

THE PLANNING BOARD
Town of Frankestown
Frankestown, NH 03043

January 13, 2010

PROPOSED MINUTES

Planning Board Members Present: Abigail Arnold (CIP Chair), Bob Lindgren (Chairman), Sarah Pyle, Mike Tartalis (alt.), Larry Johnson, Ben Watson.

Members of the Public: Betsy Hardwick, Tom Anderson, Charlie Pyle, Nick Wilder, Henry Kunhardt, Steve Bell, Gary Paige, BJ Carbee.

Ben Watson is taking the minutes in the absence of Minutes Clerk Melissa Stewart.

Abigail Arnold calls the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Departmental reviews follow, with representatives from the various departments present.

Police Department

Police Chief Steve Bell discusses future replacement of SUV police vehicle, and the ongoing need for renovations to the Police Station (former Town Hall Annex).

Department of Public Works

Highway Equipment:

Road Agent Gary Paige discusses future highway equipment replacement/refitting schedule. He estimates that the existing grader will no have no trouble lasting in good condition until 2013, its scheduled year of replacement in the CIP plan.

Road Improvement Program:

Pleasant Pond Road reconstruction will be the focus for the foreseeable future. Paige estimates that it will require \$75,000 to repair/resurface the section of road from Route 47 to Old County Road North.

General discussion ensues as to the inadequacy of annual CIP reserve funding for the Road Improvement account, due to rising costs for asphalt and materials, etc. Arnold expresses the opinion that, at \$100,000 per year, the town is losing ground.

Bridges:

Paige has put our town projects on the state list for 2015-16. Total projected cost of the projects is around \$3 million. The town's total share would be 20% or around \$600,000. The four bridges on the list are: Russell Station Road (near Stewart); Juniper Hill Road (est.

\$600,000), Woodward Hill Road (near Pitman), and South New Boston Road (est. \$1 million).

Paige has also applied for a FEMA grant for 2011 for the bridge on Russell Station Road. If approved, this would require a 25% investment by the Town.

Arnold will recommend that the Town apply \$240,000 from Undesignated Fund Surplus to the bridge reserve fund. She further suggests that in future years the Town apply most of allowable UFS to bridge and road improvement funds.

Paige says that the \$600,000 estimate for the Juniper Hill Rd. bridge is because of state standards and due to the fact that the state would build a temporary span that would have to be removed once the replacement bridge is built. Paige has spoken with the town engineer, and wonders if it would be possible to build the new bridge first and then remove the old bridge. Whether this is feasible depends partly on width of the town's right-of-way. In other words, it might be possible for the town to build the bridge, with a waiver from the state, and save money, and that this may be appropriate for the Juniper Hill site, because of the low traffic volume on that road.

The Juniper Hill bridge was damaged in the 2007 floods, and it may also be eligible for FEMA funding. Paige says the federal government may be more flexible than the state in terms of standards for a low-use bridge.

A discussion ensues concerning steel-and-wooden bridges as an alternative to can-type bridges. The state does not like the former, but there are certain advantages: no contact with the water, as with cans or culverts; wood doesn't degrade with salt treatment, etc. The consensus is that this is an option worth exploring, as some of our other bridges in town are older versions of this type of construction, and their maintenance and renovation (redecking, etc.) seems to be very cost-effective.

Nick Wilder proposes doubling the capital reserve funding for Road Improvement. Arnold suggests that one way one to do this would be to keep \$100,000 as recommended CIP funding for this year, and to amend the reserves article from the floor at Town Meeting, emphasizing that the increase will help to finish the Pleasant Pond reconstruction in a reasonable number of years.

Watson asks Paige how much more of Pleasant Pond Road he might be able to reconstruct in 2010 if an additional \$100,000 were available. Paige estimates that DPW might be able to finish down to Todd Road.

Arnold says that a \$100,000 increase in taxation would result in a \$0.50 increase in the town tax rate (roughly). She asks Paige to report on what the additional \$100,000 would accomplish, over and above shortening the duration of the whole project.

Tartalis says that, as someone who lives on Pleasant Pond Road, he is keenly aware of its terrible condition and wonders why the town can't do anything to improve it. Paige agrees on the condition, but says that

any stopgap solution would not solve the underlying problems with the road.

Conservation Commission

Betsy Hardwick says that the Con Comm is asking voters to put \$30,000 into the Conservation reserve fund this year. There is around \$105,000 in the Conservation Fund currently, all of it committed to various projects.

Arnold reports that the town has 150 acres to be protected to meet the "2010 in 2010" program goal.

Town Government

Arnold asks the Selectmen present how reappraisal should be funded going forward: should it be funded from reserves (as previously, with a 5-year reappraisal period), or should it be built into the annual operating budget, because the town's appraisers have been doing annual updates or "checks".

Town Buildings

As mentioned above, the Police Dept. requires renovations. FIHS is not scheduled to vacate their part of the former Town Hall Annex until 2016.

The library has completed Phase One of their renovation/rebuilding effort, and they are not considering future projects at this time.

Pyle recommends funding Town Building Improvement reserves at \$20,000 a year, beginning in 2010. She says that there have been savings in the town's operating budget, and that some of this might be applied to funding the reserves.

Watson agrees that reserve funding should not be zeroed out if at all possible, because the Town Hall renovation will have to occur at some point, but since estimates are not in on the uses or the cost of renovation, he recommends that funding for 2010 be \$10,000.

Further discussion ensues about the best way to accept private donations toward the Town Hall renovation. Henry Kunhardt recommends that the Heritage Commission request that Selectmen set up a trust fund, if and when private donations begin to come in. Arnold asks what happens with designated gifts currently. Hardwick states that such earmarked donations would have to go into a trust fund, set up (as Kunhardt suggests) through the Board of Selectmen.

Lindgren consults RSAs describing the powers and duties of the Heritage Commission, and the nature of the Heritage Fund. It appears that expenditures from the Heritage Fund may be approved by a majority vote of the commission.

Arnold continues the CIP hearing to Wednesday, January 20 at 6:30 pm. The Budget Committee is meeting on Monday, January 18, and should have more information after that time.

The meeting is adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Benjamin A. Watson, Secretary
January 14, 2010*