

**TOWN OF ALTON PLANNING BOARD/CAPITOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES 2017
NOVEMBER 7, 2017**

APPROVED

Members Present:

Peter Bolster, Planning Board Chairman
Roger Sample, Planning Board Vice-Chairman
Russ Wilder, Planning Board Clerk
Tom Hoopes, Planning Board Member
Bob Regan, Citizen CIP Vice-Chairman

Others Present:

Nic Strong, Town Planner

CALL TO ORDER

Roger Sample called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M.

Public Hearing on Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) of 2018-2023

Bob Regan read a memo, dated November 6, 2017, from Nic Strong to the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, and Budget Committee, for the record:

“Please find attached the CIP Committee's recommendation for the Capital Improvements Program for the Town of Alton 2018 - 2023.

The benefits of a CIP include preserving public health, safety and welfare; avoiding undue tax increases; improving communication and coordination; anticipating the demands of growth; identifying "scattered and premature" development; developing a fair distribution of capital costs; building a foundation for growth management and impact fees; and, supporting economic development.

To be considered for CIP participation in Alton, a project must have a capital cost greater than \$20,000 and have a useful lifespan of greater than three years.

The CIP Committee's stated purposes are to classify projects according to the urgency and the need for realization; to recommend a time sequence for their implementation; to estimate the cost of each project and indicate the probable operating and maintenance costs and probable revenues, if any; and, to include the existing sources of funding or the need for additional sources of funds for the implementation and operation of each project.

The CIP Committee prioritizes departmental projects as follows:

- 5 Critical - has a real potential to save lives; required to eliminate a condition dangerous to public safety or welfare
- 4 Valuable - has a real potential to save money by decreasing tax burden or increasing revenue; required for the conservation of existing property or resources, or enhances the economic base

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- 3 Beneficial - maintains existing conditions and/or facilities; benefits the community in general by maintaining existing services or programs, replaces obsolete facilities or equipment or addresses a need identified in the Master Plan
- 2 Desirable - upgrades public services; promotes efficiency, or enhances public convenience, comfort or welfare
- 1 Ideal - promotes ideal services, conditions, or operations if funds can be made available

The CIP Committee is made up of a Planning Board representative, a Board of Selectmen representative, a Budget Committee representative and two citizen members. In 2017, only one citizen member was appointed. The CIP Committee began meeting with the Department Heads in September. The Department Heads presented their projects for the six year Capital Improvement Plan but also provided the CIP Committee an inventory of their facilities and equipment needs for the next 20 years.

The CIP Committee emphasized the importance of using Capital Reserve Funds in order to save ahead of time against the Town's capital expenditures. It is important to note that due to projects not being funded in prior years for various reasons the bottom line in the first few years of the proposed Capital Improvements Plan of 2018 - 2023 will be higher before the plan can level out.

The CIP Committee strongly recommends that the Board of Selectmen investigate the space and facilities needs for the Town of Alton's departmental functions. Several town buildings are included in the CIP Plan. The CIP Committee determined not to include any funds for those buildings' improvements, additions, and renovations or for new buildings until the concepts and plans for the buildings are approved by the Board of Selectmen. The CIP Committee recommends a study to determine the needs for each department, and a cost analysis of staying in their present locations versus building a public safety building or similar, thereby allowing the reuse of buildings for other Town needs.

The CIP Committee would like to thank the Department Heads for their time and effort in submitting the project worksheets and backup information to the CIP Committee and for meeting with the Committee to discuss this very important Town financial plan.

Please let me know if you have any questions or require any further information.”

Peter Bolster asked the Board if they had any questions regarding the memo. Tom Hoopes commented that the ranking system was a wise addition. Peter Bolster stated that the CIP Committee recommended that the Board of Selectmen create a Committee to look at the possibility of building a Safety Complex to house both the Police and Fire Departments. If that was to happen, then the Parks & Rec Department could potentially utilize the firehouse, and some of the offices in Town Hall could be spread out into the present police station.

Peter Bolster stated that the CIP Committee elected not to look at the all-weather drive-through recycling facility proposal from Scott Simonds at the Solid Waste Center, because the Board of Selectmen had not addressed changing how recycling was to be handled. He stated that over a course of ten-years, it really would not cost taxpayers anything because of additional revenues. For example, if the Solid Waste Center was able to

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bale their own plastics, it would not end up in the waste, therefore, making it cheaper to dispose of the waste. There was a recycling fund where the recycling money was deposited into, in order to improve the recycling component of the landfill. The project that Scott Simonds proposed would cost around \$900,000.

Peter Bolster noted that the Mount Major Community Center in West Alton was given to the Town, and the Town was now responsible for the upkeep and any maintenance to the building, like the roof that currently needed to be fixed.

Peter Bolster shared that there was nothing submitted from the Library. He thought that was concerning because they needed to look at their long-term needs. Russ Wilder asked if there was a line item for them; Bob Regan stated there was a line item, but there was nothing against it.

Russ Wilder noted that the priorities were mostly fives and fours and there were only a couple of threes. Peter Bolster stated that the reason the Committee gave out mostly fives were because all of those proposals were needed and they liked the concept of spreading the funding out over time. He stated that the Committee had discussed lease purchase with a couple of departments. He noted in a couple of places there were items that had what the lease/purchase cost would be; therefore, those items would be purchased, and then the lease/purchase figure was what was spread out from year to year. Peter Bolster shared that the police vehicles were a lease/purchase and were not reflected in the CIP because the funds came out of the operating budget.

Peter Bolster shared that there was some lengthy discussion amongst Committee members about placing some CIP items into the Departments' operating budgets. In the end, the Committee thought that placing those items on the CIP may deter a budget from being turned down due to the extra expenses.

Peter Bolster then suggested the Board address each line item on the chart.

The first few items that were discussed were the ambulances and some equipment for the Fire Department. Peter Bolster stated that these items were funded from the Ambulance Revenue Account and would have no impact on taxes. Peter Bolster stated that with the next two items, the Fire Chief had recommended that Engine 4 and the Ladder Truck be purchased on a lease/purchase basis.

The following items from the Fire Department were proposed to be purchased through the Capital Reserve Fund (CRF). The first item was the Command Vehicle, which was proposed to be used to transport firefighters to and from their trainings; this would be a warrant article, and if passed, it would be purchased right away.

Russ Wilder suggested that the Board review each Department's section on the chart, instead of reviewing each individual line item separately. Peter Bolster agreed and informed the Board that they would review as Russ Wilder suggested and that if any Board member had an issue with any item in each section, that they should make a comment.

Bob Regan stated that there were two key issues. He stated that the chart showed how the CRF should be utilized over a long period of time and then he pointed out the priorities. He thought that by looking at the two simultaneously, it would give the Board a better understanding of what to spend the funds on, and how to spend the funds when they made their decision on what to recommend to the Board of Selectmen. The balance of the Fire Department Equipment Annual Capital Reserve Fund was \$216,908. Nic Strong stated that the running

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totals for the CRF ran across the plan, and for 2018, \$414,716 was the current CRF balance, plus the deposits into the CRF in 2018 of \$336,808, minus the \$139,000 for the items being purchased outside of the CRF in 2018. The total tax impact for the Fire Department would be \$0.315 per \$1,000 assessed valuation.

Russ Wilder suggested adding an estimated tax rate across the board along the bottom of the chart. Nic Strong stated that she would have to talk to Tom Sargent, Town Assessor, to see what the assessed valuation might be. Tom Hoopes thought that some townspeople would think that the increased tax rate was unfair, but the Town needed to do something and it needed to start sooner than later.

Peter Bolster moved onto the Highway Department's proposals. He stated that due to time constraints, Ken Roberts, Road Agent, was not able to come up with some of the lease/purchase estimates. Ken Roberts recommended to purchase one 6-wheel dump truck in 2018 and purchase two in 2019, because all three of the dump trucks are well over their lifespan. Roger Sample suggested not to lease the dump trucks because they could last longer than their estimated lifespan, but thought leasing the other equipment would be best.

Peter Bolster noted that the Highway Department's sand/salt shed CRF would cost \$350,000, and it currently had \$34,000 in the account. This project will need to take place sometime in the near future in order for the Town to be compliant with EPA standards. Russ Wilder shared that he was concerned because currently the sand/salt is stored near Mill Pond, which is out back of the Highway Department's building. He stated that Mill Pond was an aquifer for the Town wells, and that the water flowed towards the wells downstream, and thought that there could be a potential for salt contamination in the well eventually.

Peter Bolster stated that the Highway Building Improvements CRF currently had \$21,090, and the Committee wanted to have money put aside every year because the building needed major maintenance. He noted that both the Highway building and the Fire Station were both located in a 100-year floodplain. Russ Wilder mentioned that there was a Hazard Mitigation Plan and one of the scenarios was the failure of the dam on Merrymeeting Lake, which would result in releasing all of Merrymeeting Lake downstream and would flood through Merrymeeting Marsh. This would be a huge issue because the Marsh was located across the street from the Highway building.

Peter Bolster brought up the fact that \$950,000 of the proposed Highway Department funding was designated for road construction; Russ Wilder noted that maybe an explanation should be noted with an asterisk. Bob Regan suggested adding a line for what the current last year's impact to the tax base was. Nic Strong stated that what worried her was that this was the first time there was a complete list of CIP items, and last year there were only two or three things on the warrant that could be categorized as such. Peter Bolster suggested noting in the summary all of the things that were on the ballot last year and subtract it from the current amount, then come up with a tax rate increase based on what was being added over what the default budget was. Russ Wilder asked if he meant just the newly proposed CRFs; Peter Bolster stated, yes. Nic Strong stated the problem with doing it that way was that the ballot and everything that was voted on for money for the tax rate calculation also included the myriad of articles for donations to the various charities, so if she picked out what could be considered CIP items, then it would not be a true comparison to the tax rate, because the tax rate included all of those things; Peter Bolster suggested for her to go ahead and do it anyways because it was only an estimate. Russ Wilder suggested highlighting the items that were proposed for 2018, but were not necessarily CIP items, like road construction.

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Peter Bolster moved onto Parks & Recreation. Roger Sample was surprised to see that the AVAS Building Addition was classified as a priority 3. Peter Bolster stated that the plan was that if Parks & Recreation could move over to the Fire Station, if some juggling around of buildings came into play, the need for a new addition would be low. Nic Strong stated that the proposal from Kellie Troendle, Parks & Recreation Department Head, was a study about the feasibility of an addition. She stated that the proposed \$15,000 added to the current \$15,000 only comes to \$30,000, which was not enough for an addition; therefore, rating that against the purchase of equipment made it a priority 3. Tom Hoopes suggested setting up a Fiscal Committee in association with the Master Plan.

Peter Bolster noted that in 2019, concerning the Alton Bay Community Center, funds were proposed to be put aside for that building. As far as the Pearson Road Community & Senior Center went, money towards that building did not need to be put aside in the near future, because it was a fairly new building, so currently it was not included in this CIP. Russ Wilder asked if the CIP was accepted, was it going to be updated yearly; Peter Bolster stated, yes. He suggested that the yearly review should be explained.

Peter Bolster moved onto the Police Station Expansion. Currently, there was \$184 in that fund, and it was elected to not put any more funds into that account, because the Committee wanted to know if the possibility of juggling around departments to other town buildings came into play, along with the possibility of building a Safety Center to house both the Police and Fire Departments.

Peter Bolster moved onto the Solid Waste Center. He noted that the proposal for the new drive through recycling building currently had \$128,126 in the account and it was going to cost approximately \$900,000 for the new bailer and drive through recycling facility. He stated that the Committee did not consider this because it had not been suggested by the Board of Selectmen to change how the Town handled recycling.

Peter Bolster moved onto the Sprinkler system for Town Hall. He noted that the proposal was for \$145,000, to be bought in the year 2022, and to deposit \$29,000 a year towards this project. Currently, the Town Hall was not in compliance; therefore, the meeting room on the second floor of Town Hall could only hold so many people because of that. If there was a fund set up for the sprinkler system, the State could not write up the Town for a violation.

Peter Bolster moved onto the school capital costs. He mentioned that the two schools, Alton Central and Prospect Mountain High, were presented to the School Board, and not the Board of Selectmen. This proposal was provided by the School Department so that the Board was aware of their needs. Tom Hoopes asked about the asbestos abatement for the Central School; Peter Bolster stated that the issue of asbestos was the linoleum tile. He shared that there were two options to take care of the tile, one being leaving it in place and encasing the tile, and the other would be ripping it up.

Tom Hoopes thanked the CIP Committee for their contribution and hard work.

Roger Sample opened public input. No public input. Roger Sample closed public input.

Russ Wilder moved to submit the CIP Plan of 2018, as amended, to the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee as the CIP Committee's recommendations for 2018.

Tom Hoopes seconded the motion.

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DISCUSSION:

Bob Regan asked what the CIP Committee's next step was; Nic Strong stated that once she revised the chart with the Board's recommendations, she was going to pass this along to Liz Dionne, Town Administrator, and she would put it on the schedule for a Board of Selectmen meeting. Nic Strong stated she would inform the Committee of the meeting date.

Peter Bolster wanted to address the recent power outage that happened in town. He stated that there was an issue about not being able to get gasoline when the power went out. He noted that people were coming from Wolfeboro because all their pumps were down, but they could not get gas in Alton either because those pumps were down too. The closest place to get gas was the Irving station in Farmington. He thought that with all the money that was spent on preparing for disasters, why couldn't there be a grant to obtain a generator at a gas station that had numerous gas pumps; Roger Sample stated that they were privately owned. Peter Bolster also shared that the State's generator at their pump station was broken; therefore, no Town vehicles could gas up at their pumps. He thought that this issue should be looked at. Russ Wilder thought that this would fall under the State's emergency plans, and thought that looking into what their plans were should be done first.

Roger Sample asked the members for a vote; a vote was taken and the motion PASSED unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

**At 7:40 p.m., Russ Wilder moved to adjourn.
Tom Hoopes seconded the motion, and it PASSED unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica A. Call
Recording Secretary

Minutes approved as presented: December 19, 2017