

Advisory Commission on Capital Expenditures
Meeting Minutes
Saturday, February 25, 2017
Sessions Conference Room – Town Hall
10:00AM

The meeting was called to order at 10:10 am to discuss the following agenda items.

- Item 1. Review of Ordinance
- Item 2. Election of Chairman
- Item 3. Review of Capital Expenditures for 2017-2018

All members were present including: First Selectman Dan Jerram, Jennifer Zenuh (Board of Education Representative), Dan LaPlante (Planning & Zoning Representative), Reggie Smith (Board of Finance Representative).

With regard to Item 1. First Selectman Jerram distributed the Advisory Commission of Capital Expenditures Ordinance (1983) indicating that he had reviewed the ordinance with Town Counsel. He noted that while the ordinance indicates that the Commission would “determine” what the capital expenditures of the town were, this was illegal. The Board of Finance, by State Statute, has the legal authority to “determine” capital expenditures. Town Counsel indicated that the Commission was there to review needs as an extra set of eyes and make recommendation as an “advisory” board as the name of the Commission implies. He also noted that included within the ordinance was a review of land purchases. This is now redundant with the Open Space Preservation Commission and Conservation Commission that have similar charges. Commission members were comfortable with the charge.

With regard to Item 2. First Selectman Jerram indicated that if anyone felt the need to elect a Chairman for the Commission it could be determined by the will and/or vote of the four member group. If not, they could continue with all meetings operating as a party of equals with all correspondence being administrated through the Selectmen’s office and Jerram would take and record meeting minutes. All agreed that a formal election of a Chairman was unnecessary.

With regard to Item 3. Jerram introduced the topic of review of Board of Education and Town Capital indicating that the Commission could make the review as intensive as they saw fit. We could make inspections of schools, town hall, town garage and parks or the Commission could review the plans submitted by the BOE and the Town and question the proposed projects based on the input gained from the Superintendent and First Selectman. The group indicated that inspections of the facilities were unnecessary and that everyone was familiar with the buildings.

The Commission started with a review of the local Board of Education capital plan (see attached). Superintendent Murphy provided a brief description of the items within the 2017-2018 budget as well as the remainder of the BOE’s 5-year plan. A question and answer session was held with the Superintendent explaining the specifics of the plan. Smith noted that the Superintendent should be able to explain the ramification to the Board of Finance if any allocation wasn’t funded within the year specified.

A motion was made by Zenuh to recommend the amended 5-year capital plan to the Board of Finance for approval with following three recommendations: 1) that some thought of installing new LED lighting (bulbs and/or fixtures) within the schools be evaluated to reduce electric costs, 2) the lawn mowers allocations within the plan be moved into a single line item with footnotes added for simplification, and 3) consideration of an allocation for septic replacement (an engineering expense) be included in out years

of the 5-year plan to illustrate a potential large scale liability (due to the age of all three septic systems at the schools). The motion was seconded by Smith. All members voted in favor of the motion (motion passed 4-0).

The Commission then transitioned to the Town's 5-year plan. First Selectman Jerram described the items year by year (see attached). A question and answer session was held with the Jerram explaining the specifics of the plan. Smith questioned the "heat pump" replacement (year 1) stating he thought that job was complete. Jerram indicated the building has many individual units and several have been failing saying it is an expense that has been in the plan before (for other units). Smith requested additional information be included within the description of the plan. Jerram indicated he would add how many units were in Town Hall so people understood the long range aspect of the project. Smith then questioned the inclusion of the proposed water line (also in year 1) asking why the WPCA isn't paying for the line. Jerram responded that A) the WPCA has no money and B) the opinion of the Board of Selectmen, a water line extension for fire protection was a "town" related expense. Smith agreed, stating he supported the concept but questioned if the WPCA ordinance would require revision. Jerram said that the ordinance is subjective and many interpret it differently because it says "may" and not "shall". He added that Fire Fighters in town have been attending Zoning meetings requesting water line extensions for public safety and the Selectmen support the concept.

Zenuh then questioned the Oil Separator Tanks at the Town Garage (year 1). Jerram indicated that State DEEP officials were monitoring our DPW facility to ensure water (from the floors inside the garage) with traces of oil wasn't finding its way to the river. Jerram indicated that this expense, like several others (Revaluation and a Truck Payment) were really not negotiable. He noted that the Town was now renting 265 gallon totes to store potentially contaminated water for a qualified vendor to remove indicating that it was expensive – but we had to do it. Smith questioned if was true that a prior administration was given a \$500,000 STEAP grant to replace the Garage, but spent it on other initiatives. Jerram indicated it was true, long before his time. Zenuh indicated that now the Town has to pay higher maintenance costs associated with an older facility. Everyone agreed. Jerram continued to describe the later years of the 5-year plan. Smith reiterated his prior statement about being prepared to explain the impact of removing any expenditure if the project was not funded within the year proposed. Members questioned some of the larger concepts included on the bottom of the capital plan identified as possible future bonded projects. The group discussed Stedman Road (currently closed near Steele Road), Satan's Kingdom Road, the Town Garage and Rails to Trails initiatives – all being very expensive, especially for Satan's Kingdom Road that only services four or five homes..

A motion was made by Zenuh to recommend the amended 5- year capital plan to the Board of Finance for approval with following three recommendations: 1) more clarification of the heat pump expense be included (year 1) so that it's characterized as an on-going upgrade, consideration be given to modifying the WPCA ordinance, and the Board of Selectmen consider looking for grants to off-set future playground replacement expenses. Smith seconded the motion. Zenuh, LaPlante and Jerram vote yes, Smith voted no indicating that he supported the concepts within the plan but was voting no due to the questionable WPCA ordinance (motion passed 3-1).

Jerram questioned the Commission about recommendations for land purchases asking if members of the Commission wanted to make a recommendation on the proposed Farmland Preservation Project and Walking Trail on the 93 acres on Black Bridge Road owned by Michael Butler known as "Butler Farm" or if they wanted to defer to the Open Space Preservation Commission who has the specific task of recommending land purchases to the Town. Zenuh indicated that it was within the ordinance and the Commission should make a recommendation on the property. LaPlante agreed.

The Commission discussed the property that includes a one mile long walking trail along the river that would be located on an 8.1 acre parcel that would be owned by the Town. Jerram showed the Commission the aerial map that showed the property on the southern side of Black Bridge Road with river frontage on both the east and western branch of the Farmington River that included a proposed location of the trail.

There was a motion by Zenuh, seconded by LaPlante to endorse the proposed acquisition of the Butler Farm property. Jerram added that the State grant was approved for roughly \$250,000. The cost to the town was roughly \$237,000. Smith indicated that he made his opinion on the matter clear at the Board of Finance meeting (held on 2/14/17) when he indicated he thought it should wait until the state budget situation was resolved. All members discussed the Governor's budget proposal briefly discussing the uncertainty for the Towns. Jerram indicated that the acquisition looked like a good price based on prior open space acquisitions. Further that there was no real way to tell if the Governor's budget proposal would ultimately be approved or a different plan would be put forth by the Legislature. The group discussed if we would lose the state grant. Jerram indicated that he talked with the Commissioner's representative Cameron Weimar who said there was no deadline for local approval of the grant, but that state funds were being distributed on a first come, first serve basis. Zenuh, LaPlante and Jerram vote yes. Smith voted no (motion passed 3-1).

As there was no other business to attend to, a motion made by Smith, seconded by LaPlante, to adjourn at 12:15pm. The motion was passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Jerram, First Selectman