

**Board of Selectmen
Special Meeting
Thursday, January 2, 2020**

MINUTES

Present: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Selectman Alesia Kennerson, Selectman Dave Rosengren; Members of the Public: Regina Wexler, Jay Bailey, Dan LaPlante, Donna LaPlante, Tony Persechino, Mike Haller; Administrative Assistant Christine Hayward.

First Selectman Jerram called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

He noted that this was a budget workshop specifically to discuss the Capital Expenditures plan.

Budget Workshop – Capital Expenditures:

Mr. Jerram distributed the proposed draft capital plan. He reviewed the approved plan for Fiscal year 2019 -2020 and provided updates as to the status of items included on that plan.

He noted that the technology line item is a line item where funds carry over from year to year. The IT consultant is currently in the process of a server upgrade. The town hall equipment line item has typically been used to replace an average of 2 heat pumps per year. There are some broken windows that need to be addressed this year – a couple in the staff lounge and two in the Board of Education office. The Recreation Department is gathering quotes for some improvements to Berkshire hall – such as refinishing the floors and exterior painting. Quotes have been received to add security gates at both sand and salt sheds to limit public access to these areas. There have been increasing instances of large trucks filling up their sanders with the sand that is available for public use. This was never the intent of use for the public sand. It was intended for residents to take a few buckets now and then. Those with larger areas to sand should be securing the material on their own at a vendor of their choice. Barricades were put in place to limit the access at the public pile and this has resulted in an increase in folks going to the highway department's area to fill their trucks.

Mr. Jerram explained that the Village Parking expansion has been stalled temporarily due to the fact that there has been a change in board membership for the Community Club (owners of the tennis courts) and they are now seeking compensation for use of the land that had been originally been offered to the Town for use as a parking lot. Negotiations regarding this project continue.

Downtown Improvements is funding set aside for the installation of lighting along the sidewalk on Route 44 near Dunkin. This sidewalk has been continued at the expense of Dunkin and the Town had agreed to installation of the lampposts. This work is slated to be in the spring.

Following completion of the status updates for the 2019-2020 approved capital plan, the First Selectman presented the proposed 2020-2021 capital plan (year 1). He pointed out that a new project had been added to the proposal for 2020-2021, namely Brodie Septic. He informed the Board that there is an issue with non-conforming cesspools at Brodie Park. This has been a long standing issue and it is time to address this. He did clarify that Berkshire Hall and the Cub Scout cabin are both serviced by a functioning septic system; however, there are several other accessory buildings (cabins and the

workshop utilized by the highway department) that still have cesspools. He stated that the fact that there are non-conforming cesspools cannot be ignored. He suggested that an exterior bathroom facility (similar to what exists at Brown's Corner) be considered.

Selectman Kennerson asked "what is the next step that can be taken with alleviating the non-conforming cesspools?" She inquired if there might be STEAP grant funds available to assist in the construction costs. She also suggested that consultation with the Recreation Commission occur to be sure that they are on the same page. She noted that she was in favor of a bathroom facility for the park. Jerram added that the Recreation Commission had also been discussing repairing the Field House roof as an additional use of capital funds.

The First Selectman stated that the police had no formal requests for capital expenditures. However, the highway department/superintendent has requests that are larger than normal. A request for \$435,000 in capital expenditures has been put forth. A request has been made to replace one of the oldest trucks in the fleet – number 2. An estimate for replacement is \$200,000. Also, the roadside mower (2002) is in need of major repairs and the highway superintendent has asked for consideration of purchasing a replacement at an estimated cost of \$160,000. Selectman Kennerson asked if there was an estimate as to how much repair is needed. She would support spending money to repair the unit if it can be fixed, rather than replacing it this year. Mr. Jerram stated that he will ask the highway department to arrange to have an estimate for repair to be done on the unit.

Selectman Rosengren noted that the wash bay does not appear in the 2020-2021 plan and questioned why it was eliminated. Mr. Jerram replied that there are funds from 2019-2020 that have not been used yet due to the fact that the Board of Finance did not seem very supportive of a wash bay. They wanted some kind of a study performed to show the benefits of a wash bay and Mr. Jerram has not gone through with that because he didn't want to engage services for a study if there did not appear to be support for construction of a wash bay. He wants to reconnect with the Board of Finance to see what depth of study they were requesting and to see if there is support or not for a potential wash bay. At this point in the meeting, Selectman Rosengren distributed a hand out he drafted entitled "Proposal for a new town garage at new location." He stated that he had recently paid a visit to the Town Garage and had his first interior walk through of the facility. He noted that not all of the town trucks are able to be garaged, due to a lack of space. The truck used as a 'spare' sits outside, as well as the road grader. He stated that he has been looking at locations that would lend well to consideration for a new town garage site; specifically noting 2 commercially zoned lots on Route 44. One currently is priced at \$180,000; and the other price is unknown at this time. Selectman Rosengren stated that both locations would be able to accommodate a garage as well as a wash bay. Mr. Rosengren expressed his concern at considering a wash bay to be built at a location that is not included at a town garage site. He felt that it is inefficient to be driving trucks from one facility to another in order to be washed. Mr. Rosengren stated that he had investigated long term financing costs and has included them on his handout. The Selectman continued by stating that the funds that had been allocated for a wash bay study would be better served by utilizing them to conduct a study for a town garage; investigating cost of construction, site costs and financing.

First Selectman Jerram stated that he agrees with the concept of a new garage and noted that the capital plan has funds set aside as a "sinking fund" for a town garage facility. He countered that Mr. Rosengren's estimate of \$1,000,000 is on the low side; stating that the Town of Canton facility was close to \$3.1 million. Mr. Rosengren rebutted that Canton needed a larger facility because it is a larger town

with more trucks. Mr. Rosengren stated that the cost of a new facility in New Hartford would be pennies on the total budget; estimating that a \$1 million facility with current financing rates would be .2% of the total town budget. Jerram reiterated his opinion that the cost estimates were low. The First Selectman added that Mr. Rosengren had proposed sites for consideration that are not within a sewer area and noted that could be problematic for a wash bay. Selectman Rosengren opined that the town “blew it” when there was no requirement for the new commercial businesses built along Route 44 to install a sewer line.

Selectman Kennerson interjected that she, too, supports a new town garage facility in the future. She would support conducting a study for a new facility if there was a clear location for the facility, adding that each site has challenges that would need to be included in a study. Ms. Kennerson asked what would happen to the current town garage site if a new garage were to be built. Mr. Rosengren replied that the town needs to abandon the garage and make the site available for purchase. Mr. Rosengren added that a feasibility study for a new town garage could be done using a plan that would be developed by the Board of Selectmen. This plan could then be reviewed by experts who would then perform a study. Mr. Rosengren reasserted that the funds reserved in the capital plan for a wash bay could be used to fund a study for a new town garage.

First Selectman Jerram stated that he would have to ask the Board of Finance for permission to use the funds already committed to the wash bay to be allocated for a garage study. Jerram stated that there has been discussion with the owners of the property known as the Hurley property that abuts the current town garage site regarding the inclusion of the garage property should a buyer express interest in the Hurley property. If there is an interest in the abutting property, the town would get involved in the discussion to sell the garage property to the same developer/individual.

A review of the 2021-2022 capital plan followed, with Mr. Jerram explaining that a prior version of the capital plan had a street sweeper included in the proposal for this year; however, he has removed that from consideration due to the fact that an extensive repair was done to the machine. Additionally, the town is moving toward using straight salt as many area towns are; reserving the use of sand for situations that call for added traction. This reduction in the use of sand should lead to less build up on the roadway which leads to less sweeping. Selectman Rosengren asked why the town did not do more with financing expensive equipment. Selectman Kennerson replied that it has been the practice of the Board not to incur general expenses that obligate the taxpayers for a period of time. Mr. Jerram stated that the Board of Finance has only approved a financed truck one time in recent years. Rosengren questioned the purpose of \$50,000 to be placed in a sinking fund for a town garage. Jerram replied that it shows the taxpayers that there is a commitment to move the town garage at some point in the future, when there is a proposal to act upon. Mr. Rosengren expressed his displeasure at having this item on the plan; preferring to move ahead with a plan for replacement of the garage.

Looking ahead at 2022-2023, Mr. Rosengren asked if the Recreation Commission has a plan to forecast improvements they would like to see implemented at Brodie Park. He stated that he did not want to include \$50,000 as general recreation expenses in the capital plan without hearing from them what they plan to do with the funds. He also noted that he would like to see the replacement of a diesel fuel storage tank at the garage at a cost of \$30,000 be removed from the list; not wanting to invest funds into the current site. Selectman Jerram and Kennerson disagreed with this, with Mr. Jerram stating that diesel tanks can be moved from one location to another if needed.

A review of the 2023-2024 (year 4) proposals resulted in discussion concerning the inclusion of a

pedestrian bridge. Selectman Rosengren was opposed to the \$100,000 expense, with Kennerson and Jerram approving it. It was noted that funding for a waterline on Route 44 was included in the proposed plan; however Mr. Jerram stated that whether or not this remains in the long term will be dependent on the outcome of a proposed asset sale of the water and wastewater systems. Selectman Rosengren asked if the town has the right to force a private company to pay for the installation of a public waterline. Mr. Jerram replied that the town cannot compel a private company to put in a public improvement – they can volunteer to pay for it, but the town cannot force it.

Mr. Rosengren asked that the \$50,000 sinking fund for the garage be removed from year 4 of the plan. Jerram and Kennerson disagreed.

Year 5 of the capital plan was presented. The First Selectman noted that several pieces of equipment were included in the plan. Jerram commented that this was more of a wish list, knowing that there would not be funding for all of the items. Mr. Rosengren stated that he felt the pedestrian bridge should be removed from the plan. Ms. Kennerson and Mr. Jerram disagreed.

Following the conclusion of the presentation of the capital plan, First Selectman stated that a special meeting of the Board of Selectmen will be held on January 13, 2020, in order to hear a presentation from the Asset Evaluation Team regarding their recommendation to move forward with a sale of the water and wastewater assets of the Town of New Hartford.

MOTION; by Kennerson to adjourn at 7:47 PM; seconded by Jerram.

Mr. Rosengren stated that there is no need to motion to adjourn and did not vote on the matter.

Jerram declared the motion passed by a majority and declared the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Hayward, Administrative Assistant

Attachments: (available upon request from the Town Clerk)

Proposal for a new town garage at new location; prepared by Selectman David Rosengren;

Proposed Capital Project list; dated 1/2/2020