

Capital Planning Committee Meeting
Elementary School Principal's Conference Room
January 20, 2011
Minutes

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

Public: Mr. Holdcraft

Selectman O'Connell opened the meeting at 7:00 PM and thanked everyone for agreeing to serve on the committee. He distributed the agenda and charge of the committee, the expired 2002 Capital Planning Committee report, and Jim Dunbar's schedule of debt service for debt-excluded capital projects (Tantasqua and Highway Barn) and capital projects within the Town operating budget (Town Hall Roof and Fire Truck). Mr. O'Connell reviewed the agenda and asked if there were any additions or changes. None were suggested.

1. Nominations

Mr. O'Connell opened the floor for nominations for Chair of the Committee. Mrs. Wilson nominated Heather Lemieux and Mr. Johnson seconded. Since there were no other nominations, Mr. O'Connell asked that Mrs. Lemieux be elected by acclamation. So voted.

Mrs. Lemieux then asked for nominations for Vice-Chairman/Clerk. Mrs. Wilson nominated Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Achilles seconded the motion. Since there were no other nominations, Mrs. Lemieux asked that Mr. O'Connell be elected by acclamation. So voted.

Mrs. Lemieux asked for nominations for the position of "Treasurer" or keeper of the capital planning spreadsheet. Mr. O'Connell nominated Mr. Dunbar and Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. . Since there were no other nominations, Mrs. Lemieux asked that Mr. Dunbar be elected by acclamation. So voted.

2. Discussion of Committee Role and Make-up

After discussion, the Committee:

- Agreed that there may be a need to propose a revision in the Town By-Law establishing the Capital Planning Committee to ensure that the Committee members have staggered terms, perhaps with more at-large members, but that it would take no action at this time;
- Agreed that the function of the Committee is to gather capital requests from Town Department Heads and Committees, to require adequate back-up and research for the capital requests to ensure their accuracy and validity, to set priorities and develop a plan so that capital expenses are spread over a period of time, and to make recommendations for capital spending to the Board of Selectmen. The Committee would not be responsible for initiating capital projects.
- The priority of the Committee this year is to develop a 5-10 year capital plan that would provide the context for setting priorities, even if it meant that the Committee would be unable to make recommendations on FY12 capital requests. However, assuming that action on FY12 capital articles is delayed to a Fall Town Meeting as has been recent practice, the Committee felt it could do both.

- Reviewed a list of capital purchases and building projects to be sure the list was comprehensive as the basis of collecting information (attached). Added to the list were Brownfield assessments, BEMA needs, and projects recommended by the Open Space and Master Planning Committee. The Committee agreed that capital expenses for water projects, streets, bridges, roads, and sidewalks should be included.
- Discussed whether the definition of a capital request as \$10,000 and life expectancy of at least five years was too low, but agreed to keep it for now.

3. Current Debt Payment Schedule and Capital Reserves

Mr. Dunbar reviewed his handout on debt payment schedules. He noted that within six years (FY2017), the Town would no longer be making debt payments since state reimbursements for Tantasqua would exceed Brookfield's share of the debt payment. He reminded the committee that the Tantasqua debt schedule was an estimate since the actual annual payment is a function of Brookfield's enrollment as a percentage of total Tantasqua enrollment, which can vary from year-to-year. In FY12, Brookfield has 15.93% of enrollment, down from 17.28% in FY11.

Mr. Dunbar noted that Brookfield's total debt of \$282,712 as of FY12 as a percentage of its operating budget is very low and dropping by about \$30,000 per year.

Mr. O'Connell noted that the Town has a variety of funds that could be used for capital expenses including Stabilization, Trust Funds, Donation Accounts, and School Choice reserves before funding projects through borrowing or the tax levy. Mr. O'Connell agreed to obtain a list of these reserves and their current fund balances from Town Accountant Betty Benoit (who serves as an ex officio member of the committee).

4. Data Gathering

Committee members reviewed alternative data gathering worksheets and charged Mrs. Lemieux and Mr. Dunbar with the task of refining the worksheet and sending a memo out to Department Heads and Committee Chairs asking them to submit their capital requests by February 24th. Mr. Dunbar felt that he could input the data into a capital planning Excel spreadsheet before the next meeting in March.

5. Next Meeting

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be March 10 at 7 PM in the Brookfield Elementary School.

Mr. O'Connell moved to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Johnson seconded the motion. So voted at 9:07 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter S. O'Connell, Clerk