

Meredith Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes

September 5, 2007

Members Present: Bill Bayard, Chairman, Planning Board Representative
Lou Kahn, Planning Board Representative
Miller Lovett, Board of Selectmen Representative
Jack Carty, School Board Representative
Jeanie Forrester
Mark Flanders
Jack McEwan

Staff Present: Carol Granfield, Town Manager
John Edgar, Community Development Director

Chairman Bayard called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Minutes of the June 27, 2007 meeting were distributed. Chairman Bayard deferred action on the minutes until the next meeting.

Committee members discussed their impressions of the recent workshop held with the Board of Selectmen. Comments included:

- There was a lack of understanding. We need to provide an executive summary of our recommendations.
- There were good comments from Committee members however we did not get to a substantive conversation with the Selectmen.
- We have been doing a lot of borrowing. We need to evaluate the pros and cons of short vs. long term borrowing.
- We need to drive home the basis for the recommendations and the importance of not creating a spike in capital spending.
- Town officials should provide budget guidelines and expect department heads to meet them.
- We should not get into maintenance items.
- We will need revenue projection for the water department to determine what capacity the utility has to absorb project costs.
- The department's job is to provide the Committee with good numbers. The Committee's job is to "down-build".
- As debt service increases, there likely will be less non-debt dollars available to support capital projects.
- We may have to make adjustments to projects already scheduled based on changes reflected in recent budgets and the upcoming budget direction.
- Let the discussion ride on program capacity for now, focus on what is essential for 2008 and go from there.
- The Selectmen need flexibility to fulfill their duties as elected officials and at the same time need to be accountable for what is or is not included in proposed budgets.
- The public hearing before the Planning Board may be an opportunity to reinforce to the Selectmen the rationale behind the Committee's recommendations.

- We need to have Brenda give the Committee a summary of our debt service.
- As the budget process evolves, perhaps there can be dialogue with the Town Manager or the Board of Selectmen regarding priorities.
- The timing of the Fire Station project is not a foregone conclusion. We need to be able to re-visit what is scheduled.
- The current budget process encourages operating costs to increase while capital spending decreases.
- Officials need to be open to new ways of thinking to give back money to taxpayers, save money and avoid debt.
- We need more discussion between groups so we understand the dynamics that are occurring.
- The meeting was not productive in terms of getting specific guidance however it was an important step towards improving communication and understanding.

The Committee reviewed a draft fall meeting schedule. It was the consensus of the committee meet on Wed. 9/12, Wed. 9/19 as scheduled Thurs. 9/20 if necessary. We will see where we are at on the 19th and go from there. A public hearing date before the Planning Board is tentatively scheduled for October 16, 2007.

There was discussion regarding the report format. There was consensus that we needed a short Executive Summary focusing on the recommendations and the rationale behind them. The report could be supported by meaningful graphics but not over done. Some information could follow the summary for those interested in details. Debt information should be incorporated into a graphic. The Chair requested the Brenda provide a summary of debt information at the next meeting. The report needs to be to-the-point.

John distributed graphs and data prepared by Brenda regarding CIP recommendations, town meeting appropriations, debt service and project costs. This will be reviewed with Brenda at the next meeting.

With no further business to come before the Committee and without objection, Chairman Bayard declared the meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Edgar, Community Development Director
September 6, 2007

Approved: September 12, 2007

