



**PLANNING BOARD MINUTES
TOWN OF FOSTER
Benjamin Eddy Building
6 South Killingly Road, Foster, RI
Wednesday: January 18, 2017
6:30 p.m.**

A. Call to Order

Mr. Carey called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Board Members Present: Joseph Carey (Chair); Richard Sparks (Vice-Chair); Helen Hardy (Secretary); Sergio Spaziano; Michael Carpenter; and Ronald Cervasio.

Board Members Excused: Thomas Mercier.

Staff Present: Juliana King (Planner); Kelli Russ (Treasurer); Joanna Achille (Town Solicitor); and Bob Clarkin (DPW).

Public and Applicants Present: Michael Barnes and Mike Petrarca (Isaac Paine); Chief Ziehl (Police); Chris Stone (Town Council); Aaron Marsland, Catherine Bay, and Salvatore & Andrew Calise (FCFC); Tom Walden (Engineering Board); Guenter Bay (EMS); and Jeff Sheldon.

M. New Business

Discussion / Action

1) 2017/2018 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

Department Presentations

- 6:30 p.m. – Captain Isaac Paine Elementary
- 7 p.m. – Engineering Board
- 7:15 p.m. – Department of Public Works
- 7:45 p.m. – Finance / Town-wide (including Police)

Captain Isaac Paine Elementary: Mr. Barnes presented an overview of five projects (one to be funded locally and two that are in year two of a two-year phase): HVAC and Counter/Bookshelves which are going out to bid this Spring with the expectation of being finished by the start of school in the Fall, a security upgrade with safety glass in windows and glass doors which slows down unauthorized entry (to be offset with previously allocated funds in Capital), an upgrade to the phone system (partly offset by reallocation of technology funds set aside in Capital), and painting to be handled from school funds. He gave an overview of other projects tackled within the last year with the School's own funds and State reimbursement for Capital Projects at 43%.

Mr. Cervasio was of the opinion that all projects brought forth for Paine are necessary, but the School shouldn't have a separate fund balance from Capital surplus; the Auditor General had spoken out against that structure. Mr. Barnes said that after projects are completed this year, the School's balance will have over \$500,000.00. Mr. Cervasio believed that it should then be transferred to the Town's Capital balance, and recommended that no School requests be recommended and that the Council request the money back.

There was further discussion on whether this topic was pertinent to this meeting. Mr. Sparks didn't think it wise to act on it tonight but to look into the issue further moving forward.

Mr. Barnes explained that the five-year Capital Plan with needs assessment from the architect is required for State reimbursement, must be approved, and must fund at least fifty percent of projects, and that reimbursement will shoulder much of the burden in future years that the Town can't afford. Mr. Carey said the Planning Board does not have the purview to vote on the School's financial structure; they simply make recommendations to the Town Council. Mr. Barnes, Mr. Carey, and Mr. Petrarca discussed a separate school Capital Fund set up by the School Committee and what it could be used for, and that State reimbursement gets recorded and reserved. Mr. Cervasio emphasized that it could be Town Capital reserves for State reimbursement. Ms. Russ pointed out that the RIDE opinion was different than that of the Auditor General.

Mr. Sparks asked about the phone system. Mr. Barnes replied that 911 calls are prioritized and go to the police but the office is notified.

Engineering Board: Mr. Walden stated they need a new pumper for Foster Center Fire, with the cost spread out over two years. There was a discussion on the most recent pumper acquisition and recent years' requests. Mr. Cervasio wondered if it was necessary for Foster Center Fire Co. to have all equipment they currently

own, and Mr. Marsland said it was. Mr. Carey agreed that emergency equipment is important. Mr. Sparks said NFPA have very involved and complicated safety standards, and commended what Fire Depts. do.

DPW: Mr. Clarkin had two requests: one for a loader (existing is a 1997 model and definitely won't make it through next winter season, even though the LESO program has helped) and secondly for paving. If only one project can be funded then the preference is for the loader, and money could be put to paving if a loader is subsequently obtained from LESO. Mr. Carey and Mr. Clarkin discussed the major loader problem being the bucket, and how fixing it would be cost prohibitive for a twenty-year-old vehicle due to parts availability. Mr. Carey said he was very concerned about paving as it is always being put off.

Mr. Clarkin commented that he is aware of the wash bay project and intends to still pursue it. Ms. Russ said there was a delay because of the planning for a new police station; the allocated money won't be lost even though two years has passed because the project has not been abandoned.

Mr. Cervasio inquired about the overall quality of the fleet. Mr. Clarkin answered that it is old and rusted. Mr. Cervasio cautioned that they should take future needs into account. Mr. Carey reminded the Board that they did get a thorough fleet inventory in recent years. Mr. Carpenter said the amortization schedules are not emphasized enough. Chief Ziehl spoke up that LESO is still in place but suspended in effect right now due to accounting practices, but should be back online soon.

Mr. Cervasio questioned what the new paving would consist of, and Mr. Clarkin told him mostly overlay; the Council made a choice a number of years back not to include paving gravel roads in the future Capital Plan. DPW's general recommendation is counter to that, but the current Capital request is just to improve paved roads. Mr. Cervasio said all the Town is doing now is playing catch-up and even that can't be accomplished.

Police: Chief Ziehl passed out a fleet inventory, and explained that the leasing program started with the prior chief as three-year payments, and the vehicles are purchased by the Town for \$1 at the end of the 3 years. These are not just vehicles but essentially offices on wheels, with all communication equipment necessary and wholly outfitted. The vehicles have been outfitted out of operating expenses in the past and sometimes have forgone accessories due to lack of available funds, so the request is to outfit them out of Capital this time. All four would be patrol vehicles able to be put into service right away. There are eight active patrol vehicles now though often some are inoperable for various reasons:

- Totaled vehicles are scrapped, and inoperable ones will be. The 2008 Crown Victoria is on its last legs, and the two 2011 Crown Victorias will be used as patrol to detail vehicles, 100,000 mileage should be the threshold at which to replace because it is the engine hours that does the vehicles in.
- The four new ones in the request are AWD SUVs, high performance police vehicles.
- The Department is moving towards the whole fleet being AWD. Ms. Russ and Chief Ziehl discussed looking at the fleet to evaluate whether one of the 4x4s can be transferred to the Town for Building & Zoning.
- The vehicles average 25,000 miles a year on patrol, so the two 2015 Interceptor utilities bought 2.5 ago are already above 50,000 miles.
- In prior years, the 5-year outlook was based on past experience but didn't factor in outfitting with equipment or patrol versus administration, and insuring all vehicles fully.

Finance: Ms. Russ requested \$6,000 again, the second such request in five years, for server replacement; a payment plan is not a likely option. She noted that the replacement would serve the police station, too. Next year's request will be for the rest of the necessary funds if the server looks like it's not going to make it. Also, the existing accounting software is old, doesn't meet the Town's needs, and is very problematic and buggy. Ms. Russ is requesting a new software package along with FGR Schools, so both entities will have the same system and meet the incipient State transparency portal, bring payroll in-house, and bring overall cost down; the package includes training / implementation / yearly maintenance fee. Mr. Barnes added that the schools would be paying out of their own budget for their share.

Board discussion on recommendations:

Isaac Paine – general consensus on \$150,000 with the exception of Mr. Cervasio. Mr. Carey pointed out they did allocate to HVAC / counters and bookshelves last year. Mr. Cervasio countered that the schools do have money to cover themselves. Mr. Carey said the topic is more appropriate for during budget meetings with the Council.

Engineering Board – Cost spread out over three years versus two was talked about, as well as issues with future years' requests. The Board wants to reverse the Capital Fund balance trend of decrease, and build it

back up within three years' time. Mr. Marsland said they were only in the beginning stages of specs for the equipment request and hoped to get the initial estimate down.

Overall discussion commenced on 2% from operating as standard for Capital, and recommending to the Council that they change it to 4% this year during workshop. This strategy would keep capital fund balance level, and since extra above 2% was added last year the budget is now set up that way and it wouldn't affect this year's budget. Any future debt or bond is not included in the general 4% cap, and financing is also a possible recommendation.

Motion by Mr. Cervasio to transfer the requested School funds to the first year's payment of a Fire pumper. There was no second. Motion failed.

DPW – There was discussion on priority between the loader request and how it directly relates to public safety versus the pumper request and how money for paving would be affected, and associated liability scenarios.

Finance / Town-wide (including Police) – There was general agreement on the draft recommendations.

Motion by Mr. Spaziano to approve the recommendations as drafted. Second by Mr. Carpenter. Approved 5 – 1 – 0 (Mr. Cervasio voted no).

2) Land Trust and Conservation Commission Liaison Appointments

Mr. Carey asked Mr. Carpenter if he was willing to continue as the Land Trust liaison. Mr. Carpenter replied that he was.

Mr. Carey asked Mr. Spaziano if he was willing to continue on as the Conservation Commission liaison. Mr. Spaziano replied that he was.

C. Approval of Minutes January 4, 2017

Discussion/Action

Motion by Mr. Sparks to approve the minutes of January 4, 2017. Second by Mr. Carpenter. Approved 6 – 0.

D. Correspondence

Discussion/Action

Mr. Carey stated that Ms. Hardy had drafted a letter of thanks to Julia Parmentier, and everyone signed it.

E. Board Members' Reports 1) Land Trust

Discussion/Action

Mr. Carpenter highlighted that the financials were done and the Land Trust has a couple hundred thousand dollars so they are in good shape. They are looking into the DEM Farmland Acquisition program and need maps at the smallest scale to assist in recognizing property ownership for conserved land and abutting or landlocked property, and how that might impact acquisition decisions. Mr. Cervasio wanted to discuss the amount of land the Land Trust owns that is off the tax roll, and suggested the liaison discuss it with them moving forward.

2) Conservation Commission

No report was available at this time.

N. Comprehensive Plan Update

Discussion/Action

Ms. King said there were no comments received yet from the Board, but ongoing communication with the consultant indicates that they are hard at work.

O. Future Agenda Items

Discussion

- 1) RIDEM Farmland Access Program
- 2) Presentation & Discussion re: Accessory Businesses on Farms/Forests

3) Full Meeting of Town Boards & Commissions

Ms. Hardy suggested adding February 15 as Comp Plan reminder. Ms. King stated that she would share the February 1 presentation details with other Boards and Commissions.

P. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:01 p.m. was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Hardy, Secretary