

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire  
**Capital Improvements Program Committee (CIPC)**  
Meeting Minutes – September 28, 2020

*Note: Draft Minutes are subject to review, correction and approval by the Board. Review and approval of Minutes generally takes place at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

CIPC Chair Steven Bittel called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm at Whitcomb Hall and via Zoom software for electronic conferencing due to the COVID-19 health emergency in the State of New Hampshire. Emergency meeting pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, Section 8 and Emergency Order #12, Section 3. Members present: Chair Steven Bittel, Deb Davis, Jane Johnson, Bruce Bohannon at Whitcomb Hall. Recording Secretary Beverly Bernard, Selectmen’s Representative Sylvester Karasinski, and Lynn Rust via Zoom.

**PUBLIC ACCESS:** The public access to the meeting online via [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us), using the Zoom App on a cell phone or tablet or laptop, or using a landline by calling (929) 205-6099 and entering Meeting ID number 839 8443 2108. If there is difficulty accessing the meeting, please call (603) 352-7411 ext. 108.

**Absent:** Larry Crowder

**Others Present:** Town Administrator Michael Branley, Director of Planning and Economic Development Matthew Bachler, Police Chief Tom De Angelis, Fire Chief Bill Gould and Captains Eric Mattson and Brandon West at Whitcomb Hall and other members of the Fire Department via Zoom.

**MINUTES**

- The minutes for August 31, 2019 were considered. There was a **motion** by Bohannon to approve the minutes of August 31, 2019. There was a second by Davis. All were in favor by roll call. **Motion passed.**

**DISCUSSION**

**Fire Department Capital Requests**

- Replacement ambulance moved to out-years until situation clarifies.
- Fire Ponds may still be unresolved – but appears to be expanded.
- Radios may still be open – Bittel said these have settled out.

Equipment – a ladder truck and Engine2 at Center Station - both are 20 years old. Bittel said if they can last 5 more years they can be scheduled for replacement at 25 years. Gould said Engine2 has rust near the frame and water tank. He said the tank would need to be removed to see the extent of the problem. He said there might be a problem next year getting through an inspection. Bittel noted a possibility of purchasing a demo from Pierce that would cost a lot less money. Bittel said that if the Town purchases it, we cannot garage it because of its height. There is only one bay high enough to take the truck. Bittel said he didn’t think the public was aware of this issue. He commended the Chief for coming up with a cost savings of \$250,000 to \$300,000 via the demo dual rescue/pumper truck. Bittel also spoke about the pick-up truck. He noted Eric Mattson needs a vehicle since he is a command level/fire inspector/code compliance officer and should have a vehicle.

Gould addressed fire trucks. He said engine2 is priority over the ladder truck. He noted the demo engine will

cost less for a rescue pumper than a new vehicle. He said he didn't think Engine2 will last another 5 years. Gould said a vehicle for Mattson has been bid. Bittel said the controlling issue is the new station. Gould said that even if Town Meeting votes in favor in March of 2021 there will not be a station built quickly. Gould said the fire department will ramp up promoting the new fire station. He noted there are no quarters for female firefighters. More than 30% of Swanzev firefighters are female.

Davis spoke about how long it took for a new police station and people do not understand that the longer it takes to pass, the more expensive to build.

Gould said station 1 door might be able to be raised higher to accommodate new apparatus. Gould said that he has made it clear that if the new station does not pass, the Town fire department will be forced to operate out of two stations instead of three. There are too many problems with central station.

Davis noted that negative comments have been made on Facebook Swanzev Community page.

There was a brief discussion about the cost of the police station versus the cost of a new fire station. Gould noted costs are going up. He said to focus on the impact on taxes, which is minimal. Bittel said folks don't realize that the school tax is almost three times higher than the town taxes as a percentage of the total tax, and people tend to look at the total only. Bittel also noted that the police department capital expenses are minimal compared to the fire department.

Bittel said the fire department needs to promote the needs to the taxpayers. Davis said her concern is the possibility of missing out on the deal Gould found. Vote should be scheduled for 2023 with purchase between 2023 and 2024 was decided by consensus. Davis said the existing apparatus has been a lemon from the start. Gould said the winters are tough in the northeast. Down south or out west trucks might last longer. Bohannon asked about undercoating the trucks. Bittel said to try to get the most out of Engine2. Gould asked about \$80,000 being put away each year for fire trucks and couldn't that amount be increased. Bittel said the request was cut back to \$700,000 for engine2, that is a combined total for two vehicles of \$1,200,000 in five years, which is \$240,000 a year. Bittel said that would be much harder for taxpayers to digest. Bohannon asked if the Town is on track for revenue and Branley said he hasn't seen a negative impact yet from the virus. Motor vehicles have been on pace to match prior years.

Gould spoke about the possibility of leasing trucks. Karasinski said in 1999 they used leasing. Branley said leasing requires higher interest rates as compared to bonds. Bittel noted bonds are spread out more years than typical leasing. He explained a combination of capital reserve annual contribution and debt service (principal + interest) on borrowing is used for CIPC calculations. That is the proper way to track how much the Town is really spending. Bittel spoke about the percent of vote needed for the fire station.

Fire Ponds – were discussed. Bachler spoke about the changes recommended for the budget. He said he worked with Code Enforcement Officer Mike Jasmin and Andy Fisher at the fire department. He said they looked at the fire pond budget which was \$25,000 annually for maintenance. He said they decided to plan more strategically. He said there was a fire water assessment done in 2010. Those recommendations were reviewed.

He reviewed six priority projects to be done over the next six years:

- 2022 - Creating a more formal fire pond at Arrowcrest Drive just off Route 12 – dredging and adding a hydrant which would improve service in the area, including commercial properties along route 12.
- 2022 - Martin Brook - New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) will be doing some work there – the Town could possibly have a dry hydrant installed by NH DOT.

- 2023 - Dry hydrants at high school – replaced and dredge if needed – improved capacity for fire suppression at schools, town hall, library.
- 2023 - Sawmill Drive – has a wetland area - replace hydrants and dredging required. \$30,000 for this project.
- 2024 – improving coverage for business and encourage new development – public contribution as well as private contribution to pay for these – he also referred to potential for grants.
  - 544 Monadnock Highway – Nissan of Keene property has wetland that could be dredged out with hydrants installed and benefit to Fenton dealership property.
- 2025 – Widemore Farm Road – constructing a new fire pond to encourage additional development and help existing businesses. Same public/private funding as 544 Monadnock Highway.

Bachler said he is proposing a small increase in annual contribution for 2022 and 2023 projects and 2024 and 2025 projects to be funded by grants and cooperative funding between public and private business. Bachler said increasing the costs is needed to account for increased costs over time.

Karasinski asked about consideration for the intersection at Sawyers Crossing and State Route 10 at Rymes Propane tanks site. Karasinski said it needs work. Mattson said the water has eroded the site over time and it is difficult to draw water from the river. He noted regulatory difficulty in moving earth near the river.

Bachler said the intent is to look at the fire pond budget more closely annually since there may be more projects in the future or some removed, depending on need. Branley commended all who worked on this project to update. Bittel noted this year funding was committed to the Richmond Pond project. Bittel said \$35,000 annual contribution will most likely become \$45,000. Bittel referred to year over year changes and noted it was about even in expenditures. That will likely be more given addition to ponds.

Facilities need review – Bittel asked if overall number looks reasonable, which is \$20,000 annually.

Emergency Management – radios were discussed. \$25,000 is slotted for police in 2024. There was a discussion about available grants. Bohannon said he would do some research into possible grant money. Karasinski said a grant was awarded in 2005. Bohannon asked why dual-band radios needed. Brandon West explained the reasoning for the need. De Angelis also added that police could use dual band as well, but had never used it. Bittel asked about follow-up with mutual aid about this. He said the cost is about \$7,000 a copy.

Bittel spoke about maintenance data from the Chief – for fire tools line item there is 82% left in budget as of July report. Bittel said apparatus line item has only 17% of budget left because \$20,000 for new transmission for ladder1 was spent. The rest seem to be fairly spread out. Bittel noted that the \$20,000 sounds high number, but relative to the cost of the apparatus, it is reasonable.

Karasinski asked about the radios – airport frequency is not VHF – some command vehicles should have the airport frequency.

Bittel thanked Gould for his input.

### **Police Department Capital Requests**

De Angelis was present. Bittel asked about the cruiser interior revolving fund and has it been adequate and De Angelis said it is working well. De Angelis said they have had some luck with regard to cruisers. Bittel asked about station repairs, and he said they slotted in some funds. De Angelis said half the station is new

with a new roof. He spoke about water coming off the roof like a waterfall when it rains. Bohannon said to remove the repeater line item. De Angelis said he is a bit concerned about portable radios and single band versus dual-band and will do some research to see what is available. Mobile goes in the cruiser and portable is carried, explained De Angelis. De Angelis said the planned funding is low for these radios if you need to replace them all at once. De Angelis suggested approximate \$3,500 for single-band radio per officer. De Angelis said 2022 said is the right time. Software updates were discussed and when radios are no longer supported by the software, they have to be replaced. Bittel suggested \$15,000 in 2022 and \$15,000 in 2023 and De Angelis agreed. Bittel said if the water off the roof is a problem, it should be fixed. De Angelis said the water situation doesn't occur often. He said he is happy with the building right now.

**Next Meeting:**

**ADJOURNMENT**

There was a motion by Bohannon to adjourn the meeting with a second by Karasinski. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary