Long Range Capital Improvements Committee
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Room 1
October 23, 2024
Special Meeting Minutes

Committee Present: I. Haines, First Selectman, Chairman; C. Brownell, Planning & Zoning Commission; J. Endorf, Board of Education; P. Stricker, Board of Education; H. Thomas, Board of Finance; K. Thompson, Board of Education
Committee Absent: J. Corbett, Board of Finance

Advisory Participants: D. Angersola; Director of Operations; B. Auld, Fire Chief; Dr. T. DeBrito, Superintendent of Schools; C. Hughston, School Business Manager; C. Mansfield, Emergency Management Director; T. Reynolds, Fire Commissioner; R. Swol, Deputy Fire Chief

Also Present: M. Masci; J. Masci; R. Masci, L. Zemienieski, Executive Manager

1. First Selectman Haines called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and the attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of Minutes – Special Meeting of August 22, 2024

   MOTION MADE BY MS. STRICKER, SECONDED BY MR. BROWNELL, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF AUGUST 22, 2024 AS WRITTEN. UNANIMOUS AYE.

3. New Business

   A. Fire Department Presentation – Ms. Haines introduced Fire Commissioner Reynolds. Commissioner Reynolds distributed copies of the Fire Department's current capital requests and provided information about his background. He reviewed the Fire Department's responsibilities and stated that their budgetary goal is to be transparent and fiscally responsible.

      Commissioner Reynolds provided an overview of the Department's vehicle requests and stated that they are actively pursuing grants to supplement the cost of their capital requests. He requested the Committee's help in getting the Fire Department the equipment it needs and turned the presentation over the Chief Brian Auld and Deputy Chief Ray Swol.

      Fire Chief Auld reviewed a PowerPoint presentation and reiterated that it is the goal of the Department's management to be, at all times, fiscally responsible. He advised that the Department has outstanding requests for two pieces of equipment, a ladder truck and a rescue vehicle, to replace four obsolete emergency response vehicles.

      Chief Auld reviewed the conditions of the four existing vehicles and responded to questions from the Committee members. He stated that the cost of the two new

emergency vehicles is projected to be $2.1M. Emergency Management Director Mansfield confirmed that the estimated cost to replace the Fire Company No. 2 building is $14M.

There was a general discussion regarding how capital requests are prioritized and budgeted for and it was noted that there is currently approximately $650k set aside in reserves for Fire Department vehicles.

Ms. Haines reviewed the Town's list of Fire Department capital requests and asked Chief Auld to confirm that the Fire Department's list matched up with the Town's list. Ms. Haines and Chief Auld agreed to have a follow-up meeting to synch up both lists.

Ms. Stricker recommended adding a member from the Town's emergency/safety team to the committee. There was a general discussion regarding Ms. Stricker's recommendation and Ms. Haines read the Long Range Capital Improvements Committee charge. Emergency Management Coordinator Mansfield reviewed his knowledge of and experience with the Town's emergency services and volunteered to serve on the Committee in an advisory role.

MOTION MADE BY MS. STRICKER, SECONDED BY MS. THOMPSON, TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN THAT THE TOWN'S EMERGENCY MANGEMENT COORDINATOR, AND/OR HIS DESIGNEE, BE ADDED TO THE LONG RANGE CAPITAL IMPROVESMENTS COMMITTEE IN AN ADVISORY CAPACITY. UNANIMOUS AYE.

B. Improvements to Capital Improvement Program Discussion – First Selectwoman Haines distributed information related to this agenda item. In response to a question raised by Ms. Endorf, Ms. Haines advised that the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development is the Town's strategic plan. She confirmed that the Plan is updated every 10-years and a current copy can be found on the Town's website.

Ms. Hughston reviewed the Committee's capital projects scoring process. She stated that one goal of this meeting is to evaluate the clarity and pertinence of the existing scoring questions. The Committee considered each of the scoring questions and made several revisions.

C. Review of 10-Year Capital Improvement Items – Ms. Haines called the Committee's attention to a list of regularly recurring capital projects in their meeting packets. She requested the members review the list and advise her of any changes they think should be made.

The Committee discussed several items identified as regularly recurring capital requests and there was a general discussion about planning and budgeting for long term capital expenses. They also discussed how to continue to keep the list current.

In response to a question raised by Ms. Thompson, Ms. Haines advised that she expects to have a completed Road Study report by the end of this year. There was a brief discussion about the Town's culvert projects.

Ms. Haines asked the Committee members how they would like to see the information regarding new and regularly recurring capital requests for future scoring sessions. There was a general discussion and Ms. Hughson stated she would create the following lists for future scoring sessions: a) new unranked capital requests, b) ranked capital requests, c) regularly recurring capital requests, and d) a comprehensive 10-year list of all capital requests.

There was a brief discussion about whether or not the Committee should take into consideration any existing reserves for the capital requests they are scoring. Ms. Stricker stated that she felt that considering such information would be moving outside of the Committee's lane and noted that it is the Board of Finance's role to determine what the Town could afford.

4. General Discussion

   A. Long Range Capital Improvements Committee Future Meeting Dates - The Committee members agreed to schedule their next meeting for December 4, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

   B. Other – Ms. Stricker noted that the Committee had previously discussed moving up the deadline for submitting capital requests to allow the Committee sufficient time to evaluate and prioritize the requests. She encouraged Ms. Haines and Dr. DeBrito to modify their capital requests deadlines this year.

5. Audience of Citizens

   The following citizen's comment was brought up at the meeting:

   - Ruth Masci – stated that she appreciated the Fire Department's presentation and encouraged the Town to request similar detail be provided by the Public Works Department for their upcoming FY2025-2026 budget workshops. She expressed concern about Public Works' vehicle replacement schedule.

6. Adjournment

   THERE BEING NO ADDITIONAL BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, A MOTION WAS MADE BY MS. STRICKER, SECONDED BY MS. ENDORF, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:10 P.M. UNANIMOUS AYE.

Recorded

Respectfully submitted,
/s/
Sharon Wheeler, Recording Secretary