

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Capital Improvements Program Committee (CIPC)
Meeting Minutes – November 1, 2016

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the CIPC was called to order by Chair Steve Bittel at 4:00 p.m. Members present: Steve Bittel, Jane Johnson, Glenn Page, Don Skiba, Francis Faulkner, and Selectmen’s Representative Sylvester Karasinski.

Absent: Bob Smith, Deb Davis, Bruce Bohannon

Others Present: Director of Planning & Community Development Sara Carbonneau, Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard, Fire Chief Norm Skantze and Town Administrator Mike Branley

Minutes:

- **Motion** was made by Skiba to approve the minutes of October 17, 2016 with a change recommended by Karasinski. There was a second to the motion by Page. Karasinski asked for the addition of “probably” at page 3 of 4, last paragraph. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

OLD BUSINESS

Review of Submitted 2017 Departmental Work Book

- **Quick Review of Summary for Warrant Article(s) Size and Broad Options**
There was a discussion about options for paying for capital improvements: bonding, leasing, and projects can be pushed back a year or two. There was a discussion about the dam at Wilson Pond and planning for roads maintenance.
- **Review of Individual Dept. Spreadsheets.**
 - **Carpenter Home** – discussion – trust funds have estimated year-end balances of about \$189,000. Bittel noted quite a bit was drawn from them this year. Bittel said the trust funds can carry the Home for a while. Capital needs are about \$394,000 and there isn’t a way to cover that with trust funds. There was a discussion about asking the taxpayers if they want to support the Home. Bittel said you would wipe out Lucy Carpenter Trust Income Fund if used for sprinklers for the Home which needs about \$180,000. Branley said that the loss in operational expense is running around \$15,000 thus far. Bittel said he is not recommending putting any money toward the Home. Johnson asked about details. Branley said there are 16 beds and the price varies depending on which room is occupied. Johnson said there is a question as to whether or not to continue the Home. Page pointed out if there is no nursing home on the site, the land reverts back to the heirs. There was a discussion about whether or not the Town should be in the business of nursing home/assisted living facilities. There was a discussion about towns operating indigent housing. Karasinski pointed out that the Town pays the County for accommodating Swanzey citizens. There was a discussion about heirs and what the heirs might be able to do with the land. Bittel said his view is to apply no dollars to the Home

at this point since there isn't enough information to make a good decision. Jack Wozmak is supposed to provide a report to the Selectmen about options for the Home, but has not yet done so.

- **Conservation Land Acquisition** – Bittel noted that not much has been drawn out of the account over the years. He noted the account will have \$303,000 by end of year 2016. Discussion was held about whether or not to add anything to the account. Bittel said he felt there were other priorities in Town. Johnson spoke about needing funds for trail maintenance and signs and acquiring other easements. About \$78,000 comes into the Conservation Commission Account from Land Use Revenue. It was agreed that they are adequately funded this year.
- **Highway & Cemetery Equipment** – He said this budget appears to work. Bittel suggested keeping it as proposed at \$100,000 per year. The Committee agreed. Faulkner asked to revisit this item. He spoke about interchangeable vehicles. There is an initial outlay but in long run, it costs less. He asked about looking at that for future consideration. Bittel noted that Director of Public Works Lee Dunham said the technology changes so much that it is possible that the undercarriage would not fit a new body. Some examples of various body types were provided by Faulkner: flatbed, leaf body, dump body. Bittel said he would discuss with Dunham. Skiba noted that the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) does that.
- **Bridges other than Covered** - There was a discussion about Rabbit Hollow Bridge getting done first before Christian Hill Bridge as it connects to a dead end road. Would require \$205,000 in 2017 and in 2018. Bittel questioned whether Christian Hill is an absolute priority for the Town. Branley said that there is another committee working on that. Hoyle Tanner is doing a study to suggest options for the Town to replace that bridge. Bittel suggested not supplying funds for Christian Hill Bridge. We have adequate funds for Rabbit Hollow. Rabbit Hollow Bridge needs about \$200,000 for replacement and Page noted a concern about the State shutting the Bridge down if the Town doesn't replace it. Bittel suggested that the \$400,000 needed for Christian Hill Bridge be bonded. Bittel suggested a minimal amount for 2017 in the amount of \$25,000. The Committee agreed.
- **Covered Bridges** – Bittel said the contributions have been \$5,000 and should be continued. Agreed.
- **Town Dams** - 2018 need Wilson Pond Dam safety upgrade and Bittel suggested this would probably be a bond issue to pay for since the cost is over \$500,000. Branley provided 2012 numbers for Upper Wilson which was \$455,000 and lower is between \$145,000 and \$200,000. Faulkner asked about removing the dam. Branley suggested talking to Lee Dunham. Page noted that the folks who live on the pond would not be happy. The question is whether or not to add funds. There is a current balance of \$259,000. Prior year the contribution was \$7,250. Branley listed other dams that need to be addressed as well, but did not indicate any major expenditure needs. Page asked about possible failure of the dam and its repercussions. Branley said he thought the dam has more Department Environmental Services (DES) issues and not necessarily be in danger of failing. Discussion was about whether or not to cash fund or bond.

- **DPW Facilities** - There was a discussion about funding for the roof and other requirements. Bittel noted \$80,000 would be needed in 2017 for the projects (Salt Shed, Roof, and Office/Break Area). Faulkner suggested staying at \$80,000.
- **Emergency Management** – Bittel suggested that the trailer is probably not needed. However, a replacement for storage shed at the Police Department is needed. \$40,000 was the estimate for a large storage area. Bittel noted there is enough to cover \$40,000.
- **Fire Pond** – There was a discussion about when to fund projects for the Fire Ponds like installing new dry hydrants or repairing existing ones and Bittel suggested \$10,000 in 2017 and \$10,000 each year thereafter. The committee agreed.
- **Fire and Related Facilities** – Maintenance – Bittel suggested \$10,000 per year. The committee agreed with that number.
- **Fire Tools Equipment** – Bittel noted current balance is about \$34,000. The committee agreed on \$10,000 per year.
- **Fire Trucks** – Been putting in \$80,000 per year, which now appears grossly inadequate. Would need to go up to \$180,000 or more per year to currently fund department needs. Bittel spoke about options. Could be bond or a lease. Skantze noted that there have been a significant number of purchases in recent past, a replacement tanker and several SUVs, which got rid of one heavy rescue truck. Skantze said the amount of rolling stock we have now is adequate. Could Skantze slip the whole schedule by one year? He noted that the 1987 engine would be replaced. Bittel suggested bonding for a main engine. Skantze spoke about the process of lease/purchase and it takes a year to build it. Branley said that \$500,000 is not needed in 2017. Skantze agreed that it could push it out in 2017. Bittel asked for whether there would be \$180,000 contribution this year or not. Faulkner suggested staying away from bonds. Estimate for the end of this year is \$172,000. Start funding in 2018 at least \$180,000 to maintain pay-as-we-go. The committee agreed. Faulkner mentioned that this is a result of historically underfunding critical reserves.
- **Mt. Caesar Union Library** - \$3,000 per year seems to work for them. Agreed.
- **Stratton Library** - They have \$28,000 and not have any targeted needs. Bittel suggested not funding them. Agreed.
- **Police Cruisers** – One cruiser will be paid from the general fund. It works out to putting in \$10,000 each year, but a preference was noted to inclusively fund all four cars (SUVs) and an annual basis through the Capital Reserve rather than partially through either General Fund or lease programs.. Discussion was held about equipping the cruiser. Can cost as much as \$30,000. Discussion was held about Special Duty Fund contributing to the amount. It was agreed to continue funding at \$10,000 if GF proceeds are used for three out the four units required, or \$40,000 if all funds flow through the Reserve – either being tax neutral to the Town. Bittel and Karasinski mentioned their preference for the latter full Reserve option.
- **Recreation** – they are in good shape and Bittel suggested funding at \$5,000 per year. He suggested fund-raising for a covered picnic area at Richardson Park rather than coming from the operating budget. The restroom/septic and changing area upgrade can be covered with balance. Branley noted that the Brown Field folks might be looking at Town support in the future. Bittel suggested revisit the Brown Field requests next year.

- Carbonneau noted that \$50,000 is probably not enough to also cover the septic system along with the bathrooms. Karasinski suggested \$5,000 and revisit. It was agreed.
- **Recycle Center** - There was a discussion about the balance of the revolving fund which would be about \$402,000 by 12/31/16 and which is generating a lot of cash. Bittel mentioned the possibility of a drive-through clear-span facility which might increase revenue and efficiencies saving time, labor, and energy for the future. Bittel suggested termination of the Capital Reserve fund of \$49,000 in 2017 Warrant Article and return the money to the General Fund which might mitigate some of the money requested in the rest of the budget. Branley suggested spending down the Capital Reserve (CR). Faulkner said he would not be in favor of getting rid of it and the committee agreed that it will be spent down.
 - **Revaluations** – Bittel said this category isn’t amenable to much change, saying it simply is what it is, beyond real Town control other than bid and payment terms; for now it is not a priority to adjust. 2019 was reduced from \$45,000 to \$11,000 paid out over several years rather than a lump sum, which will reduce the annual contribution. It was agreed to fund what the new contract stipulated.
 - **Town Hall** – there was a discussion about there being a reserve fund for paint and repairing the siding. The Balance is \$122,000 in the CR fund. No addition was recommended.
 - **Whitcomb Hall (WH)**– Bittel said there is a dedicated group of wonderful people supporting WH doing great things. However, Bittel said he doesn’t believe the Town should be contributing money for 2017 because of other overwhelming cash and bonding needs for essential life safety Town services. Moreover, he noted that the original premise by their committee and the selectmen was that WH would be renovated through fund raising and not Town funds. Bittel suggested there will be sticker shock for the tax payers once the numbers are provided to them now that an inclusive budget is being prepared. Karasinski said there is a feeling in town that a lot of money is going to West Swanzey, especially after the Main Street project. Faulkner said it makes some people happy, but others not so much. Skantze spoke about the possibility of using Whitcomb Hall for a variety of purposes. Faulkner spoke about a DPW garage behind Whitcomb Hall which sorely needs maintenance work. Bittel mentioned that the garage did not fit into long term CH planning anyway. There was discussion about how the Recycling Center building could be used for badly needed DPW storage, assuming a new Recycling Center is constructed from the Revolving Fund. Bittel suggested putting no contribution this year. Branley said the WH Committee might go around the CIPC and go directly to the Selectmen for funds. The committee agreed to stand on principal.
 - There was a discussion about the Town needing a road repair list and the interplay between the Municipal Transportation Fund and this Reserve. All agreed the committee needs more specifics urgently. Without specifics, the committee’s recommendations are pointless. Faulkner point out that when he was a Selectmen they mandated that DPW provide specifics.
 - **Police Facilities** - \$450,000 is slotted for this purpose and there would most likely be a bond for this purpose. The committee will be briefed once the architect is finished.

Bittel said he would re-summarize and tweak the numbers and provide them to the members for their consideration before the next meeting.

Next Meeting: November 8, 2016 at 4:00 pm at Town Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

Skiba made a motion to adjourn and Johnson seconded the motion. All were in favor and **motion passed**. Adjournment occurred at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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

Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary