

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire  
**Capital Improvements Program Committee**  
Meeting Minutes – May 5, 2014

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Capital Improvements Program Committee was called to order by Chair Osgood at 4:06 p.m. in the Swanzey Center Fire Station meeting room. Members present: Dave Osgood, Steve Bittel, Charlie Sheaff, Bruce Bohannon, Jeff Goller, and Francis Faulkner.

**Absent:** Selectman Deborah J. Davis

**Others Present:** Selectman Kenneth J. Colby, Jr., Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe and Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard, Police Chief Tom DeAngelis, Fire Chief Norm Skantz, resident Keith Bell.

**Minutes:**

- Minutes from April 28, 2014 were considered. Motion was made by Bittel to accept the minutes of April 28, 2014. The motion was seconded by Faulkner. All were in favor. Motion passed.

**DISCUSSIONS/OTHER BUSINESS**

**Review draft programs and building assessments for Municipal Facilities Needs and Site Alternatives Analysis with Project Architect**

Copies of the Brickstone Land Use Consultant, LLC Review of Town Owned Property, and Daniel Scully Architects report Building Assessment for Existing Swanzey Town Hall/Central Fire Department dated April 14, 2014 were referred to by the Committee members as “the program” in their discussion.

An initial discussion on particular facilities was held. Bohannon mentioned a need for a drive-through sally port for the Police Department. Osgood said the first priority is finding the land for the municipal facilities. O’Keefe suggested that the Committee needs to review the program analysis prepared by the consultants for each facility to verify what is needed. He mentioned that at the last meeting the Committee reviewed and agreed with the program for Town Hall as proposed by the consultant. Bittel mentioned that including a Town Hall large room is not written in stone and is a luxury that the Town can’t afford. Bittel said it is his opinion that the large room is optional. O’Keefe said the architects need some guidance from the Committee to run with to generate building areas and site configurations to better develop costs. Faulkner pointed out that the Committee doesn’t have expertise to make decisions on the required number of square footage per facility. Faulkner said the architects have created the program with input from the Department Heads.

Bittel noted that architects always come in with more, and the Committee needs to decide between needs and wants and the effective way of doing it in his opinion is by looking at the dollars needed for the project. Bittel created and distributed a schedule of costs (Project Cost Analysis Model). Second page was a listing of Capital Reserve Funds and Expendable Trust Funds – Cash Available. Page one used the Ingram and Scully Architect numbers to come up with potential debt service. Bond terms at 4% for 20 years would cost the Town \$542,000 per year in debt service. Osgood asked how that affects the taxes paid by an owner of a house valued at \$200,000 house. O’Keefe made an attempt to access State records on taxes but was unable to respond to Osgood’s question.

Bittel continued discussing his calculations in the model. If you add the Recycling Center and DPW, overall costs come to \$858,000 per year in debt service. Bittel noted that individual facilities costs added together cost more than building a complex. Building a complex is less expensive. Faulkner noted that it was his opinion that the public will vote for one allocation of money only once in a twenty year period.

Bittel said that the Recycling Center has enough revolving fund reserves coming in each year to perhaps solve their own problems. Bittel also noted he was a backer of using the Keene Tree property which is currently up for sale. Faulkner said that the Town had that land appraised at about \$600,000. Bittel recommended looking at that property again.

Osgood agreed that Keene Tree site should be revisited, noting that there are two larger pieces of land for sale at the moment: the properties at Keene Tree and Carlton Drive. Bohannon asked what would be the use of the land at Keene Tree, and Bittel said that it would be right for the Department of Public Works (DPW). Faulkner said that one of the concerns that Public Works Director Lee Dunham had for that site was salt storage. Discussion ensued about the cost of adding a salt shed to the Keene Tree property. It was noted that the property has to be fixed up. Bittel suggested that new Town Hall and Police facilities could be on that property also.

Discussion was held regarding the status of Town Hall and what would need to be done to it, given removal of the Fire Department.

Discussion took place about moving Public Works operations to the Keene Tree property, keeping Town Hall after removal of the Fire Station, Fire Station moved to new location, and whether or not there is room for the Police Station at the old VFW lot near Keene Tree. Bittel said that during construction of a Fire Station and a new Police Station, you could use the existing Police Station for a temporary Town Hall.

Faulkner asked about the Fire Department call mapping that the Committee is waiting to hear about. Chief Skantze said he did an unofficial mapping for calls in 2013 which showed that calls center around the Route 10 and Route 12 corridors. Skantze said that if you had to leave from one location, the current Center Fire Station is the best location. Skantze said the need is for 3 acres, which includes training for the entire team and includes parking, but he could live with 2 acres. A brief discussion was held regarding Safford Drive as an alternative site given that it has public sewer and water. Chief DeAngelis said it doesn't matter where the Police Department is located in theory because cruisers are on the road. The cars are computerized and they can communicate from anywhere.

O'Keefe asked Skantze about where he foresees the best location for a new firehouse. Skantze replied that the Center Fire Stations needs to be centrally located not only to reach the calls but to where volunteers live. As long as the Town requires volunteer firemen, the time they take to get to the station is an issue and the fire station should be central to where they live. 40% of calls are in the west side of town, 40% in the east, according to Skantze, with the balance in a band of activity to the south.

Faulkner said that the West Swanzey Water Company is now at its limit to deliver water. Discussion was held regarding potential development on Route 12. If the Cheshire Fairgrounds are developed and there are 1,500 acres of land in East Swanzey that could be developed, that changes the emergency call sources. Bittel asked if anyone had considered properties that are not on the market. Discussion on

the fact that it might be cheaper to purchase land with houses, knock the houses down, and build on those lands.

There was some discussion regarding a suggested motion – Brickstone and Scully to examine Keene Tree. Bohannon suggested Brown Field for the Police Station and Town Hall.

Evaluation of the Keene Tree for a potential DPW site was further discussed. Discussion was held regarding moving the sand and salt storage as well.

Bittel suggested that a large meeting room for Town Hall should be a separate line item. Faulkner mentioned that the Town is growing fast enough that the location for voting today may soon be too small, given the number of booths required. Bittel suggested two buildings could be a solution, and enough people could be encouraged to participate as assistance at the vote.

Sheaff said that number one priority is a new Center Fire Station. Everything hinges on moving the Fire Station.

Discussion went back to the Keene Tree property and getting some reaction from Brickstone and Scully Architects. Bohannon suggested that the Committee asked them to look at residential properties for potential Center Fire Station in a zone one mile south and a mile north on State Route 32, from approximately Safford Drive to Carlton Drive. O’Keefe suggested consulting with a realtor for input on properties.

Discussion occurred regarding the Wilcox School property across from Town Hall and asking the Monadnock Regional School District if they are willing to sell it. There is about two acres on the site. Faulkner said that it was his opinion that there would be enough room for a Fire Station if that land were combined with the abutting Grange Hall land. A discussion continued regarding the Grange building and the fact that despite being on a list of Historic places, the Town can move or remove it.

Bohannon made a motion to approach the school district about buying the Wilcox property. Discussion continued regarding the price the School District would ask for the property. There was some discussion regarding the reluctance of the School District to sell the land to the Town in the past and that it might prove equally difficult to get agreement from the School District today.

Bittel made a **motion** to ask the Brickstone and Scully Architects to quickly run through the plan with the idea of moving DPW to the Keene Tree property and to determine the suitability of Keene Tree for that purpose and enable expanded use of Recycling operations to the DPW site, with the limitation that funding for the Recycling expansion be taken from the revolving fund which currently contains \$300,000 plus \$50,000 per year income. The motion includes two options: 1) to keep the existing sand and salt storage as is, and 2) to build a new sand and salt storage at the Keene Tree site. Brickstone is also to consider an area one mile north and south of the current Fire Station for properties suitable, whether residential or otherwise, of two or more acres. The motion was seconded by Sheaff. No further discussion and all were in favor.

***Motion passed.***

Discussion was held about continuing Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRC) work for call mapping work for response times. \$2400 is being spent, though the Scully contract is reduced by this same amount. Keith Bell wanted the Committee to know that if the Fire Department became full-time, the best location is its current location. Discussion continued regarding maintaining the Fire Station in current location, and removing Town Hall. Osgood and Sheaff said that the current location is not the best option given the amount of land and the need for parking and septic service. It was noted that the lot is barely an acre.

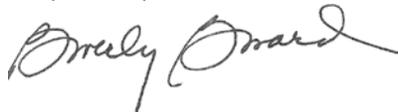
Osgood asked about the contract with Scully and whether it can cover looking at Keene Tree property under the existing contract. O'Keefe consulted the contract and determined that it should be covered because of the flexibility of sites to review.

Next meeting: On May 12, 2014, the Committee will again meet in the Center Fire Station with the architects.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** to adjourn was made by Sheaff, seconded by Goller with all in favor. **Motion passed.**  
Adjournment occurred at 5:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary

Approved on June 9, 2014.