

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire  
**Municipal Facilities Review Committee**  
Meeting Minutes – May 12, 2015

*Note: Draft Minutes are subject to review, correction and approval by the Committee. Review and approval of Minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Committee.*

The May 12, 2015 meeting of the Swanzey Municipal Facilities Review Committee was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Don Skiba. Members present: Don Skiba, Glenn Page, Charlie Sheaff, Sara Carbonneau, Steven Bittel and Keith Thibault. Also present were Fire Chief Norm Skantze and Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe. Absent: Wally Smith.

Members discussed the “ideal” day and time to meet. It was decided to meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 4 p.m. It was noted that Beverly Bernard would be available to take minutes on those days. As May 25<sup>th</sup> is a federal holiday, the next meeting of the Committee will take place on Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m.

Bittel provided two analyses: “CIP – Project Cost Analysis Model,” and “Cost of Full Optimum Program.” Bittel noted that Scully’s report detailed the optimum program for each facility – one task that needs to be undertaken is to determine the essential or necessary components for each facility. Scully had stressed to the CIP Committee that while the report contained the optimum program for each facility, a decision needed to be made about which items were essential versus what was desirable. These decisions were not made.

The “CIP – Project Cost Analysis Model” projects that if all programs were done for each facility, the total cost would be \$13,866,000. less capital reserves of \$1,205,000. resulting in a net bond requirement of \$12,661,000. The annual debt service would be \$755,000. The impact on a \$200,000. house would be \$257.85 (a 24.41% increase in taxation). Bittel noted that this scenario would not be supported by the citizens of the town, nor would it likely be supported by anyone on this Committee.

Bittel then discussed the feasibility of scaling back the programs (not using the optimum program described by Scully), by making reductions to the programs. (See “Revised Proforma Time Programmed Needs.”) This could reduce the impact on a \$200,000. house to \$72.22 (a 7.5% increase in taxation).

Members discussed reasons that they have heard why the 2015 bond article for the fire station failed. Bittel noted that optics and cost were two of the major factors. Page stated that it appeared that the rank and file of the fire department was not supportive of the project. Location of the station was discussed and while the data suggested that the Safford Drive site was optimum, there was still strong support for keeping the station in Swanzey Center (also being closer to the homes and businesses of many of the volunteer fire fighters). Sheaff stated that the CIP Committee had looked at numerous sites in Swanzey Center, but had been unable to find a suitable site.

Another reason expressed as to why the fire station bond failed was the lack of public input (in meetings and in public hearings), as well as the fact that needs of all the facilities had not been prioritized. The Selectmen did not prioritize the needs as described in Scully's report – this committee may need to do so. Finally, it was noted that the bond had not been adequately marketed.

Page asked Chief Skantze if the current site at 620 Old Homestead Highway was a possibility for the Fire Station if Town Hall went to another site. While possible and with a reduced footprint from the Safford Drive proposal, it was noted that there are site limitations regarding acreage, state right of way, and the fact that the property does not have public water/sewer available. Members questioned if additional acreage was available from the SAU (the current SAU building).

Members felt that the opportunities presented at the Homestead Woolen Mills complex were many and that they felt that the Committee should stress to the Board of Selectmen that the acquisition of this complex plays an integral part of the town's capital improvements plan. Carbonneau mentioned that the HWM property may be eligible for Southwest Region Planning Commission's brownfields program. She noted that SWRPC has a great deal of information on its website about the brownfields program ([www.swrpc.org](http://www.swrpc.org)).

Members also discussed the status of the Homestead Woolen Mills tax deed. It was noted that the Board of Selectmen deferred the decision on the tax deed until July 2015.

In regards to the Keene Tree property, Carbonneau stated that she had recently heard comments/questions from various persons questioning why the Board of Selectmen did not pursue acquisition of this property. Sheaff and Bittel noted that the CIP Committee had recommended that the Town pursue this property, but the Selectmen made the decision not to do so.

Members asked Chief Skantze to determine what the essentials for a new station (or sub-station) are.

Discussion regarding public comment/input at the Committee meetings. Motion by Sheaff that public comment is limited to no more than 10 minutes at the end of each meeting. Seconded by Page. Vote: All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m. Next meeting scheduled for Monday, June 8, 2015 at 4:00 p.m. at Town Hall.

Submitted by,

Sara Carbonneau, Director  
Planning & Community Development