr. Kelly replying “it was approved.” A brief discussion about the individual department’s needs to easily communicate and access their own expenditures followed.

Library: No requests this year. Chair Smith noted the fund raising efforts being spearheaded by the 1833 Society and the Library Trustees.

Ms. MacDonald noted “people should still know their capital budget; it should be in here if they actually have any plans.” Ms. Brenner noted the Society is planning a series of public forums “to get the word out about what they are thinking about” but she was unaware of any actual plans to date. Ms. MacDonald replied “then we will account for them next year.”

Police: Chair Smith noted the cruiser replacement and the dispatch center proposed by Chief Guinard. A brief discussion about the dispatch center followed that left Ms. MacDonald wondering. She stated “I understand the idea of a dispatch center but I don’t know if this is the time to be doing it.” Ms. Chollet added “I understand the value that will come from it but can we afford it now?” Chair Smith replied “one of the questions we face is do we feel comfortable with the estimated payback versus what we are doing today?” He went to ask “conceptually, is this a good thing for the town to do? Do we think this is a project that makes sense?” Ms. Chollet replied “financially it may not have a big payback but what I hear about having greater control

over services and resources is good.” She went to note “but there may be greater operating costs down the road though, I am not sure we have enough information.”

Ms. MacDonald asked for clarification about the dispatching process. Chair Smith reviewed some of the financial advantages but reiterated his question on whether or not the members felt this was a good way (path) to take the town. He said “\$19,000.00 more is a good investment in the long term for the benefit of control” and asked “should the town position itself to have better control?” Ms. Chollet replied “conceptually I think it is a good idea, for me it is a timing issue. I would have to question if this is the time to do it.” “Should we bring him (Chief Guinard) back?” asked Ms. Stanbury with Ms. MacDonald interjecting “I think his numbers were pretty clear. The question is *do we want to pull the trigger on a project like that?*” A brief discussion about the idea of consolidating what in fact is a piecemeal project (Police, Fire and perhaps DPW) followed.

Ms. Lewis concluded by noting “it is just a study” with Ms. Stanbury adding “the study could answer our questions.” Ms. MacDonald interjected “seems we are all pretty ambivalent, maybe we should commission the study and we what happens. It is complicated and we don’t know. Anything could come out of this.” In reference to the Master Plan Steering Committee and the Town Administration’s involvement to create a Municipal Facilities Complex, Ms. MacDonald added “it may not do the researcher any good when those decisions have not been made or the decision *not to decide has been made.*” Chair Smith interjected “I don’t think that it is ever going to happen.” Mr. Patten asked “why not?” Chair Smith briefly reviewed the history of the involvement with various town committees adding “even at the Selectmen’s level no one seemed to get really excited about it. I just don’t think it is going to happen.” A very brief discussion about investment and operating cost of such a complex followed with Mr. Kelly concluding “I think this may not be a high priority today” adding “and if investing in it is not top priority - push it back.” Ms. MacDonald agreed, noting there could be a more appropriate time for the study and “research gets outdated very quickly.”

Recreation: Chair Smith began by noting “there are a lot of new projects here.” Ms. Lewis asked about clarification on the Isabelle Miller Fund as “evidently it funds new projects but does not support them. They (Recreation) used the fund to buy the busses and then revert to us (the town) to replace them.” She added “so to me eventually it falls to the taxpayer to replace them.” A brief discussion about overseeing the fund followed with Ms. Brenner noting the town’s limited control (usually in the form of Board of Selectmen’s recommendations). “We have no real oversight” she said. Ms. Brenner went on to note her concern over the Recreation Department’s request to have the town fund the busses. “They (the busses) are a wonderful resource but to now see them show up (at CIP) is a little disconcerting” she said.

“What about the bleachers?” Chair Smith asked. Mr. Patten replied “I work up there so I shouldn’t say much but I can tell you the bleachers are a necessity.” He went on to explain how most of the bleachers are over 10 years old and are non-compliant with ADA guidelines as they have no back or rails on them. “The three larger ones are in the vicinity of 25 years old and the smaller ones are being bent and beaten up by the skateboarders” he said.

The members went on to discuss the parking problems at the playground. Mr. Patten noted “the parking lot has a very high water table. Water gets in and freezes creating frost heaves.” He noted the lot was last paved in 1994. Ms. MacDonald interjected “paving is not going to fix it.” Mr. Patten agreed noting “it needs \$19,000.00 to repair the drainage.” Ms. Lewis asked about the possibility of rolling the drainage repair into Highway’s Reconstruction of Union Street. Mr. Patten replied “Rodney says no.” He went on to describe the cold-patching of areas where the ground sunk in creating tripping hazards. He added “and we will do that again this year.”

Ms. Chollet interjected “let’s go back to Jeff” and asked “what would he most likely cut out?” Another member asked “should we push the fields back another year?” Mr. Patten replied “that has happened every year but that is what I would advise.”

The members then reviewed Capital Reserve for Equipment Replacement. Mr. Patten commented briefly on the status of each piece listed. The suggestion to break the equipment down into two categories (field treatment equipment and mini busses) was raised with Ms. Chollet noting “that is a good idea. That makes sense.” Ms. McDonald noted the bond for the pool and splash pad starting up next year and asked about any “friends of recreation” that might exist to help in fund raising. Ms. Lewis noted Mr. King’s reference to such a group “but their focus is the Armory which raises a whole new set of questions.” She went on to note “they have so many needs with no means of supporting them through fundraising.” Ms. Chollet interjected “I am right on with you” adding “the Isabelle Miller fund is wonderful but it is heaping things on us, things we are left to take care of.”

The members briefly discussed options of purchasing used busses, renting busses for the summer programs and the revolving fund. Mr. Patten gave a brief history of the Recreation Department’s experience (and problems) with buying a used bus in the past. When asked what Recreation would most likely do as their most important projects Mr. Patten replied “pave the lot and buy the bleachers.”

Chair Smith noted the time adding “we still have Utilities, Highway, Buildings & Grounds and Equipment Replacement for DPW to go. We have some pretty important stuff here.” He asked how the members felt about finishing up for the evening and continuing the review next week. He added “we may have to go another week (into November) but that is how it goes.”

Ms. Ogilvie reviewed the schedule noting “next week we have ConVal coming in.” Chair Smith replied “so the 15th (of November) we can wrestle this to the ground.” Ms. Stanbury interjected “we also want Nancy back next week.” Ms. Ogilvie asked if the members felt it necessary to have Mr. Farashahi back “or could I just ask your questions and report back?” The members felt that would be fine. They also did not feel asking the Police Chief back was necessary with Chair Smith adding “we’ll just ask the Fire Chief to re-write his justification sheet for clarification.”

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant