

TOWN OF WILLINGTON

Capital Improvement Committee

40 Old Farms Road
Willington, CT 06279

Regular Meeting
Hybrid — In Person and Online

March 6, 2024
7:00 PM

Committee Members in Attendance:

Stuart Cobb – In person
Jennifer Goodale – via Zoom
James Marshall – In person
Melissa McKinnon – via Zoom
Donna Latincsics, Business Manager – In person
Stephanie Summers, Board of Finance Delegate – In person

Mike Makuch, Willington Hill FD #1, - via Zoom
Alexander Moore, Chief, Willington FD #1 – In person

Members of the public were also present in person and on Zoom.

Committee Members Absent: Christina Mailhos, Chair; KarenAnn Caldwell

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Cobb called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

2. Present to Speak

Mike Makuch, Clover Springs Drive, commented that he attended the last few CIP and BOF meetings and has what he hopes to be a friendly suggestion. He recommended that the time between the members of the Committee be managed more equally. One member has monopolized 70-80% of the airtime during meetings and while good ideas are offered, they are being lost in the endless debate. Other members either do not have a chance to participate or are interrupted. Their ideas are lost, and Mr. Makuch believes the meetings would be more effective if time was managed better. It is incumbent upon the Chair to manage this if it is not done organically. Mr. Makuch believes there would be shorter meetings and better service to the town if the contributions to the meeting were balanced.

Chief Moore noted that he is available this evening to assist the Committee if there are any questions about Emergency Services.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. February 28, 2024

Ms. Goodale motioned to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2024 meeting.

Mr. Marshall seconded the motion.

Edits: none

A roll call vote was taken.

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In favor: Cobb, Marshall, Goodale, McKinnon

Opposed: none

Abstentions: Summers

Motion passed. (4-0-1)

4. CIP Plan, Year 1 (if needed)

Mr. Marshall confirmed that the Committee approved Year 1 of the CIP at the last meeting. The Committee has not yet received any feedback from the BOS or the BOF.

Mr. Cobb provided a recap. Turnout Gear (line 32) in the amount of \$41K was moved out of the CIP. It will be in the operating budget. He provided an overview of Fund 17 where the funds were listed to come from in the original CIP. Fund 17 is for the benefit of emergency services. The "Town of Willington Fire Services Agreement" was presented. Mr. Cobb noted that Fund 17 was not designed to support payroll. Ambulance Payroll (line 29) was also moved out of the CIP. The Parking Lot Replacement (line 33) is no longer slated to come from Fund 17.

A brief discussion regarding purchasing fire apparatus took place in regard to Fund 17. Mr. Marshall explained that the goal both for the fire department and in terms of the CIP is to minimize, or move away from, leasing. The "Town of Willington Fire Services Agreement" was discussed. It was noted that the items listed are not in order of priority. Priorities vary given the need.

A discussion took place on funding. Funding needs to be in place when placing an order. One option is initiating a bond at a time that is advantageous to the town in terms of the rate etc. although payment may not be made upon receipt.

Mr. Makuch provided information on the apparatus listed in Year 4. It is a replacement truck for the 1996 vehicle which is in need of another body repair due to rust. Many variables are involved, and they will need to consider delivery time when planning. Mr. Marshall expressed concern about waiting and needing to put a significant amount of money into repairs for a vehicle that will be replaced. Given the lead time for delivery, the Committee will look at whether it should be pushed up a year if the lead time was not taken into account when the request was submitted. Mr. Cobb noted that at the outset, they plan based on the request of the department head.

Chief Moore noted that the apparatus list with the replacement schedule has been completed and sent to the Chair.

Mr. Marshall noted that local funds (line 3) in Year 1 were reduced to \$31K to hit a target. In regard to Public Works, the Salt Shed (line 50) was reduced from \$1M to \$350K. The \$1M was from a few years ago when the plan included a reconfiguration of the site. Some of the expenditures that would have been taken from Fund 17 were put as a capital outlay. In turn, the BOS budget increased by \$35K under capital expenditure.

Mr. Cobb explained that they discussed if they should tax taxpayers more this coming year and put the money into the capital reserve so more cash on hand is available if there is an

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emergency etc. The Committee decided that this would not be advisable. Mr. Marshall noted that he disagreed with this. School projects are set as a capital reserve transfer to Fund 04 and asked if the funds are definitively assigned to school projects. He noted that line 94 has the funds listed as a single dollar amount. Ms. Latincsics confirmed that this is how it is listed on the spreadsheet, but the funds noted can only be used for school projects. Mr. Marshall requested that they be listed separately (school projects- approximately \$2.4M). He added that it gives a false sense of security for the general reserve fund for other projects. Ms. Latincsics noted that currently the only appropriated funds are for the School Facilities Study. The HMS and CMS Plumbing projects are appropriated from the town reserve, not the school projects reserve.

Mr. Marshall asked if they are in the negative in the capital reserve fund (Fund 04) for non-school projects. Ms. Latincsics explained that in regard to Fund 04, she would make a subaccount for the school projects. The fund balance starting next year for town projects is about \$400K. This does not include funds for the school projects. An additional \$31K will be added July 1st. The town will spend \$80K for the CES chimney and \$200K for design and engineering minus \$17,500 for reevaluation. The account will not be in the negative in Year 1.

A discussion took place about creating a budget based on needs, what can be sold to taxpayers, or some combination of the two. They also discussed meeting throughout the year to plan a strategy and relay it to the town. Ms. Goodale recommended putting the Year 1 plan forward, working with other Boards, and planning for the future. Mr. Marshall explained that they need to present how the Committee sees the plan working for the Board of Finance to have an understanding. Ms. Summers commented that the escalation of projects seen this year is not normal and the Committee needs to commit to fine tune the plan outside of the budget season. Mr. Cobb highlighted the large projects: schools, fire houses, and the road bond. These are structural issues that the BOF, BOS, and this Committee need to discuss.

Ms. Goodale asked if the projects in years 2-5 are placeholders and subject to change. Ms. Latincsics explained that this is correct. For example, if they put a bond in the plan, but it does not pass, they would need to rework that part of the plan. She explained that the mill rate needs to be stabilized in the plan and not have spikes i.e., need \$2M from taxpayers. If they need \$2M, they will want to bond so it is a payment. They need to plan for a way to pay for all of the projects in the plan. If they have a plan with projects but not a source to fund them, they do not have a plan. It needs to be balanced. Ms. Goodale asked if they could do one large bond for all of the projects. Mr. Cobb recommended setting the funding source for the three large projects to a bond in the plan. The bond would still need to pass. Mr. Marshall explained that they would need to decide if they would do one large bond or distribute multiple smaller bonds over the years. He would prefer to see it spread out and does not believe a single, large bond would pass.

In terms of the plan, year 1 is shown as an outlay from the reserve and in year 3, the \$5.3M would be a bond. The \$6.5M (\$2.7M + \$3.7M) for school projects will be another bond (formerly listed at Fund 04). As a single bond, it would be a \$12M bond in year 3. This is with the annual fund transfer to Fund 04. Mr. Cobb noted that the results of the school study and priorities may alter the numbers as well escalation.

A discussion regarding bonding options took place.

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A discussion regarding projects allocated as capital expenditures versus capital reserve funds took place. Ms. Latincsics explained that capital expenditures (930) are usually items purchased one time. A bond coming from the Selectmen's budget is a debt repayment (910) and an operating expense.

Ms. Latincsics will draft a list of annual payments for bonding.

- Year 2, \$11.5M for 2 fire houses; \$3.1M for roads (1 bond for 2 projects)
- Year 3, \$12M for school (addresses years 3, 4, & 5);

They may be able to cover the \$273.5K for the schools in year 2.

It was noted that Fund 17 may be able to cover the \$850K firetruck.

A discussion took place regarding scheduling a meeting for Wednesday, March 13th.

5. CIP Plan, Years 2-5 (if needed)

Addressed in combination with item 4.

A discussion took place regarding including an itemized list of the school projects included as a tracking tool.

6. Adjourn

Ms. Summers motioned to adjourn at 9:08 PM.

Mr. Marshall seconded the motion.

All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Pascuzzi

Lisa Pascuzzi

Recording Secretary

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TOWN CLERK