

Weare Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 22, 2022

Present at meeting:

- Town Administrator: Naomi Bolton
- Finance Committee: Janice Mathews, Maria Fossiano, Thomas Clow, John Merva, Tom Flaherty, Gary Evans, Bill Anderson
- Guest Speakers/Presenters: Jack Dearborn (CIP Committee), Denise Purington (Parks and Rec)

Chair Tom Clow (TC) called the meeting to order at 7:02pm. He then asked members to reintroduce themselves.

TC introduced CIP Committee Chair Jack Dearborn (JD), who presented the CIP plan.

JD thanked everyone who helped put the presentation together. He mentioned that the CIP plan supports the Town Master Plan.

Janice Mathers (JM) asked whether the Finance Committee should interrupt with questions or wait to ask. JD asked for questions to be held to each section of the plan. JM also asked if items in the plan were linked to Master Plan items.

TC mentioned that the Master Plan was outdated and that a warrant article failed last year which would have provided funds to update it.

JD explained the primary classifications of the CIP Plan, which are "Urgent", "Necessary", "Desirable", "Deferrable", "Premature", and "Inconsistent". He then mentioned that all of the items in this CIP plan were either "Urgent" or "Necessary".

JD also described the CIP 6-year Plan Overview, which shows Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) balances by department and debt service amounts. This Overview acts as a planning tool, to avoid surprises. He then explained the "White Board", a distilled view of all department requests showing priority and tax impacts.

JD went through each departmental section of the plan:

Fire Dept + EMS:

Key items are replacing 25 Radio Pagers, which would come out of the Equipment Fund, with no tax impact. Also, replacing a current 2003 Ford F350 Utility Truck.

Bill Anderson (BA) asked about using CRF versus Tax-based Warrant Article. JD said that the Board of Fire Wards would be discussing alternatives and options. BA is concerned about CRF balance relating to what shows as a 2-year shift on the 6-year plan.

Tom Flaherty (TF) asked about using the ARPA funds for Radio Pagers. JD said that the Fire has an equipment fund and was not included in the ARPA fund disbursement.

Police Dept:

Only request is a Patrol Cruiser Replacement for \$78k. JD said that Supply Chain issues are preventing getting accurate prices. This vehicle request failed last year, so 10% was added to last year's quote to estimate this year's cost.

JD explained Police Department vehicle fleet mileage, repair costs and vehicle rotation plan.

Bill Anderson (BA) asked if this was a new vehicle or a true replacement. JD mentioned that Police initially asked for two vehicles (Patrol and Command) but removed the Command vehicle request for economic reasons. He said that this was essentially a new vehicle, until one dies. JD also mentioned that we are down to our current number of cars (7) through attrition.

Janice Mathews (JM) asked whether this second vehicle request was dropped due to cost or safety. JD said that he felt the department didn't really need to ask for two. JM also asked if the Police Dept was planning to include a vehicle using the operating budget. JD said that he did not know about this.

Parks and Rec:

JD explained that the key request is a \$20k Survey and Engineering study for rebuilding the existing Tennis Courts. This is part of a multi-year plan (2023-2037) (\$170k replacement + \$20k study = \$190k estimated). This request has a tax impact.

Denise Purington (DP) presented more detail, explaining the history of the Tennis Courts, which can no longer be repaired and require replacement. She mentioned that recently repaired/resurfaced cracks have re-appeared and that court replacement could cost \$100k per court.

She mentioned that State matching grants are being pursued, possibly cutting the replacement cost in half, and that these grants often contain contingencies, which must be fully understood before applying. The application process could take up to a year. As a result, the replacement cost is only a summary.

Janice Mathews (JM) asked how many residents use the courts annually? Denise Purington (DP) explained the availability of the court and that they are used primarily for Pickle Ball, sometimes for tennis. She also mentioned that the Pickle Ball league has grown recently and has paid for nets and balls. The 2022 resurfacing repairs were paid for using Emma Sawyer Trust funds.

JM also asked if there was a sign-up process. DP said that the courts were open to the public during the season, There is a schedule but no reservation system.

DPW:

Jack Dearborn (JD) explained that the key requests are two (2) 10-wheel plow truck replacements plus \$640k in road reconstruction. The road reconstruction request includes \$40k to repaving of the library parking lot.

JD explained how the \$600k would allow Weare to maintain existing roads, reducing future repairs. This is a recurring DPW request for road maintenance.

Janice Mathews (JM) asked how many red-flagged roads Weare has. JD said he did not have the number and cannot say how many roads would be maintained.

Tom Clow (TC) explained that Weare has 75 miles of paved roads.

Tom Flaherty (TF) asked about the recent unanticipated return of State funds for road repairs (Highway Block Grant) and whether that money was already spent. JD said that the Selectmen need to decide how that money is used.

JD explained that the two plow trucks slated for replacement are 2005 and 2006 vintage. (6- and 10-wheel trucks, "T-8" and "T-9" from the fleet). The bodies of newer trucks are made of stronger steel, costing more but lasting longer.

JD also mentioned that DPW Manager (Benji) asked for two trucks last year and only got one and that 2-3 trucks may not be ready for service this year if we don't approve two new trucks. He added that truck "T-5" (a 2004 vintage was approved last year but has not arrived yet.

JD also said that trucks were cheaper a few years ago and the costs only seem to be going up. Weare seemed to take a long break in purchasing trucks around 2008-2009 and has to make up for this gap.

JD then reviewed the plan summary, explaining the tax impacts and took further questions. He concluded his presentation.

Tom Clow (TC) then passed out a Code of Ethics for members to read and sign. He said that the next meeting would be on December 7th, where the department heads would present their information.

TC also mentioned that James Drury will remain on the committee but missed the first two meetings due to personal conflicts. He mentioned that Tami Hagman will not remain on the committee.

Bill Anderson (BA) discussed the preliminary Weare School District budget sheets and that the Weare School Board has a budget review on December 6, 2022 from 5pm-7pm. He also mentioned that the next School Board Meeting is on December 20, 2022.

TC asked when we should have the Weare and John Stark School Boards come in to present their information, as December 7th may be too soon for them. The board considered a tentative date of December 21.

Janice Mathews asked if we had minutes from the last meeting to approve, explaining that we have 144 hours to submit draft minutes. No minutes have been distributed to date. This question should resurface at the next meeting, as the Secretary (Leah Borla) was not present.

Tom Clow motioned to adjourn at 8:35pm. Bill Anderson provided a second and the motion passed.

Minutes Submitted by Tom Flaherty (acting Secretary) 11/28/22