

Draft
Capital Improvement Planning Committee
December 15, 2011 Brookfield Elementary School Library
Minutes

Members Present: Heather Lemieux, Sheila Frangiamore and Kermit Eaton, Barbara Wilson, Sharon Mahoney and Peter O'Connell

Members Absent: Jerry Johnson

The meeting was called to order at 7:11.

1. **Minutes: Barbara Wilson moved and Sharon Mahoney seconded the motion to approve the minutes of November 10, 2011. So voted.**

2. **Highway Superintendent Herb Chaffee** presented information about capital needs for equipment replacement, road reconstruction, and a proposal under consideration to form a multi-town equipment sharing program:
 - a. **Equipment Replacement:** Mr. Chaffee noted that it was too expensive and not cost effective for the Highway Department to purchase new equipment, in most cases. Instead, he proposed costs to purchase used equipment that the Highway Department would re-fit as necessary and which would provide the Town good equipment that would last as long or longer than a piece of new equipment. He requested that the Committee recommend to the Town that appropriate sums of money be placed in a "Used Equipment Purchase Account" rather than in Stabilization so that, with approval from the Board of Selectmen and Advisory Committee, he could purchase used equipment when it came available. He cited the 2002 Mack Truck as a good example of this procedure, which meant that the Town has a virtually new truck at half the cost of a new truck. He asked that the Committee budget to replace the old front end loader in FY13 (lease purchase) at a cost of approximately \$55,000 over three years and justified the need to have two loaders.
 - b. **Highway Reconstruction:** Mr. Chaffee noted that Brookfield has about 40 miles of road to maintain. He said that "Type-I" blacktop material had become too expensive and of such poor quality that it was no longer recommended for road reconstruction. He estimated that it costs the Town approximately \$150,000 per mile to reconstruct a road and that with an application of crack sealing and a replacement topping after 10 -12 years, the surface could be made to last for 20 years. With 40 miles of paved road, that calculates out to a cost of \$360,000 per year to keep roads re-surfaced. He noted that some roads need replacement or treatment sooner because of greater use (Route 148) and that other roads would last longer (Devil's Elbow), but that the \$360,000 would be an ideal figure on average.

Mr. Chaffee noted that the Town needs to expand its support for the Highway Department's Administrative Assistant, who writes most of the grants for the Highway and Water Department grants (STRAP and CDBG), which have provided approximately four million dollars of funding over the past several years for Highway and Water Department needs. Grants have become both more plentiful, but require ongoing research to identify available sources of money. He pointed to the availability of Homeland Security and other grants and asked that the Committee include support for this proposal in its recommendations. He also asked that the Committee ensure Town representation at the CMPRC meetings, since the CMPRC has yet to complete its Hazardous Mitigation plan, which has meant that the Town cannot apply for funding for Mill Street and Town Farm Road reconstruction.
 - c. **Regional Purchasing and Sharing of Highway Equipment:** Mr. Chaffee reported on discussions with Highway Superintendents from East and West Brookfield, Warren, Brimfield and Brookfield to form a regional Highway Equipment Exchange. The Highway

Department Administrative Assistant, Cindy Thompson, is drafting grant proposals to support both start-up of the Equipment Exchange and to seek funding for emergency trailers and supplies from Homeland Security. Discussion focused on the possible purchase of a "cherry picker" truck for \$16,000 and the cost of an operator that would circulate among the five towns to do preventive tree removal and trimming. He noted that it costs \$17,000 to get a truck and crew for one month of work now. Under this Equipment Exchange program, it would cost Brookfield perhaps \$20,000 for the first year and \$10,000 per year thereafter for which Brookfield would get 10 weeks of tree removal a year for less cost than the current level of \$17,000 per year. Other pieces of equipment might include a sign-making machine and a hose-making machine. The Town already shares its brush-cutting machine with West Brookfield in return for the use of a dump truck and with East Brookfield in return for the use of a catch basin cleaner.

3. **Capital Improvement Committee By-Law Change:** Chair Lemieux reported that the by-law change voted at the November 18, 2011 Special Town Meeting was approved by the Attorney General. The Town Clerk needs to satisfy public posting requirements. She will contact Town Clerk Michael Seery to follow up on this requirement.
4. **Financial Indicators to Include in the Capital Plan:** Kermit Eaton moved and Sheila Frangiamore seconded a motion to request that the Board of Selectmen purchase two copies of A Handbook for Local Government, published by the International City and County Manager's Association. So voted.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to research five years of data on the following indicators, using the templates provided by David Nixon, Town Administrator for Hadley:

- **Debt as a Percentage of the Total Operating Budget (O'Connell)**
- **Debt per capita (O'Connell)**
- **Capital Expenses as a Percentage of the Total Operating Budget (Eaton)**
- **Free Cash and Stabilization Funds as a Percentage of the Total Operating Budget (O'Connell)**
- **Population (O'Connell)**

5. **Capital Requests from Remaining Sources:**

- a. **Recreation Committee:** Barbara Wilson will continue to seek input.
- b. **Council on Aging:** We need to quantify the cost of a Senior Center.
- c. **Banister Common and Mall:** Chair Lemieux will contact Kathleen Wild about their requests.
- d. **Town Clerk:** Sheila Frangiamore will check with the Town Clerk about his estimated costs for records storage and preservation.
- e. **Municipal Facilities:** Mr. O'Connell has requested projections from the Municipal Planning Committee relative to financing the Renovation of the Town Hall and Construction of a Police Station.
- f. **Computers/Technology:** Mr. O'Connell has requested projections from Mr. Heller;
- g. **Energy:** Mr. O'Connell has requested projections from Mr. Heller relative to Solar revenue, expenses for a geothermal heating system, and furnace replacement.

The Committee set a deadline of our January meeting to have requests in hand.

6. **Capital Plan:** The Committee discussed how it will determine its recommendations for capital planning priorities and policies to complete the Capital Plan. Chair Lemieux said that she has been inputting data into a spreadsheet and that the Committee will need to identify priorities,

funding sources and to make recommendations about how much the Town needs to budget in each of the five years of the Capital Plan to meet Town priorities.

Mr. Eaton noted that the plan would be of little value unless the plan was continually updated and used by the Advisory Committee, the Board of Selectmen, and Town Meeting voters in making financial plans and decisions. Based on his experience with a Senior Housing project in Spencer in which the Town Administrator played a crucial role in negotiating with federal agencies in the best interests of the Town, he argued that Brookfield needed a Town Administrator to lead the kind of financial and capital planning that Towns such as Hadley have implemented at this stage of Brookfield's development. He noted that unless Brookfield has a knowledgeable representative actively seeking grants and leading development projects, neither the Master Plan nor the Capital Plan will be implemented.

Members of the Committee agreed with his argument, but felt that it was advisable to ask the Selectmen to appoint a study committee to determine the need and if there was consensus that the time had come to establish such a position, to draft a position description to be reviewed by the Personnel Committee and presented to the Selectmen to put before the Town Meeting for approval.

Mrs. Frangiamore moved and Mrs. Wilson seconded the following motion: "In the Interests of implementing a Capital Plan, the Capital Planning Improvement Committee asks that the Board of Selectmen appoint a Study Committee to investigate the need for a Town Administrator in Brookfield and if such a need is determined to exist, to develop a job description to be presented to voters for approval and a proposal for funding such a position." The motion was adopted unanimously.

7. The date for the next CIPC meeting will be January 26th at 7 PM at the Brookfield Elementary School.

8. Adjournment: Kermit Eaton moved and Sheila Frangiamore seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. So voted at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter S. O'Connell, Clerk