Members Present: First Selectwoman Erika Wiecenski, Peter Tanaka, Stef Summers, John Patton, Rick Maloney, Christina Mailhos and BOF Chairman Michael Makuch.

Members Absent: Chairman Stuart Cobb and Geoff Prusak

Others Present: Donna Latincsics; Business Manager, Troy Sposato; Director of Public Works, Phil Stevens; Superintendent and Chief Alex Moore; Willington FD #1.

The meeting of the Capital Improvement Program Committee was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Mike Makuch.

1. Present to Speak

Don Berg; Chairman of the Housing Authority was present. He stated he would like to thank the board for their time and consideration of the housing authorities proposed projects. He added even though the board concluded that Button Hill improvements wouldn’t be funded by the committee, he enjoyed learning the process and attending the meetings.

2. Approval of Minutes

Peter Tanaka motioned to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2020 meeting. Selectwoman Wiecenski seconded the motion.

Vote: All Yes.

3. Finalize Plan-Out Years 2 Through 5

Rick Maloney asked Superintendent Stevens if they renovated Hall School, would it be able to fit the student population from Center School. Superintendent Stevens replied these would be the items addressed by the school building committee, but he believes if they decide to renovate Hall School, they will do so with the intent of fitting the students from Center School. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated she believed the Friar plan mentioned needing land acquisition if they chose to renovate Center School and asked if the Friar plan mentioned the same for Hall School. Superintendent Stevens replied yes it said the same for Hall School adding if they didn’t have any way to do so, the Friar report believed since they were on an established site they might be grandfathered in to be able to stay there with the additional student population but couldn’t guarantee anything. Rick Maloney asked if they have inspected a Hall School renovation plan to see how they would manipulate it to work on that site. Superintendent Stevens replied the plan was very raw because it was said that the renovation at Hall School would most likely be
a job were they can’t occupy the building during renovation because of the significant work needed were as if the renovations occurred at Center School, they could do a section at a time possible putting on an addition, closing one wing at a time to complete work.

Mike Makuch stated they would work on getting the number down for year 2 then proceed to the following years one at a time. Christina Mailhos suggested they look at bigger items first. Donna Latinsics stated the items in green still need a funding source.

Selectwoman Wiecenski stated last week their discussion with Superintendent Stevens was about moving all the school projects into a bond in the same year but right now they are spread throughout the four years, she asked if they wanted to consider consolidating them into the same year. Rick Maloney agreed this made sense. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated this would take two projects out of year two. Mike Makuch asked if she was referring to line 59 (HMS sidewalk replacement) and line 62 (HMS fire panel). Selectwoman Wiecenski replied yes. Mike Makuch stated they would take those two lines and push them out another year for now and they were going to leave the $100,000 in year 2 for land for a new school. Selectwoman Wiecenski replied yes, they cut the originally requested $750,000 to a deposit amount.

Christina Mailhos stated there is $105,000 for engineering the addition at WFD#1 Fire Station in year two, another $2,900,000 in year three for the construction of this addition, and $4,700,000 in year four for design and construction of a new firehouse for WHFD. She stated this is a lot of money for fire services and wonders what plans they have for all of it. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated the request for the new station for WHFD did not separate money for planning and engineering but it would need to be done prior to the year that they approve the construction. Christina Mailhos stated it would be nice to see a plan of what Willington needs for fire services and facilities. Mike Makuch stated there have been three studies done on facility consolidation. John Patton stated the results of those studies end up ignored. Mike Makuch stated those studies did say there was a need for the senior center to expand and the fire stations renovated. He added a cohesive plan may come out with the efficiency committee. John Patton stated about five years ago the board decided they were going to do the addition on Willington #1 because there are guys there 24/7 living and sleeping so they decided this was the place to put the money into. He added that the current living conditions there are not as good as you would want them to be. Stef Summers asked to confirm the overnight staff is two people. Chief Moore replied yes. Chief Moore stated that the second round of engineering is to get an exact final number on the cost of the addition because the 2.9 million is really a ballpark estimate at this time. Stef Summers asked if the number they spent previously on planning/engineering was $75,000. Chief Moore replied he thinks that is correct. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated she doesn’t think the efficiency committee is anywhere near any kind of joint plan. Mike Makuch stated the goal of the efficiency committee was to have something to turn in and show the towns people by September 2020, but he isn’t sure how evolved it will be. Stef Summers asked if there is anyway the Willington #1 addition can be done in phases so they can get the people who are on duty better living conditions right away but maybe hold off on less urgent pieces. Chief Moore replied he isn’t sure but there is only one side for them to build from and it wouldn’t make sense to build some and then build off that piece because you would end up spending more. He added that they went off the study that was done and their recommendations.

Mike Makuch stated the $105,000 for WFD#1 addition engineering isn’t effecting there bottom number because it is off budget coming from fund 17. He added that they moved the $21,000 and $54,500 out a
year but they still need funding sources as well as the $100,000 the committee left in year two for the new school land deposit. Peter Tanaka asked if these three school items may eventually be refundable. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated if there is a school building project these become reimbursable. Superintendent Stevens asked if the other $650,000 is off the table and they are assuming the $100,000 is enough to secure the land. Selectwoman Wiecenski replied yes and they concluded that the 45 million for the new school had the land purchase included in it.

Mike Makuch stated the $30,000 for WFD#1 driveway repair still needs a funding source. Christina Mailhos asked Chief Moore if they wanted to do the driveway at the same time as the addition. Chief Moore replied that is what they hoped to do but they put it on the plan separately because they didn’t know what would happen with the addition and at some point, they needed to do something with the driveway. He added they could try to do something else with it for now. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they could move the driveway repair out one year where the addition is. Stef Summers asked if the current driveway condition affects them coming in and out. Chief Moore replied it affects that amount of heat escaping and amount of heat they must use. Mike Makuch asked if the cost included some apron repairs at the doors. Chief Moore replied yes. Mike Makuch stated their yellow number is now at $620,000 closer to their target. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they still need a funding source for the school land deposit. John Patton stated he suggests they put the $100,000 into the capital reserve fund then take it out of there so the money is there when they need it, putting it in the general fund means they have to spend it that year. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they still need a funding source for the school land deposit. John Patton stated he suggests they put the $100,000 into the capital reserve fund then take it out of there so the money is there when they need it, putting it in the general fund means they have to spend it that year. Selectwoman Wiecenski asked if everyone felt confident with year two. The committee agreed to move on to year three.

Mike Makuch stated year three is currently at $821,000. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated this is when we look at all the school projects. Mike Makuch stated line 31 CES heating project is fixing outdated equipment and line 34 gym air conditioning is an add on new project. Mike stated they need to get approximately $200,000 out of year three. John Patton stated he changed his opinion about putting the $100,000 in the capital reserve fund for the school land deposit. He stated if the money is in the capital reserve, they will have to go to town meeting to approve the money for the deposit, but if it’s in the local funds 930 it’s available immediately to make a deal. John stated it won’t affect the plan at all and at the end of the year if the money isn’t used the BOF can move it into a capital project. He added it may be difficult to negotiate on a piece of land if they don’t know if they can even get the money. Superintendent Stevens asked if the BOF would still need to approve this at a town meeting. John Patton replied no, not if it’s in the 930 but it would need approved by the Board of Selectmen. Stef Summers asked if we could assign the funding to the 930 now with the possibility of adjusting the funding source next year. Selectwoman Wiecenski replied yes, it’s a working plan. Mike Makuch stated they will put it in for 930 funding for now and move on to discuss the rest of year three.

Christina Mailhos stated year three has the first lease payment for the International dump truck for public works which increased the lease/bond payments by $30,564. Mike Makuch stated they haven’t discussed the purchase of this truck yet which would be in year three. John Patton stated he also noticed in year three they have the bond for the fire station addition, but it has not been included in the bond payments. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated they could put it in the bond with all the school projects along with the Schofield Road drainage which is also in year three. Christina Mailhos stated line 21, the lease for the John Deer Excavator only shows one payment in 2021-22. Donna Latincsics replied she only put it in there so they could see what the numbers looked like and once they decide to fund it, she will add in the
remaining payments. Selectwoman Wiecenski asked if the $17,024 on line 21 was just one lease payment. Donna Latincsics replied no, semi-annual is $8,500 full year is $17,024. Mike Makuch stated if they have the first lease payment in the plan, they should include all the following years payments as well.

Mike Makuch stated line 18 of the plan shows the cost of the ambulance as $171,233 but on the requests, it was $300,000. Donna Latincsics stated this is because the $171,233 is the amount that will be paid towards the ambulance over the duration of this current plan ending with year 2024-25. Mike Makuch asked Chief Moore for the value of their current ambulance as a trade. Chief Moore replied around $20,000.

Christina Mailhos stated the library may need some water proofing in the upcoming years and was wondering if anything was submitted for the expense of doing so. Selectwoman Wiecenski replied no but they also have not received the full report from the engineer so they don’t know for sure what will be needed if anything. She added they should have the full report by the middle of March.

Stef Summers stated she isn’t comfortable with the excavator being in year 2 at this point without seeing some real time experience with the Public Works department getting some work accomplished using the rented excavator. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated any projects that didn’t get approved in year one get resubmitted if they are still needed/wanted the next year so they will be discussing the purchase again. She asked Troy if he could give them some more examples of work they could accomplish with the excavator. Troy Sposato replied drainage, border ways and lots of other projects.

Chief Moore stated they may not need the $30,000 for the driveway repair if they approve the addition because the driveway was included in the plan for the addition.

Christina Mailhos asked Donna if the bond payment on line 23 only includes what is listed and not anything for the schools. Donna Latincsics replied nothing for the schools. Selectwoman Wiecenski asked if the number was adjusted since they adjusted the number for Village Hill. Donna Latincsics replied she didn’t think so. Rick Maloney asked if they could adjust the amount for Schofield Road as well. Troy Sposato stated they don’t have the plans for that project yet and it is a bit more complicated than Village Hill. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated there were some questions on where the water will go. Christina Mailhos stated perhaps they should put the money in the plan for the engineering on the Schofield Road project. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated there is $15,000 in year two for the engineering.

Christina Mailhos stated there are still two big numbers for year three, $30,000 for bay floor replacements at WHFD and $130,000 for WHFD SCBA air packs both of which have not been assigned funding. Stef Summers asked if the air packs would typically be funded under fund 17. John Patton replied if they can afford it. Mike Makuch stated the $130,000 was the cost for the higher end air packs because that is all the company had in stock at the time of the quote. Chief Moore stated the last air packs they bought where on a 7-year lease through fund 17. Selectwoman Wiecenski suggested they put the cost of the less expensive air packs in the plan. Mike Makuch stated they would dial back the $130,000 to $105,000. John Patton suggested they put the $105,000 into fund 17 under a lease. Mike Makuch stated they could do that for now and keep an eye on the numbers for fund 17. Christina Mailhos asked for an update on the bottom number. Donna Latincsics replied $728,000. Mike Makuch asked if the $80,000 bond payment starts in 2022-23 or the year after. John Patton replied it depends on how quickly the project will get done, if you think the fire house addition will be complete in a year then we must leave it in 2022-23. Chief Moore
stated he believed the timeline for the project was 12 months. John Patton asked if the $80,000 was a bond payment. Donna Latincsics replied it is an anticipation note for the bond.

Donna Latincsics stated in year three they would take on a bond payment of $320,000 bringing their total of bond payments to $650,000 which exceeds their budget. John Patton stated they wouldn’t need to do the bond payment until 2023-24. Mike Makuch asked what their bottom number was after moving the bond payment into year 4. Donna Latincsics replied $648,000. Mike Makuch asked if they had a plan to increase the goal number by a certain percent each year. Rick Maloney replied no.

Superintendent Stevens asked if the school projects had been assigned a bond. Donna Latincsics replied no not yet. Mike Makuch stated those projects are showing on the plan in the final numbers right now. Donna Latincsics stated that is correct, they are showing in 930 the general fund.

Christina Mailhos stated when the auditor was here, he told us we are at 1.3% debt service which was very low compared to other towns, he stated over 10% would be in the danger zone. She asked if with the addition of the bonds they are adding are they getting close to the 10%. John Patton replied no if the grand list is at 440 million 1.3% of that is about 5.7 million. He added the town has debt limitations based on the tax revenue. John Patton stated their annual tax revenue is around 13 million and for a school you can use seven times that amount which would allow you to bond up to 80 million dollars. Mike Makuch stated they also have to be careful with fund 17 because the revenue from the ambulance service remains flat at $200,000 and the cost of the ambulance service continues to increase. John Patton stated the cost went up for the 24hr service.

The committee agreed they were happy with the numbers in year three.

John Patton stated they may want to move the design and construction for a new fire station at WHFD out another two years. The board agreed. John Patton added they could move the new school to off budget in the last year of this plan for a bond. Rick Maloney stated they are still at $994,000 for year 4. John Patton stated the bond payments alone for year 4 take up the whole budget. Donna Latincsics replied yes they are at $639,000 with just bond/lease payments. John Patton asked if it is possible to do 30 year bonds. Donna Latincsics replied she would have to check. Superintendent Stevens asked why they don’t put all the school items from year 4 into year 3 and bond the other items (drainage projects and fire house addition) with it and possibly make it a 30 year bond. John Patton stated they may not want to do a 30 year bond on maintenance items for the schools because it may need done again before the bond is over. Superintendent Stevens stated their list for maintenance items would grow if they decided to do a renovation or keep everything as is instead of a new school. He added the idea for bonding everything in year 3 is that over $200,000 in year 4 can come out along with the items in year 5. Superintendent Stevens stated if they go with the new school all these items can come out or if they decided to renovate or stay the new school can come out. He added that when looking at education for the Town of Willington there is savings by going to one building. Mike Makuch stated basically they are using the savings to pay for the project. Superintendent Stevens replied correct and added if you don’t go to one school you are paying twice for buildings, staffing, maintenance and projects. Superintendent Stevens stated this is why he thinks they should put the school items in a bond in year 3 as a hold and come back to it next year when they have more information.
Mike Makuch stated they are over budget in year 4 with bond/lease payments alone which would mean any project below would have to go away or they have to do something about the $320,000 bond payment. Mike Makuch stated he doesn’t think it’s healthy for the capital budget to be completely taken up by lease/bond payments. John Patton added this is without adding in projects that are requested for that year because something like equipment has broken etc. Rick Maloney asked when the library bond comes off. Mike Makuch replied 2027 two years off this plan. Mike Makuch stated they have two options either significantly increase the amount they are committing to the capital plan or cut the loan payments. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated she agrees with Mike but is wondering how they can justify paying for the addition on the fire house when they can’t fix the roads. She added she understands the need for the fire house addition for living conditions and operation. Mike Makuch asked Chief Moore if the ambulance rates are set by state. Chief Moore replied yes unless you increase service. He added High Chase and Senior Housing were they get a lot of traffic is a lower rate. Mike Makuch asked if they get some revenue from transports to Union. Chief Moore replied yes. Mike Makuch asked if the Town of Willington gets any money from Union for providing the service. Chief Moore replied no. Stef Summers asked if there are any possibly grants or other sources to cover the items included in the bond. Rick Maloney replied yes possibly STEAP funds which would give the bond some relief. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated the only grant for the fire house they looked at was USDA but the town would have to own the building. She added the grant was very limited and was split between the entire state and really only offered low interest financing over 40 years.

Rick Maloney asked how much the grand list increased last year. Selectwoman Wiecenski replied .58%. Rick Maloney stated they are increasing expenditure but the grand list is staying relatively flat. He added luckily their debt level is low so they can probably choose to do a renovated school or fire station. Rick Maloney proposed they move the fire station addition to year 5. Chief Moore stated if they are going to remain in that building at some point they will have to do some sort of major construction because the building is currently not adequate for living conditions. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated it might be good for this committee next year to see what comes from the emergency services committee and to go take a walk through the current facility so that we all understand what we are looking at.

Mike Makuch stated the $320,000 bond payment goes off the plan if they follow what Superintendent Stevens suggested. Selectwoman Wiecenski replied yes and it moves the $365,000 and $750,000 for the road projects off the plan as well. Rick Maloney asked if they will move the $105,000 engineering for the fire station addition out one year. Chief Moore stated they won’t know the exact final number of the addition without that engineering and having that number may help them plan for the project. Mike Makuch stated they will leave it in year two with hopes that by this time next year they will have new information either from the efficiency committee or elsewhere. Mike Makuch asked Donna for an update on the total for year 4. Donna Latincsics replied $674,000. Mike Makuch stated it is a $100,000 jump over 5 years. Rick Maloney replied it hasn’t had an increase in 20 years.

Selectwoman Wiecenski stated year 5 is at $575,000. Rick Maloney asked if the CIP committee should come back in six months and have a meeting in case things come up like the roof project last year. Selectwoman Wiecenski replied it isn’t the role of this committee to manage the projects on the plan. Stef Summers stated she thinks it’s a good idea to meet half year to stay up to date on planning and
discuss where they can improve. John Patton stated this isn’t a new idea the problem has always been getting everyone together. Christina Mailhos stated they did field trips one year to look at the projects. John Patton stated he thinks if they want to meet again or go on field trips it should be November/December so they can discuss where they are with each project. He added the field trips are very impactful. Selectwoman Wiecenski stated the field trips could give them the chance to anticipate what projects will come back that didn’t get approve last year.

4. Vote on Plan – Move to BOS

Mike Makuch asked if they were ready to vote on the plan. Donna Latincsics stated they should wait and see the updated numbers laid out before voting. John Patton stated they need another meeting. He added he suggests that in the future when they are constructing the plan, the BOF and First Selectmen need to first work on the plan as they do here to get them close to the target budget. John stated it has to be them because a lot of it is policy decisions of which projects are more of a priority. He stated this is primarily their plan and they are the ones who have to implement it, this way the committee can view the plan and just shuffle it around as necessary and spend more time getting answers to questions etc.

Mike Makuch motioned to table item 4 until the next meeting (TBD). Peter Tanaka seconded the motion.

**Vote: all yes.**

The committee agreed to add a final meeting on March 11, 2020 at 6:30PM.

Selectwoman Wiecenski moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:37PM. Peter Tanaka seconded the motion.

Respectfully Submitted:
Catharine Holcroft
Recording Secretary