

CIAC meeting – January 20, 2015 at DPW building (275 Old Lancaster Road)

In attendance: Chairperson Tom Travers, Jim Kelly, Bob Desaulniers, Sue Abrams, Jamie Gossels, Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi, Michael Lane

Also in attendance: Jose Garcia-Meitin, Chuck Woodard, Maureen Valente

Not present: Eric Greece

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tom Travers at 7pm following acknowledgement of a quorum.

Discussion on free cash policy

Jose Garcia-Meitin from the finance committee presented a discussion draft of a proposed free cash policy. The policy includes the following guidelines:

1. There be a level of free cash equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ of 1% of the current year's operating budget.
2. Excess free cash should be used, if approved by a 2/3 majority vote at Town Meeting, to replenish the stabilization fund if the fund balance falls below 5% of the following year's projected budget.
3. Should there be free cash remaining, it may be used on any of the following:
 - to reduce a tax levy in an override situation of the operating budget,
 - to purchase assets suggested by the CIAC,
 - to pay towards OPEB obligations,
 - for repairs necessary to infrastructure to prolong asset life,
 - any additional expenditures as deemed by the Board of Selectmen.

In response to this proposal, the CIAC suggested there be a body to prioritize the uses of any free cash. Historically, prioritization has been done by Maureen Valente and her staff, then brought to the Board of Selectmen for approval.

The minutes of the January 15th meeting were tabled.

Review of the CIAC final recommendations on the FY2016 capital budget

Tom presented his opinion that there are three items we should defer: the fuel storage tank, the proposed lights at Cutting field and fixing the Atkinson pool roof.

There was a question as to whether or not the lights would still be needed at Cutting field if the Davis field project was approved; Michael is going to check with Park and Recreation to clarify.

It was suggested that we not approve funds to fix the Atkinson pool roof that is old but not leaking. In addition, since the Fairbank Center is on track to be remodeled/rebuilt, it is presently unclear if the new roof and old roof would blend together with the new design. It was suggested to defer this project until the plans of the new Community Center are further developed.

Other projects discussion

In discussing the plans for developing Davis field, the committee noted the lack of an irrigation system in the proposal. Since the original submission included \$350K for irrigation, the committee feels that in order to make the project effective long term, irrigation is needed. Michael will again ask Park and Recreation to clarify this question. There is also some question as to how this project is to be funded. A request is going to be made to the CPC for \$1 million dollars, with the remaining \$200K paid through user fees.

Tom asked Jim Kelly for clarification on the Town and School parking lots line item. Jim explained that the \$200K request was to finish the job started last summer at Curtis Middle School, and any remaining funds could then be used elsewhere as needed on other town parking lots.

The proposal for the stabilization fund for the DPW trucks was discussed. The purpose of the fund would be to continually have the ability to set aside funds, through Town Meeting approval, to be used only in the purchase of trucks. The fact that a 2/3 majority of Town Meeting voters would be necessary in moving funds into or out of the stabilization fund was discussed. Maureen stated that the public would need to be educated on how the fund would function before bringing the concept before Town Meeting.

The discussion on the proposal for design of the MCR trail focused on what was best in meeting the needs of the town. The committee did not feel the proposed stone dust surface best served the needs of cyclists, runners or rollerblades, and the committee questioned whether or not the surface would well withstand weather and wear. In addition, the proposed 1.6 mile segment is a small section of a 5.4 mile trail that does not connect to another trail unless other towns also approve the trail. It was also suggested that doing the engineering for the first 1.6 miles does not give the voters the information they need to understand the full cost impact of the 5.4 mile trail. Also, the town will be notified by April whether or not NStar will be laying wires along the MCRT, in which case, they may create the trail, or part of it, themselves.

Final vote

Vote on capital exclusion: approved unanimously

Vote to defer storage tank: approved unanimously

Vote to defer Atkinson pool roof: approved unanimously

Vote on Cutting field lights: tabled until Michael receives additional information

Vote on MCRT engineering and design: not recommended (1 for, 4 against)

Vote on Davis field: tabled until Michael receives additional information

Tom will present the CIAC's positions to the Finance Committee on February 9th. He will explain that the CIAC does not yet have a position on the Cutting field lights and Davis field as we are waiting for additional information.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05pm

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Asbedian-Ciaffi