

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Stumpf at 7:05 p.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room A. The meeting was live cablecast.

In attendance were Chairman S. Jon Stumpf, Margaret (Peggy) Kruse, John Barry, Jr., Eugenie (Janie) Moffitt, Linn Anderson and Joanne Marden. Also in attendance was Finance Director, Donna Walsh. Absent were Greg Serrao and Bonnie Zahorik.

Approval of Minutes September 9, 2015

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Kruse and seconded by Ms. Moffitt, it was unanimously voted to approve the above minutes as amended. Motion passed 6-0.

New Town Manager Introduction

Mr. Stumpf introduced and welcomed the new Town Manager, Andrew Flanagan. The Committee members introduced themselves to him, and he followed with a short bio of himself, noted how helpful he found the 2015 Finance Committee report, and discussed some possible opportunities for improving future budget cycles. Ms. Marden noted that the Committee would like to work toward developing a long-term financial plan and financial policies. Discussed ensued.

FY2016 Budget Planning

The Town Manager reported he would firm up a date for the first Triboard meeting next week.

Capital Project Evaluation Checklist

Ms. Zahorik submitted the revisions to the CIP checklist (see attached.)

It was agreed that a new #3 be added under Section II - Determination of Total Cost.

3. Are there funds from prior CIP approvals that can be used.

7. Add new #7: "What is the expected replacement schedule or life of the asset? How will replacements be funded?"

8. Add at end of sentence, "now or anticipated in the future?"

III. Scheduling of Debt Service: delete "for Town Manager and Board consideration."

FY2016 Liaison Updates

Ms. Kruse reported that Ms. Nicosia would appear at the November meeting.

OPEB – Mr. Barry reported that Tom Hartwell of the Retirement Board had made a presentation to the Board of Selectmen regarding increasing eligibility requirements from part-time to full-time. GASB regulations require OPEB liabilities be reflected in the balance sheet. The linchpin of their recommendations will be subject to the new actuarial report due in December. A week prior Mr. Morris had also appeared before the Board and reported that the Committee was nearing completion of its fact-finding mission and was ready to make its recommendations based on many datapoints.

Fire – Mr. Barry reported that he had met with the Fire Chief on his CIP requests.
Open House Saturday, October 17th from 10:00-1:00.

Police - Mr. Barry reported he would meet with the Police Chief next week.

School – Ms. Moffitt reported that on September 25th she had met with several school representatives on out-of-district end of year numbers. Two new students were added and one moved within the district. 6.15 net FTE's IA's were added and all took health insurance. Circuit breaker funds amounted to \$1.16M. \$1.2M remained in special ed reserve funds.

Library – In Ms. Zahorik's absence, she emailed the following update, which was read into the record by Ms. Anderson:

Balcony project is underway but behind schedule due to: a) handicapped access lift has too high a threshold costing additional approx. \$5K, which will be funded from within the project funds by reducing the amount to be spent on furniture; b) work on deck of the balcony uncovered leaks in an area of the roof that were pre-existing; cost will be funded from separate dedicated repair funds.

2016 Budget and CIP -- no significant new requirements in the operating budget. However, replacement of a 20-hour benefitted employee will be spread amongst other benefitted employees (that were already over 20 hours but not at full-time). P&F to submit the Library windows and possible upgrade of first floor restrooms.

Schools - IT

The CIP was discussed for the first time by the School Committee at a 9/17 workshop, but not covered at 10/8 meeting. One interesting point is that the school's Business Manager referred to technology as the 5th utility and was advocating for consideration of inclusion of at least some costs in the ongoing operating budget. The IT Director supports this but shared an idea for funding that would involve initial CIP funding to jumpstart the investment, followed by a 25%, 50%, 75% gradual shift of funding into the school's operating budget. He also shared an idea for creating a "technology endowment fund" that residents and town businesses could contribute to.

Highest priority is "SCH 2" to fund the student BYOD program currently in pilot. Included would be increased infrastructure upgrades and a plan to provide machines for those who do not / cannot provide a suitable device. Ms. Gilbert thought it could be challenging to make a decision on the right solution given the stage at which the pilot is currently (still in pilot, currently rolling out to all 8th graders and to Freshman at AHS.)

The IT Director recommends that the BYOD machines be funded under both SCH1 (staff and teachers) and SCH2 (student used). He described a plan that would involve transferring some of the teacher machines to labs and backfilling those. Ms. Zahorik will follow up with him.

ITAC – Ms. Anderson reported that the Committee meets next Wednesday. Mission statement will be reviewed and rewritten. She informed the new Town Manager about this meeting.

General Government – Ms. Anderson referred an update on our annual audit which began at the end of September to Ms. Walsh, who reported that the audit is ongoing and is going very well. Ms. Anderson asked if policies and procedures recommended in last year’s Management Letter from the auditors had been implemented. Ms. Walsh will talk with the Auditors about specifics of that recommendation and what direction they think we should take. Discussion ensued about new GASB regulations regarding filing of OPEB liabilities (June 30, 2018.) From a rating perspective, we are still AAA rated, since the town is addressing the problem and allocating monies to a trust fund instead of a stabilization fund. It was agreed that education and public awareness is key in moving forward with addressing all aspects of the unfunded liability, including healthcare, eligibility, employee benefits, etc. This is a long-term problem requiring a long-term solution.

Elder Services – Ms. Anderson reported that the tax relief article passed in 2014 is still under review at the state level and may require amendment.

Other – Ms. Walsh was asked for a new growth number. She will be meeting with Assessors for an update. She reported that Free Cash was not yet certified, as the state was focusing on those towns having Fall town meetings.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, November 4, 2015.

Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Moffitt and seconded by Mr. Barry, it was unanimously voted to adjourn. Motion passed 6-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Martin Barraford
Recording Secretary

Attachments:

Capital Improvement Project Evaluation Checklist