

**TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE
November 14, 2017**

MINUTES

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

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

Site Visit:

The members had met at the Waste Water Treatment Plant on Pheasant Road off Route 202 at 2:30 before reconvening at the Town House. Chair Hanson (Mr. Hanson) called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. with no introductions necessary.

Minutes: Deferred

Follow-Up Items:

2013 Master Plan Chapter 12: Municipal Facilities: Mr. Throop reviewed a study evaluating all the town facilities by Weller & Michael in 2005. He told the members “nothing has been done since except the storage area and parking lot at the Police Station and the Fire Station upgrades.”

Mr. Hanson asked about the Dispatch Center that had been discussed with Chief Walker interjecting “there has been no further discussion about it.” When Mr. Ericson asked about the Dispatch Center and Chief Walker gave a brief description of the facility that would allow Peterborough to do their own emergency dispatching (currently dispatched by Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office for Police and Southwest New Hampshire District Regional Mutual Aid for Fire and EMS).

Mr. Throop explained the Master Plan Steering Committee had met and agreed to review the Municipal Facilities Chapter but “it has only been four years since it was last updated and they are not inclined to hire any outside assistance to do an update.” He added “they have two members willing to participate (Beth Alpaugh-

Cote and Sara Stenberg Heller) but they believe the recommendations from the last review have not changed.”

Underground Utilities: Again noting the Master Plan Steering Committee (as well as the Planning Board) had met last night and he had asked both groups if they had any known public sentiment about underground utilities in the Downtown. He reported the Master Plan group had heard support for underground utilities over the years. The Planning Board members did not recall hearing significant sentiments about underground utilities but suggested that the questionnaires from the 2015 Vision Forum be reviewed.

Ms. MacDonald asked “if the whole place is going to be dug up anyway why is it going to cost a half million dollars to bury the utilities?” From the audience Town Administrator Rodney Bartlett replied “Oh, it would cost a lot more if it were not already dug up.” A discussion about the extension of the underground utilities and what poles would be removed followed. Mr. Ericson asked “who gets paid?” “The contractor” said Mr. Bartlett “for putting in the conduit and manhole work to house the Comcast, Eversource and First Light cables.” Mr. Ericson noted “so they are charging *us* to put in the conduit that they charge *us* to use.”

Mr. Juengst asked about actual area being buried with Mr. Bartlett noting “the scope is to extend it to where it makes the sense to do so.” He then pointed out the east side of Route 202 and said “right now it makes the most sense to include the Kyes-Sage House to Pine Street.” He added “it will be an article at Town Meeting, we’ll let the voters decide.” Mr. Bartlett explained financials by First Light and Fairpoint were still being put together, that he was not sure of the schedule “but the work will be done prior to the bridge project.” Mr. Ericson asked “if the work interrupted the bridge schedule would that affect the cost of the bridge?” Mr. Bartlett noted a recent meeting with all parties had brought forth a lot of new information including the existence of utility wires that currently run under the bridge sidewalk. Mr. Ericson cautioned the members to be aware of what the utility companies were responsible for maintaining, repairing and replacing.

Mr. Bartlett concluded “our competitive advantage is our beauty and the safety issues of crossing the bridge for sure” adding “it comes up (burying utilities) 99% of the time” when the corner is discussed.

Fire Station Design and Construction Drawings:

Mr. Hanson asked Chief Walker if he had additional information for the members. Chief Walker replied “I have not gone back to the architect because I don’t know if

we are moving forward or not. It was left fairly ambiguous as to what we are doing” adding “is the discussion even moving forward?”

A brief review about the process and cost to develop pricing documents followed with Chief Walker noting “if the discussion is moving forward, based on the site we selected there is not a significant effect on costs.” This served as a segue to a discussion about the site chosen with some members not comfortable with the location (at the motor pool building), traffic and parking concerns and the potential to stay at their current location with upgrades. Mr. Kelly was a strong advocate of this idea and asked again to discuss the pros (facility exists, room can be manipulated, and structure has received upgrades) and cons of staying on Summer Street (in the flood plain, size of facility, rehabilitation versus new construction traffic bottleneaking). He noted “I would like to see more specific information put on the table on this *as an option* instead of 7 million dollars on a new garage.” Ms. MacDonald interjected “Fire Station” to which Mr. Kelly replied “Fire Garage.”

