

**Advisory Commission on Capital Expenditures  
Minutes of the March 11, 2009 meeting**

- 1) Chairman Tom Frenaye called the meeting to order at 7:01pm in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room in Town Hall. Commission members Eric Harrington and alternate Marilyn Conley were present. Raye Mandirola and George Colli IV were unable to attend. First Selectman Scott Lingenfelter was present.
- 2) After Mr. Harrington moved, and Mrs. Conley seconded, the Commission approved the minutes of the February 11, 2009 meeting.
- 3) Mr. Frenaye opened the Public Hearing to receive input from residents concerning capital projects for the 2009-2010 budget year at 7:05pm. Town Engineer Gerry Turbet was present and offered some additional input on two projects previously submitted. He indicated that recently a proposal for bids for the construction of the remaining portion of the Farmington Valley Greenway had been released. The unfinished section in Suffield is one of the very few remaining sections between Farmington and the CT/MA state line, and that the requested \$55,000 for the 2009-10 budget was the last of the financing necessary. The town has also requested that funding through a CT Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant submitted 1/2/09.

Mr. Turbet also noted that the \$2.44m project for an upgraded bridge on Suffield Street is in its final approval stage. The state pays 80% or \$1.952m and the town will pay \$488k, of which \$188k has already been set aside. Mr Turbet indicated that the town is also pursuing the remaining \$300k needed through the Capital Regional Council of Governments (CRCOG) as they help to prioritize eligible state projects for economic stimulus money from Washington. Suffield seems to have a reasonable possibility of securing some additional funding.

Lastly, Mr. Turbet noted that the planned survey of all town roads was about to be finalized. The RFP process has been ongoing and it appears the cost for the survey will be lower than expected, thanks to the current economy. The survey will be started once the snow season has completely passed.

Mr. Frenaye then closed the Public Hearing at 7:30pm

- 4) Chairman Frenaye updated members on questions raised on submitted capital projects at the previous meeting, including further input on the proposal for the Fire Department communications system upgrade. He said that the radio systems had to be upgraded by 1/1/2013 according to Federal rules, and that both the Fire and Police Department plans included increasing coverage in northeast and southeast portions of town, and replacing telephone connections to remote receiver sites was a necessary step towards better reliability. He said that Chief Belmore indicated that at the very minimum the Fire Department need to upgrade two repeaters for a total of \$45,000 and some additional equipment at two sites for \$25,000. That would provide for minimum compliance, but that eventually, the department would need to switch to digital equipment to be compatible with the Police Department communications system.

He noted input from the Finance Director that the town's capital assets being depreciated were valued at \$89,096,882 as of 6/30/08, plus another \$11,302,624 for Land and

Construction in Progress. The Water Pollution Control Authority has an additional \$26,137,933 being depreciated, plus \$16,038,335 in progress.

Mr. Frenaye also noted that the estimated cost for extending the town's fiber optic communications network across Route 75 to serve the Library and new Senior Center (and options to include Bridge Street School and the Ambulance Association) was prohibitive, based on the estimated costs received. Joe Sangiovanni, chairman of the Permanent Building Committee indicated that the Senior Center Plans would only allow for basic telephone and Internet connectivity, and they would not be able to connect in to the town's data or telephone systems.

He reported that he had a conversation with Representative Matt Conway regarding state Open Space funding in their 2009-10 budget, and that as of the moment, Mr. Conway expects continued funding, though possibly not at the present year's levels.

Eric Harrington commented on a revised schedule of Fire Department apparatus replacement costs he had generated as a result of Chief Belmore's input that the life span fire trucks and related apparatus should be calculated based on a 25-year term, not 30 years as had previously been indicated. This means the town will need to reserve considerably more money for apparatus replacement than had previously been indicated - \$582k/year for seven years.

5) Mr. Frenaye noted that the Board of Selectman had been copied on minutes from previous ACCE meetings and had been given a draft list of submitted capital projects that had not been prioritized. First Selectman Lingenfelter was invited to comment on the lengthy list of projects and provide any additional input he might have.

Mr. Lingenfelter reviewed a number of the projects on the list, reviewed the Board of Selectman's Long Range Plan draft from February 2008 and offered input on several items. In response to a question, he noted the town's proposed operating budget for 2009-10 included maintenance line items of approximately the same amount as the present year – building maintenance was the same at \$80k and grounds/field maintenance was reduced from \$106k to \$100k.

Mr. Frenaye indicated that two requests for studies would not be considered and should be part of the town's operating budget, if desired. They were the request from the Town Planner for \$91,000 for the Plan of Conservation and Development, and the \$25,000 requested from Parks and Recreation for a study of Babb's Beach. The Commission does not believe that studies should be considered as capital projects.

During the discussion, Commission members made some suggestions to change the priority rating of a number of projects on the list. Mr. Frenaye will be revising the project list based on the discussions and circulating it to members next week for further review.

The next, perhaps last, meeting of this budget season is planned for March 25<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm.