

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Capital Improvements Program Committee (CIP)
Meeting Minutes – June 9, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the CIP Committee was called to order by Chair Osgood at 4:07 p.m. Members present: Dave Osgood, Charlie Sheaff, Francis Faulkner, Jeff Goller, Bruce Bohannon and Selectman Deborah J. Davis.

Absent: Steve Bittel

Others Present: Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe, Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard, Daniel Scully and Katie Sutherland from Daniel Scully Architects, Dave Bergeron from Brickstone Land Use Consultants, LLC, Recycling Center Manager Bob Osterhout, Police Chief Tom DeAngelis, Resident Judy Gallaresi, Resident Michael Goldschmidt, and Residents Sally and Michael Markey.

Minutes:

- Minutes from May 5, 2014 were considered. Motion was made by Bohannon to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Davis. All were in favor. Motion passed.
- Minutes from May 12, 2014 were considered. Motion was made by Sheaff to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded by Faulkner. All were in favor. Motion passed.

CITIZEN PETITION

Gallaresi presented the Committee with a petition to abandon consideration of land at Carlton Road and NH State Route 32 for Town facility projects. Osgood read the petition aloud to the Committee. In it these topics were cited: peripheral expenses associated with a Civic Center and traffic that would be generated on a covered bridge, visual impact, noise, odor, effect of 24 hour lighting, highway safety for students, environmental impact on the Ashuelot River, and impact on aquifer among other items. Gallaresi said that her group demands transparency to the public about the ongoing work of the Committee and noted that infrastructure projects cost a lot of money; the citizens of the Town need to be informed when infrastructure projects are being considered. The petition was signed by approximately nineteen residents.

Osgood stressed to the residents present that no commitments were to be made until put to a full vote of the Town’s residents. Osgood said the CIP Committee meetings have all been posted for public notification. O’Keefe said that the meetings were posted in several places including Town Hall, the Town’s website, and the post office. Discussion then occurred about meeting notices and how they are publicized. O’Keefe explained to the residents about the point in the process at which a Public Hearing would be required. He suggested that the Town could also have voluntary Public Hearings about this project when the Committee was ready. Osgood said the Committee and the Board of Selectmen have no intention with being “under the radar” as suggested by Gallaresi. Osgood affirmed the charge from the Board of Selectmen to the Committee to examine the facility needs of the Town. The architects have been hired to provide siting assistance, designs and estimates of costs based on input from Town staff as to their needs.

Gallauresi asked about the costs in the minutes from a previous meeting that referred to square footage of buildings. Daniel Scully explained that their role is to learn what the needs of the Town departments are and then to provide an estimate of square footage costs. Gallauresi mentioned that no environmental studies have been completed and Osgood responded that she is way ahead of where the Committee is in its planning. He explained that it is a process and part of that is a preliminary look at properties.

Goldschmidt asked about a list of the requirements from the staff. Daniel Scully provided an explanation to Goldschmidt. Gallauresi said she is concerned about property taxes necessary to pay for the Roundabout on State Route 12 and the Safford Drive project and O'Keefe said the roundabout is a State of New Hampshire project and they are funding it. A short discussion was also held about Safford Drive being funded by TIF District bonds paid for by TIF District property taxes.

Osgood emphasized that it will be up to the voters of the Town to decide about spending money. The job of the Committee is to bring recommendations to the Board of Selectmen, and their job is to bring it to the people to vote on. Goldschmidt said that most of the residents were clueless as to what was being considered. He claimed that recently the noise ordinance was considered without residents being part of the process. He said he would like to be part of the process and have a true referendum when a vote is taken.

Gallauresi said she thinks the problem is lack of communication from the Town. She suggested that the Town send out text and emails to the residents. Goldschmidt said that openness equals trust. He said that it isn't a good time to learn about a consideration when it is time to float a bond. Osgood emphasized that there is no intention to keep a secret. Everything is on the table and in the open. Goldschmidt said he is here to be part of the process.

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 are referred to by the Committee members as "the program" in their discussion.

Scully raised the issue of the schedule – the middle of June was supposed to be when estimates on nine scenarios were completed but he is about two weeks behind schedule. He recommends scheduling a meeting for July 14, 2014 with building configurations and have estimates to go along with those.

- **Fire Department Call Response Time Report**

Dave Bergeron next presented a report on Fire Department Station response times. The Fire Department provided 3,000 records, and Bergeron used 2,400 data points from the year 2010 to the present to analyze call data. Areas of densely populated were noted: west, east and north. Fire calls are centralized around West Swanzey, Central, and northeast Swanzey and at NH Route 12 and Flat Roof Mill Rd.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) calls: Many calls in West Swanzey area, Carpenter Home, and many at northeast corner of the Town and a number of calls in East Swanzey. Some northeast calls are associated with accidents on NH Route 12.

Analysis of drive time to calls: Assumption is that equipment will be going 10 MPH over the speed limit. The analysis did not include getting volunteers to the equipment. West Swanzey station firefighters are getting to their calls in less than 2 minutes when the calls are in West Swanzey. Getting to other locations like northeast or east Swanzey, it took as much as 14 minutes to reach some of the locations. The West Swanzey Station has really good coverage and can get to most of their calls within four minutes. Theoretically, they can get to other locations within 14 minutes, assuming no driving over the covered bridges.

Center Station was discussed. Majority of calls are reached in 4-6 minutes. Standard for emergency calls is within 4 minutes.

East Station was discussed. They are getting to only 10% of their calls in the 2-4 minute time frame. 60-70% of the calls are 6-12 minutes.

Discussion was held regarding response time for staff. There is variability in the response times given they are home and able to respond. And as time goes by the staff changes and the list would be entirely different. Bergeron suggested that it is taking on average a minimum of 5 – 10 minutes of response time to get to the station. Add that on to the time it takes to get to the location of the call. The Center Station has an advantage in serving the Northeast area which has many Fire and EMS calls. Since the majority of the calls for EMS and Fire are in the Northeast quadrant of the Town, setting a goal of a four minute response time would mean a Fire Station in the Northeast.

Faulkner asked about the impact of the new roundabout on Route 12. Bergeron said that while there may be more accidents when first installed, they are likely to be fender benders, and may not require EMS response. The proposed new intersection of Safford Drive may be an issue as well. Faulkner asked if there will be a signal there. O'Keefe said, "No", but there will be dedicated left and right turn lanes. Discussion was held about a signal that will trip when there is a Fire Station nearby.

Goldschmidt asked how many deaths were included in the call statistics presented. Bergeron said they didn't look at the outcome of the calls. Goldschmidt also asked if any staff responds directly to an incident. Bergeron said, "No", because you don't want people parking their trucks along the highway.

Scully asked for comment based on the data. Bergeron said the West Swanzey Station is necessary. The East Swanzey Station covers one end of Town if Central Station is moved north. Bohannon asked about what would be the driving times for the various staff should the Center Station be moved up north. Bergeron said that figure could be calculated based on a new Fire Station location.

Bergeron said if you are looking at growth corridors: consider NH Route 10 and NH Route 12. NH Route 10 is well covered by the West Swanzey Fire Station, but not State Route 12. Bergeron said there will be some benefit from a Fire Station in the Safford Drive area to address growth at southern end of State Route 12.

Osgood asked for questions. Osgood noted there are not a lot of volunteers living in the area of NH Route 12, which has many businesses. And it was noted that it is getting harder and harder to get volunteers to staff the equipment. If you want to meet the 4 minute response time standard, you need a full time staff. DiLuzio Ambulance provides service more quickly to the northeast corner of the town since they come in from downtown Keene, NH. Osgood asked Bergeron to calculate response times for a north station. Bergeron said that he did run the numbers for Safford Drive. Moving the station to Safford Drive, you get 40% of the total calls for the entire Town within the four minute timeframe. Center Station is responding to 70% of their calls between 4 – 6 minutes.

Goldschmidt asked if the firemen go to the station prior to responding to a call, and Bergeron said they did because all their gear and specific equipment is located there. Goldschmidt suggested that a procedural change might impact that positively.

A brief discussion was held regarding 2-4 minute response times. Davis said the Town used to have an arrangement with Keene, NH to cover North Swanzey, but the Town no longer has that arrangement due to the expense involved.

O'Keefe asked if Swanzey Fire Chief Norm Skantze has seen the report and Bergeron said that he will review the report with Skantze tomorrow. Davis pointed out that elderly housing tends to generate more calls. EMS calls are about equal to the fire calls. Scully mentioned that newer buildings have better fire safety features so there should be less fire calls in the future, but the aging population is growing and therefore more EMS calls would be expected.

Scully asked for zeroing on some sites given we have the data. Bergeron said if the CIP Committee wants to propose different locations, he can provide a call mapping analysis. Bergeron said that he would like to speak to Fire Chief Skantze first. Goldschmidt asked if there is any software that would be useful. Bergeron said that he is using a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software system already. Goldschmidt asked if the software might provide a recommendation for a location. Bergeron suggested that the analysis could divide the Town in half such that West Swanzey takes care of the west side and locations for just the east side (north to south) be considered.

O'Keefe suggested that Safford Drive might be a good alternative. Bohannon agreed. Bergeron said to keep in mind that location of the new station would be the one that is manned and would have an office. It was also noted that the Town wants to build a station that will last 40 or 50 years. The West Swanzey Station is limited in space. None of the current stations meet the federal standards for fire stations. O'Keefe noted that just to bring the Town Hall building up to safety code is estimated at a cost of \$400,000 to \$500,000. State of New Hampshire requirements have to be met. For example, there is no elevator and there are other safety and access issues.

Bergeron said he will need a couple of weeks to discuss the analysis with the Fire Chief and to research some locations in the north. Scully suggested meeting on June 16, 2014 to cover the other materials Scully had prepared for the Committee. On July 14, 2014 meet with Bergeron again to discuss his analysis of a north location.

Brief discussion was held regarding fees for Southwest Regional Planning Commission's GIS work coming out of Scully fees. Bergeron also noted data can be kept up to date indefinitely via the software if someone takes that task on.

Next meeting: June 16, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. at the Center Fire Station.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Sheaff, seconded by Davis with all in favor. **Motion passed.**

Adjournment occurred at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Beverly Bernard".

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary

Approved June 16, 2014.