

Town of Jackson Planning Board
Minutes – August 24, 2023 Working Meeting
- UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED

Call to Order: Chairman Bill Terry called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M. Chairman Terry conducted the roll call of all members. In attendance were Members Scott Badger, Sarah Kimball, David Campbell, Dick Bennett, and Kathleen Dougherty and Alternates Jerry Dougherty and James Wasco. Absent was the Selectmen's Representative Bob Thompson. There were no public attendees. The meeting was recorded via Zoom and will be made available on Jacksonflicks.com. Chairman Terry stated that there is no need to determine voting Members tonight as no actions will require a vote.

Approval of Minutes: No Minutes were reviewed.

Public Comment: No comments

Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Update:

Chairman Terry opened the discussion by asking if any member had any updates before we started. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to begin to organize the CIP department input into a workable document that lists the items, cost of projects and overall impact on the Town. Member Campbell prepared a draft of the needs presented over the past several meetings as a starting point for our discussions. Member Bennett and Chairman Terry stated our goal is to provide information, costs, impact on taxpayer and then present to the Board of Selectman.

Member Kimball suggested we review the previous five years of town expenditures to determine what percentage of the budget capital improvement expenses have been to demonstrate experience.

The first department reviewed was the Fire Department, and their needs over the next ten years. Member Badger asked what the status of the fire house project is, will it be new vs. remodel. Member Campbell stated that the Selectmen are reconsidering all available options and exploring the costs associated with each option. There was discussion on why there was a large cost difference between new vs. remodel of the current facility and what were the pros/cons for each option. Member Kimball suggested we create a one-page information sheet with pro/cons on major topics to educate the town people. She stated that the Planning Board's role is not to decide which option is appropriate but to provide options, costs, and impact to taxpayers to the Board of Selectmen.

There were additional questions on various items such as the need and the costs for each. It was agreed to develop a set of questions to obtain more clarification on need/cost. Member Campbell will go back to the Fire Department for clarification on all costs along with a report to determine the purpose of the equipment.

There was a general discussion on reserve funding of high-cost items by suggesting that the Town vote to reserve a percentage of the cost (75-80%) and then when it is time to purchase the Town votes on the additional funding necessary to purchase the item. This idea may be presented with our CIP final document.

Chairman Terry raised the need for additional space for the Police Department and asked how that would impact the Town Office building. Member Dougherty raised the need for additional office space and storage (paper files). The additional space could benefit the Police Department with more office space along with a car port to protect the police vehicles. There was a discussion on a digital solution to remove the paper that is in storage so the space could be used for different purposes. Chairman Terry questioned if there is any legal requirement for us to keep paper copies. Member Dougherty said that she will investigate if there are requirements, but reminded the Board that all current documents are digitally stored. The additional question discussed was the amount of space required. The estimated size of the additional office space would be around 1600 sq. ft. and the cost estimate is around (using \$250 per sq. ft.), \$400,000. The cost for upgrades to windows and carpeting could be factored into the additional space if the space is approved, otherwise, it could be a separate item. An outstanding issue that impacts the additional space is the building of the new fire house.

The next department reviewed was the need for the Highway department. The need for a roof for the salt storage was decided as a good idea and had a good cost associated. Alternate Dougherty raised a new need, road maintenance. The highway department is currently evaluating every culvert in town to determine if there are any structural needs. Chairman Terry and Member Bennett pointed out that there is no item/cost for road repair. Alternate Dougherty stated that in the past it was \$100K for maintenance, but that has been reduced over the years. He suggested that we put in put back in the program of \$150K per mile.

Alternate Dougherty said that the Grammar School is not focusing on long term plans right now. Chairman Terry pointed out that the school board has asked for funding for school upgrades in recent years and do we think that need will come up again within the next 10 years. It was suggested that in the CIP we put a future need for additional classroom space and storage with no cost associated with the items.

Chairman Terry updated the Board on Library activities. They are currently working on a strategic plan. The most important issue right now is the shelving system, which means moving from a fixed to a flexible system. The estimated cost is likely between \$50-\$70K. Various other needs are for children space, meeting space and storage which will be part of their long-term plan. The Library Board is also discussing the expansion of the building.

Member Badger talked about the challenge of raising money for a Housing Commission. This way the Commission would be ready to assist in the development of housing projects such as the town buying property for development or off-set cost. Member Kimball suggested that the establishment of a Trust might allow for obtaining grants and donations. Chairman Terry reminded the Board this year that the Facility Committee asked for feedback from townspeople

and the number one issue that everyone mentioned was the need for affordable housing. Therefore, the need for a source to facilitate the process and develop a plan needs to go into the CIP document. Alternate Dougherty suggested we conduct a buildout analysis similar to the one the NCC did in 2014, with updated parameters, so we can determine what the possibilities are in Town. It was decided that we will recommend the establishment of a Housing Commission and initial funding.

Member Bennett reviewed the plans and cost for a solar power array on the old Transfer Station property. The estimated cost for a 40 panel array ground mounted system is \$101K with a \$30K federal credit, so total cost would be \$71K with a monthly meter cost. The recommendation for the Transfer Station and Whitney Center will be included in the CIP document.

Member Campbell updated the Board on the Gray's Inn Garage project. He has had one vendor here to review the property and obtained a quote and is waiting for the second vendor to quote on repairing the building. The building is in worse shape than initially thought, so it might need to be removed. If so, we will need to discuss storage for the items in the building, that belong to the Highway Department, Fire and Police Department, Library, Town Office staff and Chamber. An optional use for the property is to turn it into green space, or recreational use.

Member Campbell mentioned that we did not have the Emergency Management Department as a department to explore so it has been added. Member Campbell will follow up with Emily Benson to discuss their needs.

Member Bennett motioned to adjourn the meeting and Member Dougherty seconded. The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 P.M.

Next regular Planning Board meeting is September 14, 2023.

Respectfully submitted by David L. Campbell, Secretary