

Capital Improvement Planning Committee

August 25, 2011

Minutes

Members Present: Heather Lemieux, Jerry Johnson, Barbara Wilson, Sharon Mahoney and Peter O'Connell

Members Absent: Sheila Frangiamore and Kermit Eaton

The meeting was called to order at 7:09. The approval of the minutes of 7/21/11 was deferred.

EMS Capital Needs: Donna Lafleur and Peter Martell were present and presented a spreadsheet (see attached) showing net income and loss related to Emergency Medical Services for 2004-2011. Some years show a profit and some years show a loss, with the average being about \$10,000 surplus per year for the last five years. They pointed out that in some years neighboring towns may not have provided Advanced Life Support Services, which increased Brookfield's number of calls. Recently, out-of-town mutual aid calls are down (other towns are providing ALS services), but the number of local calls are up. More people are requesting to be taken to UMass Medical rather than to Mary Lane, which reduces the net income to the ambulance reserve fund since all calls are reimbursed at the same flat rate.

Although EMS receives some cash donations, those funds are used primarily for the purchase of equipment. However, about \$23,000 in donations were used in 2009 toward the purchase of the new ambulance.

Pete Martell warned the committee that the uncertainty about the number of ambulance calls in a year and the increased costs of delivering patients to Worcester might mean that the Town would need to appropriate some money for the purchase of a new ambulance in 10-12 years.

Cemetery Commissioners: Art Jay and Peter Masuzzo suggested that although a new lawn mower would be needed in about 4 years at a cost of \$7,000 and some roadway maintenance in 3-4 years, the primary capital needs lie in the need for historic preservation and eventually in the need to acquire land to expand the cemetery. He noted that the cemetery land would be sufficient to last about 45 years, but that the Town would want to acquire land before that time.

Based on a consultant report, preservation projects and estimates included:

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| 1. Complete Archway Gate Restoration (already funded) | |
| 2. Gravestone Assessment | \$10,000 |
| 3. Gravestone Preservation @\$325 per stone | \$30,000 (?) |
| 4. Stone wall restoration | \$25,000 |
| 5. Civil War Monument Preservation | \$30,000 |
| 6. Tomb Restoration | \$20,000 |

The Cemetery Preservation Fund currently has a balance of about \$60,000. Funds from the sale of cemetery plots (\$350 per plot, which is about average when compared to area towns) is split 50/50 by law into perpetual care and preservation. In addition, the Commissioners have been successful in raising funds for cemetery preservation from donations and from preservation grants. However, the grants require a commitment of 50% matching funds up front. In the past, the matching funds have been provided through a combination of Town appropriation and funds from the preservation fund.

Peter suggested that it might be good for the Town to budget \$10,000 per year to be put in a restricted cemetery capital improvement fund for preservation matching and land acquisition. However, he thought that regular fundraising and grant-writing could reduce that need.

Planning Board: Sharon Mahoney suggested that the Planning Board's capital needs lay primarily in the need to purchase new zoning maps and map overlays showing wetlands, land use, etc. Since the Assessors are requesting funds for digital maps, it could be that the Planning Board needs will be met.

Sharon also noted that the recent DOR Financial Management Report suggested that the Town Boards and Committees needed to review their fees and provide justification for the fees that were being charged. She wondered whether fees could include an overhead charge that would allow funds to build up to cover capital costs. Mr. O'Connell thought that the law limited Planning Board fees just to direct charges to developers or users for the specific project.

Sharon will come back to the Committee with specific requests.

Other Business:

- Peter O'Connell will contact the Board of Health about submitting capital requests
- Jerry Johnson will invite the Highway Department to attend the next meeting \
- Barbara Wilson will invite the Recreation Committee to the next meeting.
- The Fire Department has submitted an estimate of \$50,000 for roof work which would be added to their capital requests
- Library: Brenda Metterville will revise her earlier capital request, since the Town appropriated \$25,000 in FY12 for capital **improvements instead of** the \$10,000 she **originally** requested.
- Special Town Meeting: Heather will request an opportunity to make an interim Capital Improvement Planning Committee report, but the Committee would not expect to review any capital requests for the STM itself.
- By Law: The Committee agreed to discuss a proposed by-law change that would make the CIPC a standing committee with members having staggered terms.

The date for the next CIPC meeting will be September 22 at 7 PM.

Mr. Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Mahoney seconded the motion. So voted at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter S. O'Connell, Clerk