

**Capital Improvement Committee
Town of Willington
40 Old Farms Road
Willington, CT 06279
February 3, 2021
6:30 PM
Regular Meeting Minutes**

Virtual Meeting via ZOOM

Members Present: Chairman Stuart Cobb, First Selectwoman Erika Wiczenski, Christina Mailhos, Orlando Rodriguez, and BOF Chairman Michael Makuch. Cari Donaldson arrived at 7pm.

Members Absent: John Patton, Geoff Prusak and Stephanie Summers.

Others Present: Donna Latincsics; Business Manager, Troy Sposato; Director of Public Works, Phil Stevens; Superintendent.

The meeting of the Capital Improvement Committee was called to order at 6:33PM by Chairman Cobb.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski moved to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2021 regular meeting.

Christina Mailhos seconded the motion.

Vote: 5 Yes (Wiczenski, Cobb, Mailhos, Makuch, Rodriguez). 0 No. 0 Abstain.

Motion Passes.

Present to Speak

No one was present.

Plan Discussion of Year 1

Chairman Cobb stated I received an email from the Conservation Commission stating they wanted to make sure it was clear that they had not yet been awarded a grant from DEEP for the \$62,500. They wanted to make sure we didn't think they were only asking for the \$38,500 and added it is important for grant purposes that the town demonstrates support for the entire purchase price for which a portion will be covered by the grant if awarded.

Chairman Cobb stated we have to decide if they don't get the grant, are we willing to pay an extra \$62,500 out of the budget.

Mike Makuch stated I believe the agreement with the BOF was that they would continue through the process and keep us informed and when they came to decision points they would come back to us.

First Selectwoman Wiczenski stated that Mike had a question on the fire panels at the school and whether they had an effect on the town wide project and the answer is they don't. The other question we had for the superintendent were, if he would prioritize the fire panels over the window replacements in year 1.

Superintendent Stevens replied yes the BOE would prioritize the fire panels.

Mike Makuch stated my hope is that I can help the school work out some cost savings.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated the other item that we moved out of year 1 was the gym floor refurbishment.

Superintendent Stevens stated that project is to strip the floor all the way down for resurfacing. We have had complaints for a couple years now that the floor has been slippery so from a safety perspective this was a priority.

Orlando Rodriguez asked if everyone was aware the school districts are going to receive a second round of Covid funding about \$270,000.

Superintendent Stevens replied yes and asked if he was trying to connect the funding to a project on the CIP plan.

Orlando Rodriguez stated I am wondering if we can use it for a CIP project.

Superintendent Stevens replied the grant language is very specific for what we can use the money for. The BOE agreed at their budget meeting last night to reduce their budget by \$100,000 to pay for the utility staff. It would also be for items such as cleaning supplies. I don't believe there is any CIP project that would fall under this funding.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked what the plan would look like if we took out the CES window replacement and put in the gym floor refurbishment.

Superintendent Stevens stated you could also break the window replacement project into two years doing the front side of the building in one and the back side in another. The roofs are happening this summer which means that's another contractor in the same spot this summer so to move it into year two is reasonable.

Chairman Cobb stated we can move the gym floor back into year 1 and the CES windows out to year 2.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked how this changes our final number.

Donna Latincsics stated the number increased by \$11,000 because the windows were in the reserve and I put the gym floor to local funds, but you can now start moving somethings out of local and into the reserve. This reduces the reserve spending to \$122,486.

Chairman Cobb asked what number we had decided on for local funds.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski replied I don't think we decided yet, last year it was \$544,000 but I think we are going to have to put a little more in because we can't keep neglecting some of these projects.

Mike Makuch stated I don't think we should cut anymore from year 1 just from looking at all the projects we have.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated several of these items should have been done in this current fiscal year and would have if not for the pandemic.

Chairman Cobb asked what it would look like if we reduced what we were sending to the reserve to \$100,000.

Donna Latincsics replied that would put the local spending to \$654,000.

Chairman Cobb asked if that leaves a sufficient running balance in the general reserve.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated the \$654,000 puts us roughly \$100,000 above what we had in the plan last year and if you add up the projects that were taken out when COVID hit you get just about that dollar amount.

Donna Latincsics asked if we wanted her to remove the grant reimbursement for the Talmadge Road property.

Chairman Cobb stated I'm sure this would have to go to some sort of town meeting either way. Maybe we look back at the paperwork from when they bought the property on Mason Road and see how that was done procedurally. My thought is to leave it there for now.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated if we are to approve year one as is, we are committing \$161,000 in tax dollars for that project.

Plan Discussion of out years 2-5

Chairman Cobb stated at the top of the spreadsheet are the projects we are committed to. In terms of the excavator, I never did hear if we were to spend the \$66,000, can we save \$66,000 on outside contractors. We need an updated price on the projects and also what it would cost us to do in-house.

Troy Sposato replied we wouldn't be buying the excavator just for the Village Hill project.

Chairman Cobb stated we just need to see if we would be saving any money doing this project in-house rather than hiring a contractor.

Troy Sposato stated no one is going to bid on it when we don't have the funds allocated.

Chairman Cobb stated we have a town engineer who generally does the estimating based on his knowledge.

Mike Makuch asked if we have someone within the town that is available to do a more formal cost analysis.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski replied as Stuart said we would spend some money with a town engineer.

Orlando Rodriguez stated you can study things over and over but at some point we have to decide if it is something that we want and what is the best way to get there.

Troy Sposato stated if we have the machine it's there to use whenever we need it and whenever we can use it.

Mike Makuch stated I agree as we push these road projects out further, they get more expensive it's just a matter of trying to find the dollars.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated these road projects have been pushed out for years and if we have the opportunity to get some of it done ourselves don't we owe it to our tax payers to start to chip away at some of this work that needs to be done.

Mike Makuch stated we owe it to our tax payers to figure out the most cost effective way to get the project done.

Chairman Cobb stated we will leave the \$10,700 payments in the plan for now and get the prices for having a contractor do the work versus the town.

Orlando Rodriguez stated I don't think we need updated numbers, we should just decide if we want to do it. I don't think there will be that big of a cost savings by having PW do the project with all the things that would be required.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated it has been determined by the people at the table that we have never been able to afford these projects in one year which means we would need to increase the CIP budget or have less projects.

Chairman Cobb stated we need cost estimates either way.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated we have put \$30,000 in year 1 for the Village Hill project so we have committed to starting the project. We are planning to get a little done each year and if we rent the excavator each year, we will have paid the price of the excavator without the ability to use it for any other jobs.

Christina Mailhos asked what the \$30,000 covered.

Troy Sposato replied the pipe, six catch basins, and the stone/process material to pave the trenches and the rental for a month.

Chairman Cobb suggested we make the \$30,000 for the Village Hill project \$20,000 and add the excavator back into the plan for year 1.

Mike Makuch asked if we are responsible for the bridge at Depot Road over the Willimantic River.

Christina Mailhos replied I don't believe so I think the line is the railroad and that is Tolland's.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated it was not in the bridge report we received from the state.

Mike Makuch stated the property line is on the river not on the railroad tracks.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated we will look into this.

Chairman Cobb stated for next year's CIP requests, we need to know the ongoing cost of the Village Hill project as well as the cost of the paving.

Troy Sposato stated I will get all that information.

Chairman Cobb asked if the South Willington LOTCIP project was going to impact the parking lot across the street.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski replied it will just need to be paved it will be lowering that parking lot. It will also add an ADA accessible crossing there. In year 2 Phil has \$100,000 for HMS paving the parking lots and a portion of that is paving the lot across the street.

Chairman Cobb stated one of the big projects in year 2 is the land purchase for a new school. At that point if you've committed to the land are you committing to a bond to complete the project?

First Selectwoman Wiecenski replied not unless you've gone to a referendum.

Chairman Cobb asked would you buy the land and not build a school.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski replied we have just started the conversation and land is a topic at the next meeting. I would say they are two different commitments. The \$750,000 was the amount used in the Friar study we could find it to be more or less than that.

Chairman Cobb asked how we come up with that large amount of cash to buy the land out of local funds while still completing other projects. If the whole project went through you would usually bond it and spread it over 20 years but this is requiring you to do a cash purchase.

Chairman Cobb stated another big project in year 2 is additional money for the salt shed. My recommendation is to run with the \$347,000 and get what we can with that.

Mike Makuch stated I agree I understand the goals of the large salt shed but it is too much.

Chairman Cobb stated I think we can push the Schofield Road project out one more year because it will take Troy and his crew some time to finish Village Hill.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated we also still have the problem of where the water is going.

Chairman Cobb stated that is part of the reason we have \$15,000 in year one for this project so we can use some engineering to figure that out.

Chairman Cobb stated the first school project in year 2 is the CES PA/Clock system replacement. Our funding source options for this would be 930 or 04.

Donna Latinsics asked about putting the deposit for the land to the reserve fund.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski replied that's fine.

Chairman Cobb asked if there is enough in the reserve fund for that.

Donna Latinsics replied no.

Chairman Cobb stated I think it's going to have to go with the bond for the school because the tax payers aren't going to vote on appropriating funds for the land if they're not committed to building the school.

Donna Latinsics stated that is out in 24-25.

Chairman Cobb stated you may do that a year early with a bond anticipation note. There was a talk about doing one big bond for Schofield Road, the school and whatever other big projects you have.

Mike Makuch stated we did talk about the possibility of a municipal improvements bond.

Chairman Cobb asked if bonds are usually 20 years.

Donna Latinsics replied 20 or 30.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated there are \$401,000 of school projects in year 2 and we cannot use any LoCIP money for these.

Chairman Cobb stated if they were to move forward with purchasing a new school, you wouldn't end up doing some of these projects.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated the majority of them. I think the HMS parking lot project needs to stay in either way so we should find a funding source for that.

Chairman Cobb stated unless there is some significant cost savings doing them together perhaps you would do that in two years, one year for across the street and one year the parking lot at the school. How long does it take to build a school?

First Selectwoman Wiecenski replied it depended on which option we went with about 2-3 years.

Chairman Cobb asked if the sidewalk project at HMS is affected by the South Willington LOTCIP project.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski replied no. Phil had pictures of the sidewalks included in this.

Mike Makuch stated the back sidewalk which is their ADA access is included in this project.

Chairman Cobb stated you wouldn't want to break that project up into pieces.

Chairman Cobb asked if the \$35,000 in year 2 for the Village Hill project could go to LoCIP.

Donna Latincsics replied yes. That puts the number at \$833,000

First Selectwoman Wiecenski asked about the lights for the walking track in year 2 and if they wanted to keep that in.

Mike Makuch replied I think the lighting is a great idea but it is a large amount of money.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated I agree I like the idea but we haven't seen the effects of the lights that are being installed around all of the equipment that is there. Maybe if we push it out one more year, we will be able to see what that brings.

Mike Makuch asked if they have installed the parking lot cameras.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they went up with the parking lot lighting.

Donna Latincsics stated this puts the capital reserve at about \$70,000

First Selectwoman Wiecenski stated that is not sustainable. We started this year with \$466,000.

Mike Makuch asked what we have going into the capital reserve in year 2.

Donna Latincsics replied \$169,000.

Mike Makuch stated we will try to be prepared to do year 3-5 in the next two meetings.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski added they would also move on year 1.

First Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:31PM. Mike Makuch seconded the motion.

Vote: All Yes.

Respectfully Submitted:
Catharine Holcroft
Recording Secretary

TOWN OF WILLINGTON, CT
Received for record February 10, 2021
At 2:01 pm Rh
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