Chief Walker noted the motor pool building was a brick shell with a metal roof where they could reuse the walls, truss and floor. “It is town-owned, paved, has a structure on it. It is on town water and sewer, has three-phase power and good access to the highways” he said. After additional discussion Mr. Juengst concluded “there are questions that remain to be answered in this complex equation.”

Mr. Ericson noted the Michael & Weller report indicated the need for a space increase of 140% of the current (fire) facility. Chief Walker agreed noting “it is more than double the current size of the building that would take up the entire parking lot.” Mr. Ericson noted “in my opinion this is a math issue.” Mr. Mabbs-Zeno interjected the need to assess the current building’s constraints but to also assess the salvage value of the site.

Chief Walker told the members the equipment stored in the motor pool building would be stored at the Summer Street location eliminating the need to build a storage facility to accommodate the equipment. He then noted the CIP’s thought to take a step back and do an overall study of the Evans Flat location. “That is accurate” replied Mr. Hanson. Mr. Throop noted the option of having the Fire and the DPW located at the same sight. A brief review of the models supplied by the Chief (including facility, apparatus bays, parking, entrances and exits) followed. “All of which are designed to address the constraints of the lot” he said.

DPW Garage – Location and Timing:

The members reviewed the location of the Waste Water Treatment Plant. “With only four acres there is not nearly enough room to do what they want to do” said Mr. Patten adding “there is no room for a salt shed, sand piles for snow and gravel for washouts. Mr. Bartlett disagreed as he pointed out additional acres he noted “there is plenty of room.” Ms. MacDonald asked about snow dumping (traditionally hauled off and dumped off Evans Road). Mr. Patten interjected “going in to town is an extra three miles each trip.” He suggested they build a new facility in the same location and move the Fire Station back to where it needs to be to have drive-thru access (no backing up of apparatus). Ms. MacDonald reiterated they should all be thinking about the highest and best use of the land and a brief discussion about affordable housing and a mixed-use model of living followed. Ms. MacDonald concluded “we are not holding the Chief’s feet to the fire, rather we are trying to determine the best use of the land. We don’t make the decision to build a new Fire Station, we cannot tell the town not to have a new Fire Station.” Mr. Patten added “both (Fire and DPW) are in desperate need of a redo, one way or the other” and advocated “the right thing to do is to combine the projects.”

Mr. Hanson noted there could not be a consensus on that statement (yet) as they were waiting additional information on the financial analysis being done to understand the effect of bond rating and the refinancing of current debt. “There are a lot of moving parts, the issues do not go away and it is *not* getting cheaper” he said. Mr. Juengst agreed noting “costs go up, interest rates vary and we don’t have a crystal ball.” He suggested that in the mean time they fund the evaluation of the Fire Station design and construction documents for pricing. “We should get the design and then move to construction plans” he said.

Before deliberations Mr. Throop gave the members a summary of “where we are at the moment.” He told the members “your job is to reflect your recommendations in this CIP based on the information you have on hand.” Mr. Rode asked if information received in the future could alter the current recommendations with Mr. Throop replying “yes, you can and you do.”

Deliberations:

Finance Software for \$50,000 for two years then \$75,000 for two years followed by \$100,000 for two more years for a replacement in FY 2026. Mr. Juengst noted nightmarish problems the Finance Department has endured with the current software and its reporting problems. The members agreed to keep the Finance request.

Fire Stations Design and Construction Drawings: In this slot was \$500,000 and Mr. Ericson noted “that is enough for design drawing, it is not for bids, it is for pricing provisions, it is more than enough.” Mr. Throop added “so we are leaving the \$500,000 in for FY 2019?” adding “we have to be clear on what the staff needs to do in the process of public input and consultant recommendations.” As Mr. Throop said this he projected the FY 2019 spreadsheet showing an 80% increase over last year.

The members then went through the projects one at a time.

Library:

Mr. Ericson began with “based on the importance of other projects I would not vote for this.” He noted initially the Library was to be fully fund raised. “Then they ask for money (\$2,000,000) then they ask for more money (\$3,000,000). The architect has come in over budget consistently on projects, there are more important things for tax payer’s money than a new Library.” Mr. Throop noted there *would* be a separate warrant article on the ballot “so it will be up to the voter.” Mr. Ericson replied “I do not support it.”

Mr. Patten told the members they should support it. Mr. Mabbs-Zeno noted the status of the public private position the Library has taken, the 1833 Society efforts and not supporting the effort may result in the loss of monies committed from the private sector. “I would hate to lose the money and work that has gone into this project, I would support it” he said. Without an opinion for or against Mr. Juengst noted “this project is out of the gate now” adding “going forward, if we leave it in for now we could encourage fundraising by showing support with a commitment and hopefully raise more money publicly to reduce the cost.” Regarding the warrant article Mr. Juengst concluded “it is so important the voter is informed.”

New DPW Facility:

Mr. Throop spoke briefly about the warrant process and Mr. Hanson suggested the members vote of the “big four” projects. The member’s unanimous consensus was that they keep the *Fire Station* and new *DPW Facility* on the CIP. When the *Library* was brought up Mr. Ericson asked for a vote for the record. Supporting the 8 million dollar Library and it resources as demonstrated was Mr. Zeller, Mr. Patten, Ms. MacDonald, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Rode and Mr. Mabbs-Zeno. Mr. Ericson was against and Mr. Hanson and Mr. Juengst abstained.

Roads Program:

All member but Mr. Junegst (who abstained) agreed the *Road Maintenance Program* needed to start now. “We need to get out to the voters what is ahead of them and not put it off another year” said Mr. Juengst. Mr. Ericson agreed adding “we need the opportunity to present to the voters on this maintenance improvement to help them understand where their money is going.”

Other Items:

This included the North Dam, the Transcript Dam (“for the record I am in favor of repairing the eastern side of the Transcript Dam” said Mr. Zeller) Ladder Truck refurbishment and Underground Utilities. Again Mr. Ericson requested a vote for burying the overhead wires. After a brief discussion all but Mr. Ericson (against) and Mr. Juengst (abstained) were in favor of this project.

Mr. Throop reviewed the bottom line of an 80% increase for the FY2019 budget compared to last year’s budget. “This is driven by the \$400,000 Road Project and \$500,000 Fire Station Project” said Mr. Throop adding “if we were to take them out the increase in the budget goes down to 9% (to \$1,373,583). It is important to understand what is driving the changes you are proposing as priorities.”

A motion was made/seconded (Mabbs-Zena/Zeller) to recommend the CIP Plan dated November 14, 2017 to the Budget Committee with all in favor.

Communication Strategy to Budget Committee and Town:

A brief discussion on a public communication strategy followed with Mr. Juengst noting “it is always a problem, we have to just keep trying to do better. We need to do more *sooner* than late.” Mr. Throop agreed but added “it is a delicate balance of informing the public and at the same time maintaining your leadership responsibility.”

Mr. Ericson suggested doing newspaper articles regarding the big items on the budget *way* before Town Meeting. “We should advocate a strategy on each item in the articles” he said adding “the public needs a clear and concise message to understand what they are voting on.” Mr. Juengst noted a large population of retired professionals in town. “Maybe we could advertise for a volunteer to help us without having to pay” he said. In closing Mr. Ericson suggested the Board of Selectmen set up a Communication Committee. Mr. Mabbs-Zeno encouraged each member to write letters to the Editor of the newspaper as concerned individuals.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant