

TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE

5:30 P.M. Tuesday
October 7, 2014

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Leslie Lewis, Leandra MacDonald, Roland Patten, James Kelly, Bob Hanson and Alan Zeller.

Also Present: Peter Throop, Director, and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development.

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

Opening Comments & Introductions:

Chair Lewis began with “welcome back” as well as a warm welcome to new member Bob Hanson. Mr. Throop interjected that the Committee’s other new member, Donna Hanely was not able to make tonight’s meeting but that he looked forward to welcoming her next week.

Chair Lewis then gave a brief overview of the CIP process and noted “we got most of what we asked for last year.” She told the members she had prepared and presented a Power Point presentation for the Budget Committee showing a trend of when the budget is cut, “the next year it spikes.” The members then briefly reviewed the master spreadsheet with specific discussion about the SCBA line item from the Fire Department, the new snow blower from the Department of Public Works and Fleet Services in general. Chair Lewis also gave a brief review of the Committee’s responsibility to listen to the Department Heads present their needs for the upcoming year and beyond. “We take it in while looking at the bottom line and that brings us to what the budget can bear” Chair Lewis told the members adding “then at the last meeting we put it all together and determine the needs. Sometimes (a Department Head) gets what they really need and sometimes we reject the whole thing.” She noted the bartering that goes on all the way into December when the budget is presented.

Mr. Throop noted the Committee will need to be thinking of what the town priorities are noting “there are a number of projects up in the rafters that are not on this spreadsheet.” He added “and they will all of a sudden drop down and they are large.” He noted the potential for expansion/renovation at the Fire Department, the Library and the Highway Garage as well as an additional parking area for the downtown as examples.

Mr. Throop then explained the project or equipment justification sheet submitted by each Department Head and distributed the first set of sheets from the Department of Public Works. “This is your homework for next week” he said. Mr. Kelly asked “the whole thing?” Mr. Throop replied “yes, it is a thick packet” adding there was also a designated area on the sheets for anticipated revenues and noted those monies came in the form of grants, bonds and capital reserve funds.

Election of Officers:

A motion was made/seconded (Patten Zeller) to re-elect Leslie Lewis as Chairman with all in favor. A second motion was made/seconded (Lewis/Hanson) to re-elect Mr. Zeller as Vice Chairman with all in favor.

Review of Meeting Schedule, Overview of CIP Process and Review Status of FY2015 CIP:

Mr. Throop noted the schedule consisted of a meeting every Tuesday night “for the next 8 weeks.” Mr. Zeller asked “what about the Library?” Mr. Throop replied that although the Library was scheduled for CIP review for the first time in a long time “I believe their intent is in fundraising” adding “they have a lot of optimism.”

The members briefly discussed the structure and some of the numbers reflected on the spreadsheet. Mr. Throop noted the Department of Public Works actually consisted of the Highway Department, The Recycling Center, Buildings & Grounds and Fleet Management. He also pointed out Debt Services in Section 11 adding “bonds come in and go out through debt services.” Mr. Throop also noted the last page consisted of items that have no impact on taxes. He noted the Ambulance Fleet which is paid for by a mutual aid, multi-town contract and Town Utilities (water and sewer) which are paid by user fees.

Mr. Kelly complimented Mr. Throop on the spreadsheet noting “it is nice to see the big picture first.” He also said he hoped the Committee might take a bit more aggressive approach with the Department Heads during their meetings. Mr. Throop

briefly explained the percentages on the spreadsheet and cautioned “I think they are a bit misleading, it doesn’t take much to fly those percentages up.”

Chair Lewis noted the importance of listening to what the Department Head had to say at their meeting “and not worry about the bottom line until we get there.” The members briefly discussed bonding and the state and federal funds associated with the Main Street Bridge as well as the status of the Transcript and North Dams.

Mr. Kelly reiterated his wish that the Committee “be a bit more hard-nosed than in past years.” He told the members he would rather be tough in the first place than have their recommendations knocked by the Budget Committee. Chair Lewis explained that the Budget Committee “had actually liked our proposal” and that there had been an administrative preemptive action involved in it being cut. Mr. Patten noted the last five years had been tough with no raises, no repairs and delayed maintenance. Ms. MacDonald added the presentations would be made with the Department Heads knowing full well they are not going to get everything they have asked for. Mr. Kelly replied “so it is a matter priorities” with Mr. Patten interjecting “that will be the first questions I ask them” adding “there is no point in being confrontational, we will cut what we need to cut and what is fair to the taxpayer. Then in the final run it is up to the Budget Committee to put it into the context of an operations budget.” Ms. MacDonald agreed adding “and it is more of looking long term and asking not *what can you leave out* but *what can you push out.*” Mr. Kelly replied “that is a good spin to put on it” with Ms. MacDonald replying “and it gives them the thought that it is at least an eventuality.”

Mr. Throop briefly reviewed the Fleet Schedules for DPW and the Fire Department with useful views that may be 20 to 25 years out “because if you don’t plan for them it is going to be a serious whack.” Ms. MacDonald interjected “it is the same old problem of having waited too long in the past.” A brief discussion about fleet replacement followed.

Mr. Zeller noted the Union Street repair project and his frustration of projects costing more now because they have been put off in the past. “I still have a headache about it” he said adding “it may not bother a lot of people much but it bothers me a lot.”

The members briefly discussed target budgets Mr. Throop noting “we need to get to the bottom line of what is needed and if there is no funding for it, get creative in funding or push it out.”

Chair Lewis also noted the extraordinary number of large infrastructure projects happening in a short amount of time. A brief discussion about the bonding process and interest rates followed. With a smile Mr. Kelly noted “if the interest rates are fixed we should all we can now.”

In closing Chair Lewis noted “I have one other thought. Noting the bogged down feeling with some of the presentations from last year she said “this year I would like to get the basic presentation without reviewing justification sheet after justification sheet.” Mr. Hanson interjected “except for the snowblower. That is important.”

Mr. Throop concluded by reviewing the meeting schedule. All of the members were very pleased with the Community Center venue. The members also briefly discussed the ConVal School District CIP with Chair Lewis questioning whether or not it was worth having them come in. Ms. MacDonald noted “we are the only Board that can required them to come in and report.” Chair Lewis agreed and noted “we have always done it in the past just get some insight of what is going on.” Ms. MacDonald noted “we may have a questions, let’s keep them on the list.” Chair Lewis also noted the Kyes-Sage House had been taken out of DPW and was now under the Library CIP.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant