

## **Weare Finance Committee Minutes for 19 Nov 2015**

1. The Weare Finance Committee met at the Town Offices on Thursday 19 Nov at 7pm. Members in attendance were Lori Davis, Matt Whitlock, Bill Anderson, Keith Erf, Rochelle Pitkaniemi, David Recupero, Peter Mennis, Stephen Wallace, and Greg McDowell. Town Moderator John Foss was also present.

2. Membership. Chairman Davis announced that Russ Hammond has had to resign from the committee due to pressing personal and work related issues. This leaves the committee with ten members.

3. CIP Business. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Chairman Jack Dearborn and CIP member Stu Richmond were present. Chairman Dearborn presented the CIP projects for CY16 for Highway and Fire Departments. Chief Vezina from Fire and Supervisor Redmond from Highway were also present to answer questions and provide details on the listed projects.

### **a. Highway Department Requests.**

1. Highway Garage (\$1.36M). Project would replace the current outdated wood frame structure with an 80X140 building. Added site work would include septic, well, and cistern/pump to service fire suppression in the building. The project would protect and allow more efficient use of trucks and equipment by providing covered and heated storage for all vehicles. Warm up times would be reduced and trucks could be preloaded in prep for winter storms. Garaging would also potentially extend the life of high priced equipment. Personnel would be provided a safe work environment including proper ventilation, drainage, and space. Office and storage space is included. Steve Roberts from the Garage Committee provided additional information and rough conceptual drawings. Project costs are developed using today's standard of \$105/sf for the structure and \$184K for site work. Project is expected to be bonded over 10 years; first year tax impacts are projected at 23 cents per thousand.

2. Road Reconstruction (\$480K). Project is recurring each year. Project provides the funding to maintain town roads. It is funded by a state and town generated funds. For CY16, state funding is expected to increase from \$240K to \$268K ( the result of increased gas taxes). Last year the road reconstruction project was funded at \$450K. This year's project would increase the fund by the additional dollars provided by the state while leaving the town tax portion neutral as compared to last year.

3. Wheel Loader (\$185K). Equipment is critical to loading winter sand and salt into trucks; it also loads fill in summer months for road maintenance. If the loader breaks down it would cost the town \$5-6K per month for a rental. Current loader is eleven years old with over 10,000 hours on it. Replacing now would reduce

maintenance costs and provide some trade in value (est \$25K) to offset a portion of the purchase price.

4. Plow Truck (\$179K). Project would replace a 2003 6-wheeler plow truck with over 100,000 miles. Price includes the plow and a stainless steel sander. Replacement now is consistent with long range planned replacement of plow trucks at an approximate rate of one per year. Deferring will continue to add maintenance costs on an aging fleet and create the need for multiple purchases in the same budget year. Last years warrant article for a plow truck failed.

5. Skid Steer (\$59.6K). Project would replace transfer station equipment used to move recyclables and fee based items. Current equipment is 2005 with over 4200 hours. Main problem is high maintenance on existing equipment. Item failed last year as a warrant article.

6. Scales (\$43K). Currently the transfer station has no way to weigh incoming demolition and other fee items. Residents pay now based on estimated volume by the attendant. When material is transferred the town pays the receiving site by weight; thus the system is comparing apples with oranges. The town has no idea whether the fees collected match the bill to the town and residents have no way of knowing whether they are being fairly charged relative to other customers. Scales would rectify the problem.

7. Two additional projects were deferred to outyears by the CIP. River Road has significant degradation in areas and will require paving; this road is a major town artery as it provides the only alternate N/S route to 114. The River Road Bridge near Buzzell Hill Rd, which was replaced in the late nineties, has significant flaking of structural steel and will require attention in the near future. Any weight limit imposed due to condition would have a significant impact on both town highway and commercial truck traffic.

b. Fire Department Requests.

1. Ambulance (\$238K). Project would replace a 2003 model with over 90K miles and 5000 engine hours, the oldest of 2 ambulances in the town. Increased frequency of repairs and reliability on the 2003 model is adversely impacting the reliability of fire and medical services. Proposed replacement model will have the added benefit of AWD thus avoiding potential delays in responding to secondary roads in winter conditions. Leasing option could spread 238K costs over multiple years. Failure to purchase or lease now will push replacement of both ambulances closer in cycle. Project failed as a warrant article last year.

2. Jaws of Life (\$35K). This is a life/safety issue. Current extraction equipment is not effective versus modern automotive material technology (carbon fiber/ boron steel). The technology, initially used in luxury/high end models now has broad industry use. New, more powerful equipment is needed; time is critical to save lives.

3. Forestry Vehicle (\$60K). Current command car used by the fire chief is a Durango passed on from the PD. It is a 2006 with 120,000 miles and severe rusting and in need of replacement. Current forestry vehicle is scheduled for replacement in 2020. Chief Vezina proposes replacing the forestry vehicle now and moving the current forestry vehicle to a command vehicle. The Durango would be placed out of service. There is approximately \$35K in a CIP reserve fund for fire vehicle replacement; note, this fund can be applied now to offset cost or the cost of an ambulance; it may also be carried over for future purchases.

### 3. School Boards.

a. Weare School Board. Marge Burke, Weare School Board, brought the committee up to date on budget status. The preliminary proposed budget is \$14.67M, slightly higher than last year's \$14.60M. The finance committee noted special education costs were reduced this year by \$149K and debt service was reduced by \$209K. The committee noted that we would expect those savings coupled with a declining student population to result in a lower proposed budget. A budget workshop is scheduled for the Weare School Board Dec 4th 330-530.

b. John Stark School Board. Preliminary proposed budget is slightly less than last year. Overall student population is down slightly to 711. There are considerable savings in special education costs this year, as is the case above. Major impact for Weare tax payers is the growing percentage of students in the HS from Weare; Henniker now has only one quarter of the HS students. Thus, like last year, even if the budget goes down, the Weare portion could go up. Stark School Board will have a budget workshop on 6 Jan from 4-6.

4. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 1010pm. Next meetings are scheduled for Thursday 3 Dec 7pm and Thursday 10 Dec 7PM at the Town Hall.

Bill Anderson/Secretary