

**Capital Planning Committee Meeting
Elementary School Library
March 24 , 2011
Minutes**

Members Present: Peter O’Connell (Selectman), Barbara Wilson (Elementary School), Jerry Johnson (Advisory Committee), Bruce Clarke (Planning Board), Heather Lemieux and Archie Achilles (At-Large Members).

Others Present: Mike Blanchard, Chief of Police, Brenda Metterville, Director of the Merrick Public Library and Matt Bansfield, Library Board of Trustees.

- 1. Committee Membership:** Jim Dunbar has announced his resignation as Treasurer, so Mrs. Lemieux agreed to maintain the spreadsheet, at least until a new Treasurer is appointed and joins the committee. Bruce Clarke reminded the committee that he is not running for re-election to the Planning Board so a new Planning Board representative will be needed. Mr. O’Connell suggested (to general approval) that he ask the Board of Selectmen to appoint Mr. Clarke to the remaining at-large seat.
- 2. Approval of Minutes:** Mrs. Wilson moved and Mr. Achilles seconded a motion to approve the minutes of January 20, 2011. So voted.
- 3. Police Department :** Mike Blanchard submitted his proposed schedule for replacement of the 2004 cruiser (in 2012 for about \$32,000), 2005 Chief’s vehicle (in 2014 for about \$27,000), 2007 SUV (in 2015 for \$40,000) and 2011 cruiser (2016 for \$35,000). Chief Blanchard felt that vehicles should be replaced after 100,000 miles and that the average cruiser logged 23,000 – 30,000 miles per year. four vehicles, including one 4 wheeled drive vehicle and one Chief’s vehicle ensured gradual wear and regular replacement and that 2 fully equipped cruisers would be on hand even if one were in the shop. He did not recommend cutting back to two cruisers.

Chief Blanchard argued strongly against the purchase or continued lease of the current Police Station as a long-term Police Station. He noted that without a sally port it is difficult to handle prisoners and secure them, the building is not fully accessible (two steps between booking room and main station), there is no office for the Sergeant, there is no video capacity to record prisoner behavior and treatment, the meeting room is not large enough for the staff when all assembled and there is no place to change into uniform, and there is water in the basement, which makes it problematic for the evidence room that is located there. Parking is “horrendous” and the ATM is in the way.

He recommended that the Committee construct a new Police Station and indicated that he felt the Pleasant Street site that had been found acceptable by the Police Station study committee would be the best site of those previously considered by the Committee. Mr. Loeb, the consultant to that committee, had proposed a \$2.5 million structure with a preferred location behind the Town Hall. Such a facility would have met all requirements for a Town of 5000 people, though he felt a \$1.5 million structure could have served the town as an interim facility until the Town reach 5000 people.

The Committee took Chief Blanchard’s recommendations under advisement and thanked him for coming.

4. Merrick Public Library

Brenda Metterville and Matt Bansfield noted that the building is now 126 years old and is in need of a number of repairs if the building is to remain functional and if the Library Trustees are to preserve its historical character. The trustees believe the Library can serve its functions without an addition by (1) reshaping and reshelving a collection that is tailored to the interests of the patrons (2) by using new technologies, (3) by shifting to the min-net system of inter-library resource sharing and (4) using both the library and other community spaces in which to present public programs

Ms. Metterville noted that their new custodian, an engineer by profession, has already been able to address moisture issues around the windows and on the southern wall. Their capital plan is designed to take full advantage of his skills and willingness to use them. Key issues include conversion to a mini-net interlibrary system, waterproofing and insulating the basement and pouring a new floor, replacement of a furnace/conversion to natural gas, removal of bat guano and insulation in the attic, window repair, replacement of roof soffits and cornices, and the replacement of the iron railing on the front steps.

The Trustees proposed that these projects, estimated to cost approximately \$30,000 - \$35,000, be done incrementally over a ten-year period. Capital planning committee members were impressed with the thoughtfulness of the staff and Trustees and their willingness to implement capital projects on a gradual basis. Jerry Johnson, Bruce Clarke and other committee members urged the Trustees to move ahead on a five-year timeline with priority given to overhauling the basement, replacing the furnace and insulating the attic because of the potential for energy savings and rebates. Trustees were also encouraged to explore the use of the Sheriff's department for some of the renovation and felt that any security issues could be addressed. Another alternative would be vocational students at Tantasqua. The Trustees agreed to go back and revise their proposal.

5. The Water Department

Bruce Clark presented the capital plan for the Water department, including a schedule of well maintenance (2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014), drilling of a new well (2015), the replacement of the water department truck (in 2018 at a cost of \$40,000), and installation of radio-read meters (over the next 2-3 years). All of these costs are funded through water department fees paid by customers, which generate capital reserves that are invested and earn interest. Mr. Clark noted that the standpipe on Draper Street had been completely replaced using CDBG grant funds at no cost to the Town. The only threat to the wells is manganese which becomes a problem if a well has to be pumped harder, thereby drawing more manganese into the water. Because the wells are maintained and not over-pumped, manganese is not a problem right now.

The committee discussed the finances of a possible expansion of the water system to the area south of the Quaboag River. Mr. Clarke said that the current users of the water department could not be expected to foot the bill of the entire cost of expanding the water system. Some funding would be required either from the Town or through grants. Mr. Clarke thought there was interest from Nanatomqua Mobile Home Park in extending the water line under the Quaboag River if the Town were to agree to obtain a grant and loan from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development program. If the USDA were to extend a grant of 25% of project costs with a low-cost loan (2.75%) over 40 years for the remaining costs, the project might be affordable. Mr. Clarke will report back on potential interest from Nanatomqua and perhaps Wagon Wheel and on potential funding from Massachusetts Rural Water project funding as well.

6. Selectmen: Peter O'Connell briefly summarized capital projects submitted by the Selectmen. These will be reviewed in greater detail at the next meeting.

7. Other:

The Committee reviewed a draft policy from the Selectmen that included approval by the Capital Improvement Planning Committee of capital purchases proposed mid-year. The Committee agreed that it was a planning committee whose charge it is to propose plans and not an approval committee, which is the province of the Selectmen and Advisory Committee.

Ms. Lemieux proposed that the Committee should add buildings to the Capital Asset Inventory and will report in greater detail about the GASBE 34 requirements at the next meeting. She also reported on her meeting with the Department of Revenue Financial Review team, who will make its recommendations to the Town in May or June. Melinda Ordway encouraged the CIPC to develop policies on debt, reserves, and free cash, and she suggested that their financial recommendations, as well as our minutes and capital plan, be put on the Town website.

8. Next Meeting

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be Thursday, April 28 at 7 PM in the Brookfield Town Hall. AT that meeting, we will review the capital plans for the Selectmen, Fire, EMS, and the Cemetery Commission.

Mr. Achilles moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Clarke seconded the motion. So voted at 9:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter S. O'Connell, Clerk