

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE

SEPTEMBER 17, 2009

MEETING MINUTES

Present : Diane Lanney, Chair, William "Bill" Murray, Vice-Chair, Kevin Motta, Caleb Langer, Planning Board representative, Ernie Newcomb, BOS representative, Ed Blanchard, Finance Committee representative, Karen Chick, Town Accountant, Ex-Officio, Debra Roussel, Town Administrator

Also in Attendance: Walter Ducharme, Dennis O'Donnell, Sandi Knipe, Sgt. Bob Forte

Meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm

Approval of July 23, 2009 meeting minutes with one typo to be corrected.

Motion: Kevin Motta, Second: Ernie Newcomb 3 in Favor – 2 Abstain

Motion carries for approval

New Finance Committee Representative: Ed Blanchard replaces Sue Motta. Ed has officially been sworn in by the Town Clerk. He has been given CIPC Policy and Procedures and plans to share these with the entire Finance Committee.

Open Position on CIPC : Greg Cravedi, member at large, sent his resignation in July. Diane Lanney nominated Walter Ducharme. Mr. Ducharme declined the nomination. Diane Lanney will request Elaine Peterson, Town Secretary, to post the position on the towns Website and Peg access for a member at large.

Chair and Vice-Chair positions: Currently Diane Lanney and Bill Murray respectively
Motion: Diane Lanney for Chair by Bill Murray, Second by Kevin Motta. All in Favor
Motion: Bill Murray for Vice-Chair by Diane Lanney, Second by Kevin Motta. All in Favor

Correspondences and Emails:

1988 Mack Truck ~ The truck is in need of \$15,000. worth of repairs. Hubb Equipment who re-furbished our last truck does not want to do the work. They have said the truck is not road worthy. Lyn Gauthier, Highway Superintendent, was not available tonight so CIPC will ask him to elaborate further at the Sept 23rd meeting. Ed Blanchard would like to discuss the possibilities of review new vs. used vehicles for the highway dept. on the 23rd. A reminder that (30B) will play a role in the bidding process for used vehicles. It makes the process very difficult.

Diane Lanney's discussion with Ernie Newcomb regarding Capital Planning with the BOS. There has not been success with the last 3 attempted overrides. It appears that the 500-700 thousand dollar request from the taxpayer is not a viable approach. The past approach by CIPC to prioritize per department needs some refining. We need to have a couple of successes to build that relationship from CIPC/BOS and towns people. It will be critical to prioritize for the entire town, not necessarily by department, and have a true collaboration by all the departments.

Ed Blanchard, Finance Committee representative, wanted to clarify the CIPC minutes of July 23. He indicated that Fin Comm. is in agreement that CIPC should be making

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financial recommendations with capital purchases. He would like to see definite collaboration between the two committees.

Diane Lanney had a discussion with Matt Castriotta: Acting as an individual, not a BOS, he asked that CIPC consider the option of a "Trade" with Mass Pallet on Gardner Road and a town owned property on Pitcherville Road. Diane Lanney contacted Roger Knipe, he was an ad hoc member regarding the Mass Pallet property in 1990. At that time it would have required 350K in renovations. The property has a very small septic, and no perc can be located, however it would only handle the 5 EMS employees. Secondly it would require a public hearing with the residents of Pitcherville as that property is not zoned commercial. It would require a special permit, it would require the planning board to re-zone the area.

Fire ARRA – 5 million dollar Grant. The funds would be used for the cost associated with the site work and construction of new fire station. CIPC and Fin Comm. requested that they be notified when grants of this type are applied for.

Solar Farm – Planning Board has spoken with the Assessors. A lease would be developed for land on Pitcherville Road, town property.

Wind Power Studies: Bill Murray reported of surrounding towns progress and changes to requirements. The wind requirements have been reduced and Open Space and Conservation land may be eligible for future sites, which would exempt the planning boards from review. Deb Roussel asked if conservation lands, purchased with state funding, would the state want some of the monies generated by the wind power. Bill Murray does not believe at this time that would be the case.

FY11 – 10 Year Plan:

Deb Roussel reported information she obtained from a MMAA meeting. She asked that group how do other towns fund their capital purchases? One suggestion was to do a one-time override and dedicate those funds each year to capital purchases. This would require a commitment from the BOS to take that % of the levy in future years to purchase capital. Of course this would require town meeting approval, but the commitment comes from the BOS first. Deb Roussel exited the meeting @7:55 pm.

Ed Blanchard would like to see the commitment of Free Cash to Stabilization and then in turn use the stabilization to fund the down payments of capital. This fiscal year ('10) 58K was retired in Maturing Debt and all of it went back into the operating budget. He would like to review the options of those funds being down payments for future capital. Another option to consider is to vote out CPA at 1.5% and use those funds as an override and dedicate that amount to capital each year. This would not cost the taxpayer additional taxes, just a shift in use.

Ernie Newcomb feels strongly that a success needs to be had with the purchase of capital before another override can be considered.

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In regard to the override and commitment to future use of those monies for capital. Caleb Langer believes the argument will still be that the public has lost the individual control over those funds. Once it is in the levy there does not seem to be as much control.

At this time of the meeting it was asked of the members and participants to offer some ideas as to the reasons behind the failed overrides. What can be learned from those and move forward to more success for the entire town.

- Lack of Trust
- Lack of Transparency
- How the override was worded and presented to the towns people
- Need a Collaborative effort from all the Departments
- Dollar amount to high, Just reduce amount not a menu

Discussion of the Police Cruiser in the levy. It has long time success within the levy, the towns people don't want to be hit each year for a purchase that is virtually yearly. Walter Ducharme reminded all that by leaving it in the levy, we then have Capital competing with the operating budget, and the operating budget needs to be protected.

Caleb Langer would like to review what should and should not be within the levy. For example the PD cruiser is yearly purchase, with the rotation of the fleet, vs. the Fire truck or Grader which were much larger capital and have a life of 10 years or more. He would like to see the Targeted Stabilizations be more specific. Be able to break down the amounts in each account for the specific item they are supporting. The cleared the information the more support we will receive from the public.

Ed Blanchard believes that the FD and PD are in pretty good shape regarding capital, however the Highway department is in terrible shape. He thinks the focus should be on the repair of our roads and capital purchase for Highway. He would like to have CIPC/Fin Comm. and BOS have the same game plan along with all the departments for success.

Diane Lanney reported that the Financial Management Report from the DOR should be forth coming. As the CIPC chair she spoke with the representatives regarding the 10 year plan. The DOR commended CIPC for their long term planning, but also wondered how it is working in these economic times and our budget constraints.

Final thought for the night was to review the budget and availability of funds prior to requesting an override. The changes and reductions need to be made prior to asking for additional funding from the town.

Motion to adjourn by Ernie Newcomb – Second by Bill Murray
Adjourn at 8:55 pm