

## **CIP Committee**

### **Regular Meeting**

Minutes

**September 8, 2023 – 7:30AM**

**Attendance: Tim Paradis, Paul Vance, Charles Kelsey, Bill Helm, David Royle**

**Others Present: Adam Ricker, Bob Brown, Emily Cobb, Jay Lyon, Kim Hallquist, Lynn Lewis**

#### 1. **Call to Order** –

Chair Paradis began the meeting at 7:30.

Adam Ricker introduced Bob Brown, Chair of the Conservation Commission (CC), and gave a background of how the CIP committee has handled CC during the CIP process in the past.

Mr. Brown gave an overview of the CC goals, specifically the preservation of “open space,” and how that relates to planning for future expenses related to land purchases and conservation. He gave a history of Conservation Commissions in New Hampshire and how the target goal of 25% for conservation land in New London was developed. He shared a current estimate that we are at 15% conserved land. He spoke to the challenges of being able to predict future land costs and noted that when an opportunity becomes available to purchase a parcel of interest, there isn’t time to wait for a warrant article at Town Meeting, the funds need to be available to purchase quickly. Mr. Brown prefers budgeting a fixed amount of funds each year to make long-term planning easier.

Tim Paradis had heard a different estimate of 19% conserved land in New London and asked if it could be due to differences in how the number can be calculated. Mr. Brown explained that there have been different models used, including some estimates that included bodies of water in the calculations. He gave details on what is included in the 15% calculation.

Paul Vance asked for more information on surrounding towns and how we should consider our land conservation goals in the context of the state overall. Mr. Brown gave an overview of how different local Conservation Commissions are structured and how some municipalities have other considerations such as state parks within their borders that can change the dynamics of how each municipality works towards their conservation goals. There was a conversation about partnerships with other entities such as the New London Springfield Water Precinct and Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust.

Charles Kelsey asked if there was a more specific way to estimate what amount of funding should be recommended. Mr. Brown spoke of the challenges of not knowing what the next purchase would be. Bill Helm suggested that with rising land costs, the \$500,000 estimate is too low, and should be adjusted accordingly. It was agreed that the target number will be raised to \$1,000,000. There was a discussion around current projects and maintenance, and it was decided that those expenses were more an issue for the budget committee.

Chair Paradis thanked Mr. Brown for his time and work on the Conservation Commission and welcomed Chief Emily Cobb to speak on the Police Department needs.

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Chief Cobb gave an overview of some potential expenses that could be considered for the CIP. Many of those items directly relate to the building infrastructure and there is concern around the fiscal responsibility of investing large sums of money into projects that will only deal with issues on a patchwork basis, rather than looking at the building project as a whole.

Mr. Helm asked Chief Cobb to speak about the communications tower and it was noted that the tower could be upgraded independently of the building. Chief Cobb's estimate was \$100,000 within the next 3 years. Chair Paradis recommended listing it for 2025. He noted that there are some projects, such as solar panels or electric vehicle infrastructure, that could still be useful for other town departments if the police were moved to a different location. He also agreed that some projects are specific to the needs of the police department, such the replacement of the obsolete security system. There was a conversation around the balance between upgrading deficient equipment reactively, and considering how those improvements could be planned into a new building. Electrical and structural infrastructure was discussed and whether the current building can support some essential equipment upgrades that will be needed.

Mr. Kelsey questioned the estimate currently projected for a new facility. There was a discussion of comparable projects in the state, as well as the potential soft costs of pursuing stop-gap measures vs upgrading the facility, more data will be gathered on those projects. There was a discussion of how to categorize different project costs within the framework of the CIP matrix. Chief Cobb explained how some future costs could change based on how the department is structured and operates, particularly with the focus on community policing.

The committee thanked Chief Cobb for her time and welcomed Chief Jay Lyon to speak on the Fire Department needs.

Chief Lyon gave an overview of grants that have been received in the past for some equipment that is now reaching the end of its lifespan. He recommended that certain types of equipment should be replaced all together, rather than incrementally as sometimes suggested for budgeting purposes. Batch replacement ensures consistency of operation and styling for critical equipment so there is no confusion during an emergency.

There have been supply chain issues, particularly with apparatus replacement. New orders are being estimated for delivery up to three years out, vs. under a year. Price increases are also outpacing previous predictions. He is exploring the potential to "re-chassis" the next piece to be replaced, which is the tanker, rather than replace it completely. This would help off-set rising costs.

Mr. Royal asked where that type of work could be done. Chief Lyon shared that they have been exploring local options with businesses experienced in that type of project. He explained that they can consider this option now because they have focused on purchasing multi-function vehicles, which reduces insurance costs and helps them manage during staffing shortages.

Mr. Kelsey asked if the sale proceeds from old equipment are factored into the cost of replacement. Chief Lyon gave an overview of NFPA standards and insurance considerations which don't typically lead to a high return on resale.

There was a conversation on work-force housing as it relates to recruiting and retention. The Fire House infrastructure was discussed in relation to how a future expansion could fit with the

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specialized needs of Fire Department equipment. The future of ambulance service in New London was brought up and operating models from other municipalities were discussed.

Chair Paradis thanked Chief Lyon and the committee welcomed Kim Hallquist to the Town Administration needs. Ms. Hallquist gave an overview of a proposed expansion to the Town Clerk and Tax Collector's offices. She explained how challenging the current set up can be when there are residents that need to deal with confidential or potentially sensitive topics. Since that project would require a reconfiguration of the overall office space, it would be a logical time to address some of the known building security issues such as an alarm system and keyless entry. She also recommended some other updates, such as carpeting, which could be accomplished at the same time.

Mr. Royle asked about emergency management storage. Ms. Hallquist said they have a storage container down at the sewer pumping station but noted that they would need to consider where emergency management operations would meet, when needed. There has been a shift away from using the second-floor conference room for public meetings and with the upgrades to Whipple Hall, the focus will be on using that facility going forward.

Mr. Royle asked about the status of Tracy Library and Mr. Ricker shared that due to the ongoing maintenance issue, they shifted Crystal Schimpf off the schedule for today and have not rescheduled her to a future meeting yet. Mr. Vance asked about digitization of paper records. Ms. Hallquist acknowledged the importance of that project but noted that they have not sent out a Request for Proposals yet.

The committee thanked Ms. Hallquist for her update.

2. **Future Meeting Dates:** Thursday, September 14 at 7:30AM at Syd Crook Conference Room.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55AM

Respectfully Submitted,

Cara Leone