

**TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE**

**3:00 P.M. Tuesday
November 7, 2017**

MINUTES

Present: Roland Patten, Kim Rode, James Kelly, Bob Hanson, Alan Zeller, Ed Juengst, Johnathan Ericson and Carl Mabbs-Zeno

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

Chair Hanson (Mr. Hanson) called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and introduced the members and staff.

Minutes:

A motion was made/seconded (Kelly/Patten) to approve the Minutes of October 24, 2017 and (Zeller/Kelly) October 31, 2017 as written with all in favor.

Town Administrator Perspective on CIP Challenges:

Mr. Bartlett noted the large number of Rodney number of large projects being considered and told the members he and other administrative staff had met with the Board of Selectmen to talk about what direction to go in and how to manage the CIP in reference to these projects as efficiently as possible. He reviewed the four large projects that included the Library of the Future, a new Fire Station, a new Department of Public Works (DPW) building placeholder and the Roads Program treatment categories (*very poor/reconstruction, poor/reclamation, fair/preventive maintenance, good/routine maintenance and excellent/deferred maintenance*).

“With the goal of more repetitive maintenance than reclamation and reconstruction” he said adding “I took East Mountain Road out. That is a three-mile road with estimates of a million dollars a mile. It has a high silt and clay content that is susceptible to frost heaves and instability. Asphalt is not holding that road together.” He went on to note they would replace culverts along the road and continue needed maintenance “but to leave it in as a reconstruction project is not a good use of money” he said.

Regarding the Fire Station Mr. Bartlett pointed out \$40,000 for a conceptual study using the motor pool building located in front of the current Highway Garage. He also noted the potential to move the Highway Garage to the Wastewater Treatment Facility in North Peterborough. He explained one of the lagoons at that facility was used as an industrial lagoon for a former industrial company and contained large amounts of Barium (which adheres to the soil and does not travel with the ground water). "It was recommended no recreational fields or playgrounds be put there for that reason" adding "a better use would be a parking lot with little or no intrusion into the soil. It would be a good use a DPW facility with town water and sewer and three-phase power already there."

The members had a brief discussion about the location of the fire station and its proximity to the DPW as well as the Community Center and its youth and seniors programs. Mr. Ericson asked for clarification of when their recommendations would be presented to the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee.

Mr. Bartlett told the members the Library had hired Harvey Construction as their construction manager and Ann Beha Architects were on board. "Draft design plans have gone to Harvey for review of constructability and costs and then we'll move on to the next steps." Mr. Ericson asked "are you involved with that?" with Mr. Bartlett replying "yes" adding "and the goal is to reduce costs and be as successful as possible in fundraising." Mr. Bartlett also noted he and his staff had met with Finance Director Brenda Fox to discuss the potential of getting a bond rating (we don't have one so we pay higher rates) and refinancing existing debt. While noting some existing bonds could not be paid off early, some can be "and we also want to look at the CIP process to determine options to reduce potential finance costs" he said. He told the members about a combination of options provided by a financial advisor "that we can carry into the budget process." When Mr. Ericson asked about the estimated savings Mr. Bartlett replied "\$100,000 to \$200,000 dollars." Mr. Ericson asked "total or per year?" Mr. Bartlett replied "per year, this is real money." Mr. Ericson asked about fees associated with a financial advisor with Mr. Bartlett noting it depended on the range of services requested. "We don't have a final number yet but it certainly is reasonable" he said.

Moving on Mr. Hanson asked Mr. Bartlett to review the process of burying the overhead utilities in conjunction with the Main Street Bridge project. "Would you explain it just one more time?" he asked. Mr. Bartlett reviewed the federal/state commitment for the Main Street Bridge adding "the initial cost estimates did not include the cost of the sidewalks being cantilevered over the river, when that plan

was changed to regular sidewalks the state agreed to pick up the cost, leaving monies earmarked for the sidewalks available to bury the overhead utilities. It was noted Eversource agreed to do this project for \$420,000 dollars. “Is it a town goal to put the wires underground?” asked Mr. Ericson with Mr. Bartlett replying “well it is always brought up for every project that comes up in the Downtown.” Mr. Ericson asked “who provides direction to the value of underground utilities in the Downtown?” Mr. Bartlett reviewed the cumulative opinions and suggestion by the Planning Board, Master Plan Steering Committee and Heritage Commission. It was also noted the timing of the project with the Main Street Bridge project was favorable.

When it was noted that the Main Street Bridge was originally estimated to cost 1 million dollars in 2009 (and an estimated 6 million dollars in 2017) Mr. Bartlett explained the bridge had to go through NEPA Evaluation Program because it was historic, had a unique design and was eligible for the National Historic Register “which drove the decision to reconstruct the bridge in the same design style.” After a brief discussion about the width of the bridge Mr. Bartlett concluded “the bridge is currently in its final design phase with particular attention to traffic management.”

Department of Public Works/Road Program Update:

DPW Operations Manager Seth MacLean was present to review the Road Program.

Peter Throop to fill in.

Discussion Regarding Town Land available for Public Facilities:

The members briefly discussed the 2005 Weller & Michael Study and the Evans Flats Steering Committee (EFSC) Report of 2009 for the future *best use* (development or redevelopment) of the town-owned property. Chief Walker interjected “looking back thirteen years the location for a fire station is validated” adding the question “is it ever going to be the right time?” Mr. Kelly asked if it might make sense to keep the Fire Department where it is and put additional monies into it. Chief Walker replied “it is still in the flood plain and wit hits topography only about 5% of the 16 acre site is developable. Mr. Mabbs-Zeno added “the station is substandard now and not meeting current never mind future requirements.” “Correct” replied Chief Walker adding “we need to grow and we

can't do it there." Mr. Patten interjected "the need was different in 1972, they outgrew the station 20 years ago. The situation now is not just the need for a new station but where to put it." Mr. Patten went on to mention *fleet creep* (a situation where every year you get a new vehicle but don't get rid of one). "So if you had 10 trucks ten years ago, now you have twenty. You have out-storaged yourself and not kept pace with your growth."

The members reviewed the "areas" of the Flats (Area I, Current use of Motor Pool for DPW and Community Center, 3.5 acres, Area II Potential Workforce Housing and Community Gardens, 4.5 acres, and Area III the Current Highway Garage, 6.6 acres). Mr. Patten told the members "I think you (Fire Department) are limiting yourself to the narrowest part of the lot (Area I)" adding "I think a combination project should be done with the DPW and the Fire Department." When Mr. Zeller suggested approaching the neighbors on Summer Street about selling their homes Chief Walker noted the policy of *not* removing property from the tax rolls (and) "we are still in the flood plain" he said. When asked if the Department had ever been flooded Chief Walker replied "yes, we have."

Mr. Ericson asked about the presentation of their recommendations to the tax payers with Mr. Hanson replying "we have not made any decisions yet." Mr. Ericson qualified by noting "in general I meant we make recommendations but then the people show up and they do not have an understanding of priorities or our decision making process. We need to communicate what is going on to the townspeople." Chief Walker agreed noting "get it *all* (Library, Fire Station, DPW and Road program) in front of the tax payers at once, not in a serial process." He went on to say "the Library is moving forward, there *will* be a warrant article in May for a new Library, it is important the townspeople know where the other projects are." Mr. Ericson agreed adding "the library is proceeding, the other projects have to be brought forward so the townspeople can choose between rescue and life services, roads and Library." Chief Walker interjected "I am not so sure it is a choice, when you have *this* or *that* you find a lot of *thats* have not been done. It was demonstrated two decades ago things needed to be replaced and the need for funding is never going to go away. It is not a choice per se. We need to lay tis out in a logical fashion t be able to move forward. The need is never going to disappear." Mr. Ericson agreed and noted "if the town votes no the need does not go away, it just becomes more expensive over time to complete."

A brief discussion on the budget timeframe and how the recommendations from the CIP get communicated to the townspeople as well as the members continuing to support and market their recommendations followed.

Mr. Kelly asked for a list of the constraints of the current Fire Department location with Chief Walker replying “we are in the floodplain, given the intersection with Main Street we have a chokepoint in vehicle response (as well as a safety issue) and the Master Plan Steering Committee and its subgroups determined the condition of the building (state of deterioration) made it not suitable for reconfiguring (topography and steep slope) or rehabilitation.” Chief Walker went on to note the motor pool building (albeit a shell) is constructed and sturdy, already owned by the town and would require very little site engineering.

Changing gears Mr. Ericson asked about the Transcript Dam. Mr. Bartlett noted after testing there were no particular contaminants found. Mr. Ericson noted “but if the dam fails the silt moves down river, does that cause any impacts?” Mr. Bartlett noted no impacts to the aquifer and the Board of Selectmen’s dilemma was to breach it or repair it. Mr. Bartlett also noted every picture or painting of the area shows the dam. Mr. Throop noted a breach would narrow the channel of the river “and that may change the character along Depot Square a bit.” The members briefly discussed the North Peterborough Dam as well.

Mr. Hanson asked for a consensus from the group. “We need to decide on Evans Road, DPW and Fire” he said. Mr. Ericson said he felt alright with the numbers presented “given the variable from year to year you can spend time refining prices but it is still a guess.” The members agreed a huge first step was working out numbers with the Finance Department and getting a bond rating. They also agreed having all the major projects laid out so that the community can start to make decisions going forward. Mr. Ericson noted that in light of the new information regarding the DPW’s relocation to the Wastewater Treatment Plant that they should have a site visit.

Review of CIP Spreadsheet:

No changes from October 31, 2017.

Review of CIP Meeting Schedule:

November 21, 2017 – CIP presentation

November 19, 2017 – Budget Proposal

February 6, 2018 – Library and Warrant Articles

May, 2018 Open session for Library (3 million dollar or less bond “the goal is to reduce the cost and increase donations”)

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. at the Town House following a site visit to the Wastewater Treatment Plant at 2:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton
Administrative Assistant