

## Capital Improvement Committee

### Minutes 11-14-2024

Present: Marie Saucier, Select Board

Erin Malloy, School Board

Kathy Luczynski, Finance Committee

Peter Miner, Fire Chief

The committee met and went over guidance from the town bylaws and various seminars that had been recently attended. A five year rolling plan is recommended that is reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary.

A capital improvement has been defined as having a life of at least 5 years and is \$10,000 or greater.

The general guidance recommends 5% of the town budget be set aside for Capital Improvements. This would be \$150,000.

The last Capital Improvement Plan found in the town office was 2006. For many years the town has been held to flat funding, leaving a lot of deferred maintenance that needs to be prioritized.

The inventory has been started from the insurance schedules. The **buildings** were reviewed.

The Garage at 262 Main is in very bad condition. This one should be reviewed in depth with Todd present.

The fire station has a leaking roof. The bolts in the metal roof are rusting and breaking off. This is a priority to address.

The town office needs a new roof on the old section. While the painters were there this summer Marie convinced them to put a couple shingles on where the lathes were exposed. There is some ceiling bulging in the main office. It also needs 17 windows, and a foundation repair.

The school has no major needs, as there has been some funding that has been passed along from the state that has done much of the recent capital improvements, but that was likely covid related and is drying up fast.

The Little Red School House however needs foundation work, paint and possibly a roof. No one has touched this as it is on the Historical Register, and we have no historical commission in town. However there comes a point where fix it or lose it. So, fixing and keeping the same color scheme with no architectural changes is a reasonable plan.

### **Land Improvements**

A stockade fence along the back property line of the firehouse would enhance the looks around the town facility and address some other issues with the abutter using the driveway.

The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority plans to be starting bus service through town by June 2025. The schedule shows four times per day in each direction – North Adams and Greenfield. The proposed stop would be at the town office. There is not sufficient parking currently for what we have going on at the town office. Developing a parking lot should be undertaken. There is a possibility of grant money from Shared Streets and Spaces Program as this is a regional initiative. Could the current town park area be adequately expanded for parking and a bus to swing through? Could additional parking be developed on the town office land footprint? Could it expand into the town park “conserved” land, is purchasing the lot across the street and building parking there an alternative? This grant is open every year and does not cover the costs of acquiring property, or the initial engineering.

**Communications** were addressed. It is said that the State Police will be taking over dispatching from the county effective with the first of the year. The plus to this is we will not have to pay the county dispatch \$15,000 annually for dispatching services. The minus is the State Police are all on UFH Radio – and that is not what we have. It is anticipated they will simulcast for 2-3 years and there should be some grants available in the future for the conversion. Total cost anticipated to replace radios is \$120,000. The Chief would like to utilize the \$15,000 that will no longer be going to the County dispatch and replace a couple radios per year, while watching for the grant opportunity to come through.

The Canary Kats are trying to get a Repeater on the tower on Borden Mountain. This would facilitate communications town wide, for the groomer as well as for the town Highway department, which loses radio and cell communication in parts of town. This is noted as the town may actually own the tower? All of that is in flux due to the sale of the Wi-Valley system.

The town office has three phone lines. This could be replaced with one voice over IP system that gives everyone a line, that can be transferred to for voice mail messages available to everyone who has a desk. Currently the SB admin posts notes on a locked door and just hopes for the best. The enhanced communication system would facilitate to better customer service for our citizens.

Finally back to the bus stop. If someone arrives when the town office is closed and does not have ATT as a cellular provider – they are out of luck to make a call. Not sure how to address this?

### **Vehicles & Equipment Fire Department**

The vehicles for the fire department have been reviewed. All fire vehicles have 10 years FRTA certification then should be replaced. The reality is ours do not get a lot of use and we certainly can't come up with \$600,000 to replace a truck in one fell swoop. We maintain them carefully and make do. There has not been grant funding available for vehicles for some time. Engine#1 is a 2008, Engine #2 is a 2009 and the tanker is a 2015. Thought should be given to putting some away each year toward when we need to replace a truck.

The safety gear the firefighters wear is also rated for 10 year. We have approximately 18 sets. The Chief incorporates into his regular budget replacing two per year. He carefully puts any aged out equipment with the staffing not qualified to go into burning buildings. This seems a well thought out plan – and should be continued.

The Jaws of life is the only piece of equipment that is likely in need for replacement.

Chief Miner then spoke of some history when previous Select Boards were looking at putting a Public Safety building on the land near the school and incorporating a town office and highway department as well. Leaving the old Firehouse for vehicle maintenance, the salt and sand where it is. Sources had been found for funding of extremely low interest and long terms. This was washed by subsequent select boards.

Meeting Adjourned 7:50PM

Marie Saucier