

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM COMMITTEE
TOWN OF WILLINGTON
TOWN OFFICE BUILDING
January 22, 2018**

Members present: First Selectman Erika Wiecenski, Chairman Stuart Cobb, Jim Bulick, Peter Tanaka, Barry Wallett, Stephanie Summers, and Kelly Trueb. Members Absent: Donna Latincsics, John Patton and Rick Maloney.

Others Present: Chief Alex Moore and Assistant Chief Tyler Millix from Willington Fire Department #1 (WFD #1) and Chief Tom Snyder and President Brian Violette from Willington Hill Fire Department (WHFD).

The meeting of the Capital Improvement Program Committee was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Chairman Stuart Cobb.

1. Approval of Minutes – January 17, 2018.

Chairman Stuart Cobb asked for approval of the January 17, 2018 minutes.

Peter Tanaka moved to accept the minutes as printed, seconded by Kelly Trueb.

Vote: 6 yes (Wiecenski, Wallett, Trueb, Cobb, Tanaka and Summers), 0 no, 1 abstention (Bulick). Minutes accepted as printed.

2. Present to Speak.

There was no one present to speak.

3. Presentation of Willington Fire Department #1 (WFD #1) and Willington Hill Fire Department (WHFD).

As WFD #1 had less project requests, it was decided that they would present first.

5.1 Fire Station Addition \$75,000.00 for Planning, Engineering and Inspection in fiscal year 2018-2019 and \$2,541,806.00 for Construction and \$75,000.00 for Equipment Purchases in fiscal year 2019-2020. Alex Moore stated that not much has changed on this project since last year's submission. One change for Phase 2 of the addition project was they changed their request from \$100,000.00 last year to \$75,000.00 this year after getting the final figures back from the first Phase of the addition project, it has been reduced to \$75,000.00 for what needs to be done for the project to be "shovel ready" to move forward. This addition would provide a training/meeting area, bunk rooms, adequate storage and office space. It would be a two-story building added on to the left side of the firehouse if you were facing it. Currently their paid staff (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) one sleeps in the office and one in the bunk room/living area/emergency operations center/etc. They require separate sleeping quarters as both men and women could be sleeping there at the same time. This addition would give them adequate living facilities as well as a proper Emergency Operations Center (EOC), training area, bunk rooms, etc. Tyler Millix stated that this is just a continuation of what was accepted or approved over the past year or two to continue on the path getting to the point where there are some documents that are "shovel ready"; which is what they are looking for. Whether it is Town funding, federal funding, grants, etc. they are ready to go. Their goal is to go after whatever grants or federal money that might be out there, but they have to get through this next phase first. The original building was built in 1981. There will be an increase in utility costs and insurance and their request is to have the addition built in the year 2020. They realize that the fiscal climate isn't really good right now, but at the time they started talking about

this project, there was overall acceptance/agreement to move forward to the next phase. Tyler stated that there had been talk of bonding this project with other projects for the Town, but they don't know what the Town's position is on bonding now. A discussion was had on bonding, FEMA and State grants in general and regarding this project. Alex stated that in the packets they provided for the Committee is an estimate of the addition with a summary of what the money would be spent on and other fire departments done by this contractor near Willington. First Selectman Wiecenski asked about how the addition sits in relationship to the house next door. Alex stated that it is still on fire department property, but they will probably need a variance. The homeowner is fine with the addition as long as the fire department provides screening. There are also blueprints available that they will leave for the Committee to peruse at their leisure. Peter Tanaka asked if they knew the square footage cost of fire departments in the surrounding area as the fire departments in the package are larger towns with more revenue. Tyler stated that the newest construction of fire departments in this area in the last 5 to 10 years were Ashford (1.2 million and half of that was STEAP money) and Columbia (about 1.5 or 1.6 million); which were both done a while ago but WFD #1 is willing to find out more details if the Committee wishes that. Peter stated that the location makes a big difference. First Selectman Wiecenski asked if there would be any revenue from this addition, and Alex stated that there will be a hall/training room that they could rent out and there is some office space there for the future if the Town ever wanted a resident trooper program. Tyler stated that when planning an addition you try to look at things as best you can and try to keep mindful of how much these things are, but they tell you as a general rule, a fire house should be planned for 99 years. He stated that you have to look at the Town where it is now and where it will be in 5 to 30 years from now mentioning that it would be foolish not to plan for the future even if some of the plans didn't come to fruition. Right now the town would be scrambling for space if they had to institute a resident trooper program or small police department. Tyler stated that isn't the driving force behind the addition but it is something to think about. The hall rental would be a small consideration, but probably wouldn't be used as a sales pitch when trying to promote this addition. They will continue to look into grants, etc. for this addition. Kelly Trueb stated that \$75,000.00 to get to the next phase should not be spent unless the Town is going to commit to building the addition. She doesn't want to see this money spent and then the Town decides not to build the addition. Tyler and Alex both stated that the \$75,000.00 is needed for blueprints to shop around for builders. Stephanie Summers asked how many people the meeting space and the office space would accommodate. Alex stated that there would be a total of four offices; the emergency operations center, a training/conference room/hall, 4 bunk rooms upstairs (for the two people that are there now 24/7 and volunteers who want to stay overnight and ride the ambulance). Right now they have two fold down (Murphy) beds.

5.2 Oil Tank Replacement \$20,000.00 for fiscal year 2020-2021.

Alex Moore stated that the tank will be 20 years old in 2021. They are still trying to get an exact answer on when it needs to be replaced. If the addition gets approved the oil tank may be part of that and/or if everything gets switched over to propane, it will be a propane tank. Chairman Cobb stated that they had conflicting information on when the tank needs to be replaced (one said 20 years, another 30 years and DEEP over the phone stated that it's not regulated, and do whatever they want). Willington Fire Marshal Dick Palmer contacted DEEP and had it put in writing that because it's for heating only and it's a 2,000 gal. tank or under, DEEP doesn't care about it. However, it's a single wall tank, and the Fire Marshal's suggestion was to replace it with either another in-ground tank or an above-ground tank or go to propane. All three would involve some costs and all three would involve decommissioning the present tank either by removing the old tank or filling it with sand and leaving it where it is (both options have a cost involved). A discussion was had on switching over to a propane tank. First Selectman Wiecenski asked what the \$20,000.00 covered. Alex stated it covered the first option of removing the existing tank and replacing it in its current location. They were asked to have quotes for the other two options when it got closer to replacing the tank.

5.3 New Ambulance Purchase \$250,000.00 in fiscal year 2021-2022.

Alex Moore stated that in fiscal year 2021-2022 the current ambulance will be 7 years old and their typical lifespan of an ambulance is 5 to 7 years old and the ambulance is their biggest revenue source.

Tyler Millix mentioned that it would just roll into another lease (the lease runs for 7 years) and it is the most important vehicle the whole town has to get some type of revenue coming in. If it isn't rolling, there isn't money coming in. It is in everyone's best interest to keep the ambulance going and replace it on the regular schedule. Tyler mentioned that the money to pay the lease comes out of Fund 17 (the revenue generated by the ambulance) and isn't taxpayer money. They also do get a trade-in on the ambulance which they don't on fire trucks so it is in their best interest to keep the ambulance running. The \$250,000.00 includes the trade-in.

This concluded WFD #1's project presentations and they stated that anyone was welcome to stop in the firehouse at any time to visit or ask questions. They were thanked for their time and the Committee then moved on to WHFD's project requests.

7.1 Replacement of SCBA Bottles \$30,268.00 in fiscal year 2018-2019.

Tom Snyder stated that the first thing he wanted to address on this project was the late submission on it. He stated that the Committee may now be seeing it for the first time. He was under the impression that because it had already been submitted and approved to be done (and the bottles expire in April, 2019) that he did not have to submit it, and he apologizes for that. He stated that the bottles won't be good after they expire. Kelly Trueb explained the background on the bottles and the SCBA packs for WFD #1 for the newer members that weren't aware of the history regarding the bottles. Tom Snyder stated that he got a recent quote on the bottles changing the price from \$40,000.00 to \$30,268.00 and the request should be changed to reflect that. Tyler Millix stated that WFD #1 already has a lease for SCBA air packs and it would make sense to add WHFD's bottles to that lease. Chairman Cobb stated that they look at all the funding sources to decide what they will use and that they can't add on to an existing lease.

7.2 Parking Lot Replacement \$50,000.00 in fiscal year 2018-2019.

Tom Snyder stated that this project was approved but the funding was coming out of LoCIP funding, so it was put on hold and he doesn't know where it stands with the LoCIP funding. Chairman Cobb stated that Donna Latinsics announced at their last meeting that the LoCIP funding had been released by the State. First Selectman Wiczenski stated that it was the money they were anticipating and there are a number of projects that fell into that same category. She further stated that it is in the pile of projects that had been approved using the LoCIP funding and she and Donna will be looking at this project as well as the others that were approved. Kelly Trueb noted that after they review the projects and before CIP finalizes their plan, it may need to be put back into the plan. Stephanie Summers asked if they were paving the whole lot. Tom stated yes including the side by Center School exactly how it is paved now.

7.3 Property Acquisition for New Firehouse \$300,000.00 in fiscal year 2019-2020.

Tom Snyder stated that they have had this request in CIP in years past and it kept getting pushed out to the 5th year and then eventually it was taken off the plan. They have put this request back into the plan because the need isn't going away and the property across the street from the firehouse is going up for sale. The land is being appraised now, they don't know where it will come in at, but they put \$300,000.00 in there as a ballpark figure and to open up conversation on it. Their intent is to lock in the property; it's in a good location and right across the street from their current firehouse. They discussed amongst themselves that there is a building and a house on the property that could be leased or rented to pay the payments until they get to the point where they would build a firehouse on the property. They don't want to see the property be sold to someone else. First Selectman Wiczenski asked if the property was being sold as one piece or subdivided. Tom stated that he hasn't seen it subdivided yet on any maps. Right now it is owned by the Norwich Diocese.

7.4 Bunker Gear Replacement \$15,000.00 in fiscal year 2019-2020.

Tom Snyder mentioned that they did receive a grant for 10 sets of bunker gear, but that was quite a while ago and the bunker gear has since expired. They have been trying to replace it a set at a time, but they can't keep up with the demand for the members going to fire school, and the fire school won't accept a lot of their gear because it's not up to standards or up to date. This request would buy 6 sets of

gear. They had talked in the past of putting a couple of sets of gear on the CIP plan every year but as yet hadn't done it, so they would like to start with this request. Jim Bulick asked Tom to explain what bunker gear is for anyone who might not be familiar with it. Tom stated it's a fire coat, pants, helmet and boots that you would wear into a fire. Tom stated it is roughly \$2,500.00 per set of gear. Kelly Trueb (speaking as a CIP member and not a member of the fire department) asked Tom what makes him think this justifies as a CIP request and not a budget request from their regular budget. He stated it's because they now need more than one or two sets a year. They now have 10 sets that are outdated and they are running behind in replacing them. They have a lot of people that need new gear. Tom feels both departments should be putting this request in either every year or every other year to keep up with the demand to replace outdated gear. First Selectman Wiczenski asked WFD #1 what they do to replace their gear and Alex Moore stated that for at least the last 5 years they have been putting it in their budget to replace 2 sets a year. Firefighters at WHFD have been borrowing gear from members whose gear is up to date to go to fire school as their gear is outdated, and then they give it back when they are done and use their outdated gear. Tom would like to see all these members in up to date gear as they have passed Firefighter 1. Jim Bulick asked how long bunker gear lasts. Alex Moore stated NFPA standards are 10 years. Any rips or tears have to be sent out to be repaired and they are lucky to have a machine at WFD #1 for both departments to wash the gear and keep it in the best condition they can. Jim Bulick asked if they should be putting this in their budget every year if it is a recurring expense or something you buy periodically for a CIP expense. Kelly Trueb feels it is recurring and it should be in their budget every year; however, WHFD has had a large influx of new members that have gone through training in the past two years and they didn't have the money in their budget to cover the newly trained members with new gear. The gear that the new members are using from that grant is starting to fail. She thinks at this point they need the gear they are requesting to get them closer to where they should be. All agreed that this is a good problem to have. Jim Bulick stated that he is ok with WHFD having a one-time request for several sets of gear, but he thinks it does make sense for them to have it in their budget. First Selectman Wiczenski believes they should be adding bunker gear to their budget every year and Tom agreed to that, as long as they get fitted gear either way. Chairman Cobb gave some background before the grant they got for gear, the fire departments went to both the Board of Finance (BOF) and the CIP Committee asking for gear and had the fire departments going back and forth telling them to ask each other (BOF and CIP) for the gear and the last big batch of gear came out of CIP (that the Town paid for). A discussion was had on putting the gear in their budget vs. requesting it through CIP. Barry Wallet asked why it is requested in fiscal year 2019-2020 and not 2018-2019. Tom stated that they were going to try to make it through the next fiscal year; however, it is a necessity now with firefighters borrowing gear and if CIP would like to put it in fiscal year 2018-2019 that's fine.

7.5 Bay Floor Replacement \$30,000.00 in fiscal year 2020-2021.

Tom Snyder stated that the project has been the plan, but was not approved, but the need is still there. The floor is cracking, chipping, (concrete) there are big cracks in it and the pillars in the front are down to dirt. There is no surface left to it and it needs to have the cracks filled in and sealed with epoxy which will hold it for 10 to 20 years. This includes the aprons to the back of the building. This project was discussed last year and combining it with the driveway paving. Tom stated that that would be the best and cheapest way to go, but he doesn't have firm quotes on either project. The parking lot paving was approved to do in fiscal year 2018-2019. A discussion was had on why the two projects were split up. Chairman Cobb stated that he thinks there was a limit to the LoCIP funding that they were going to try to use for the paving project. Kelly Trueb would like everyone to think about scheduling the two projects at the end of the fiscal year (paving) and the beginning of the next fiscal year (June and July) (bay floor) and then be done at the same time.

7.6 Replace Service Vehicle \$65,000.00 fiscal year 2020-2021.

Tom Snyder stated this is their 2007 SUV and it is 11 years old now and it would be close to 15 years old by the time a new vehicle would come in. The reason for this request is that the transmission is slipping, the motor is ticking and they would like to retain some value with the vehicle for a trade-in and not let the transmission go or be completely worn out to where the vehicle is not usable or having to spend

\$4,000.00 to \$5,000.00 on a transmission when you could replace the vehicle when it will be about 15 years old. They would rather see that money go to a new vehicle. It is their first response vehicle and it goes to every call. Jim Bulick asked why they are asking for a Ford Expedition and not a less expensive smaller vehicle like a Ford Explorer or a Jeep. Tom stated that they would certainly shop around; however, they house a lot of equipment in the back of vehicle including medical equipment and an air pack and transport people (and their gear) to fire school in this vehicle which holds 5 people. Tom said they could certainly get a smaller vehicle, but they would have to cut back on the amount of equipment they could carry in the vehicle. Tom doesn't believe a Jeep type vehicle would be that much less expensive, but they would put this project out to bid and see what their cheapest option is for their needs. They bought their present vehicle through the State Police bid and it is a stripped model police vehicle and that is what they would do when buying a new vehicle.

7.7 Rust Repair and Equipment Modernization – 1991 Engine Tank 149 \$95,000.00 in fiscal year 2021-2022.

Tom Snyder stated they have been pushing this project out themselves and keeping it in the plan and they are doing the same thing now, keeping it in the plan by pushing it out to fiscal year 2021-2022. He stated that fortunately the truck is still in good shape, but it is a 1991 vehicle so it is getting up there in years. Typically 30 years is good for a fire truck for a refurb or a replacement and they are approaching that with this vehicle. Fortunately for them it is holding up pretty good with the rust, etc. and they aren't looking at any big expenses coming up to put into it so they pushed it out but are keeping it on the plan because of the age of the truck. Eventually the truck will need work and he would rather keep it in the plan then come back later for money and have someone ask why it wasn't on the plan. Jim Bulick asked if they were generally happy with that vehicle, that must be in great shape and they would overhaul it and upgrade it. Tom stated yes that they have done that with other vehicles in town (cosmetics on the vehicle, lighting upgrades, rust repair and tank replacements have been done). Jim asked if the body is lifted off the vehicle and if the frame is in great shape. Tom stated that their mechanic said the frame is in great shape, the tank is in great shape the pump is in great shape and it is on the plan because of the age of the truck and eventually it will need a refurb or replacement. Stephanie Summers asked how much time does that buy them with the vehicle by refurbing it. Tom stated an average of 10 years and by that time it would be 40 years old.

7.8 Design and Construction of New Fire Station 4,700,000.00 in fiscal year 2022-2023.

Tom Snyder stated that this has been put on the CIP plan for years and has been pushed out again. He stated that the need hasn't gone away but has become greater to build a new firehouse with the fact that they have no office space, no storage space, 6 trucks in a 5 bay station, a hall with bathrooms that aren't in ADA compliance and a whole list of things that go in the argument for a new station. They are keeping it on the plan with the hope of the land acquisition and maybe down the road bonding could be thrown in there with it.

This concluded WHFD's project presentations and they were thanked for their time.

4. Plan Discussion.

First Selectman Wicewski stated that the Committee is looking at requests for 2.7 million from one department and about 5 million from the other department for either additions or new buildings. She stated that she is going to bring up the super popular discussion of why we have two departments when we are looking at consolidating the schools into one building, but still funding two separate fire department facilities. She is not in favor spending money on a study that is going to go nowhere as there are plenty of studies out there. She stated that they need to take a look at that as these are some big numbers still in two different places and she's not sure the Town can continuously support that. Barry Walleet stated that when he looked at it last year on the BOF, everyone agreed (including the fire departments) that we don't need two fire departments. The problem is one fire department is paid (Tyler Millix later clarified that they have some volunteer members) and one is a volunteer department. They are both doing great, both are very good and both have different cultures. First Selectman Wicewski

stated that they need to assimilate into one department. She thinks that they all do their best, the same job for the town and they all want the same thing at the end. She thinks that at some point the Town needs to step in and point them in a direction that they want to see them go. Jim Bulick would like to see a per capita fire cost for fire protection. A long discussion was had on both fire departments, paid vs. volunteer, stipends and tax abatements, the fact that some of the paid members also volunteer, what are the taxpayers paying for fire and EMS coverage, how it compares to other towns, Fund 17 (which is insurance money received from ambulance calls and funds the fire apparatus and ambulance in town), funding an addition and a new fire station, consolidation, providing better service as one department, previous studies done on consolidation, etc. Peter Tanaka then asked Tyler Millix if he would take the amount the Town pays for fire service minus the amount they pay into Fund 17 and divide it by the number of structures in Willington. He would also like Tyler to do that for the towns of Mansfield, Tolland and Ashford, and if those towns don't deduct their Fund 17 money, don't deduct it from their operating budget because that would be what the town pays them (the figure would probably be smaller if they keep their Fund 17 money). Peter would like to see how much per household Willington is paying compared to those towns. A short discussion was had on Peter's request.

Peter Tanaka moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by First Selectman Wiecenski.

Vote: All yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Smith

Eileen Smith
Recording Secretary

TOWN OF WILLINGTON, CT
Received for record January 29, 2018
At 4:30pm Ony B. Janot