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Town of Ludlow, Massachusetts
Capital Improvement Planning Committee

Minutes of the April 10, 2023, Capital Improvement Planning Committee.

Meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

Members Present: Marc Strange, James Gennette, Josh Carpenter, Luis Vitorino, Tony Sanches

5:30 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Gennette: Thank you everybody. I think we're going to try to get through pretty quick. First thing we're going to have to do, it's actually not on the agenda here but we have to reorganize. I need a nomination for Chairman.

Motion made by Mr. Carpenter to nominate James Gennette to remain as chairman.

Mr. Gennette: I have a nomination. Is there anybody else that would like a nomination? Hearing none. Can I have a vote?

Mr. Sanches second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Gennette: Next is the vice chairman. Are there any nominations? Josh, do you want to stay in that position? Are you interested in being nominated?

Mr. Carpenter: I would like to stay in the position if the board would wish to keep me there.

Motion made by Mr. Sanches to nominate Josh. **Mr. Vitorino second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.**

Mr. Gennette: We're reorganized. That was quick and easy. Right to the agenda. Obviously, everybody knows about the Board of Public Works. The vote impacted what we do here. We had just changed our bylaws not too long ago to include a Board of Public Works person to be on the committee so we're going to have to change everything back. Marc, while we're talking about changing things back can we have counsel just take a look at our bylaws to make sure everything is copacetic?

Mr. Strange: Sure.

Mr. Gennette: It seems like I was reading it and it seemed kind of it looked like it could have been a little better grafted. Maybe legalese. Unless you guys are opposed. Any discussion on the Board of Public Works positions?



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Mr. Vitorino: What does that do for the committee? It just adds, are we adding 2? We're adding another at large and someone from DPW. So, are we taking that person off?

Mr. Gennette: That's what we have to decide. Do we want to change the Board of Public Works person to another resident, 2 residents, or do we want to go back to a 5-person board?

Mr. Vitorino: My feeling is I would like someone from that department. Typically, it's someone in the, I'm thinking out loud, I wonder if it shouldn't be the new...I know you're reorganizing with 3 different departments under 1 head. I think it would be odd if that 1 head of the department was on this committee because they're kind of voting for their own thing so I don't think that would work out well. I don't know. It would be nice to have someone with that is a big department, but we also don't have someone from the police department. We do have someone from the schools, but we don't have someone from police or library so I'm not sure.

Mr. Gennette: From my viewpoint, what we have right now are a board member and a resident. These are not paid positions that are on this board. It's one of the reasons we had taken Marc and slid him off of the board. I suppose that brings into question Kathy, because she works for the school department, but that's a different conversation we can have after. For me, I don't think paid positions should be on the board. I think there's a conflict of interest of somebody saying I need these capital items and I'm going to fight for them on this board instead of being an elected part of the community to represent that. I don't know what you think.

Mr. Vitorino: I guess you just moved my train of thought to, I thought Kathy was the representative of the school committee, maybe I'm incorrect. It should be someone from the school committee but because they didn't attend, they nominated, appointed her to be their representative. Is that how you read it Marc?

Mr. Gennette: Our bylaws state that the superintendent of schools chooses a representative from the school. At the time, Kathy was not the business administrator. She was an assistant to the business administrator. Until she got all her credentials. Now that she's a business administrator maybe that's a different conversation that we need to have. It's still appointed by the superintendent, which I think is weird anyway. It should probably be appointed by the chairman of the school committee.

Mr. Strange: It's the school superintendent or its designee. He can designate. Luis makes a good point. The rest of the members are board members. School committee is one of the most important committees that's not represented on this board. It could be something to think about.

Mr. Gennette: I think we should pursue that. I would like to hear what Kathy has to say about all of it and what her thoughts are. Is there any other discussion about what we think we want to do as far as the Board of Public Works.



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Mr. Carpenter: You kind of fall into a catch 22 if you make it a 3rd private citizen because we've waited so long for, I think right now we have 2 vacancies for public citizen, correct?

Mr. Gennette: No, we have one.

Mr. Vitorino: I'm the public citizen.

Mr. Carpenter: So, one and that would open up 2 and we haven't had this posted since October. I just don't want to fall into a quorum issue leaving it at 7.

Mr. Gennette: I think I agree with that. I think in a perfect world we should scale it back to 5 now that DPW is going to be under a director just like police, fire, school.

Mr. Vitorino: I think because of what Josh just said, since we already voted to add another citizen, I think that could easily be the argument for removing someone from DPW. Taking that slot off because I can't imagine how you would assign someone that would only be from DPW. You've already created a new position for a citizen. I think that brings 2 citizens to the table, me and someone else with different views. We're not paid by the town; we don't work for a department as independent as could be. Same thing with you. You're elected, you're elected, you're appointed, I'm appointed. I think that's not a bad mix. I think I'd be in favor of saying reduce by the DPW person because there is no BPW.

Mr. Sanches: I agree. If they work for the DPW and they're a citizen or resident of the town, can they still run as a resident? So, they can still fill the position?

Mr. Gennette: Yes.

Mr. Sanches: Cutting down to 5 would be fine.

Mr. Vitorino: I don't know what the appropriate way would be but maybe talk to someone at the school committee and ask them to revisit that whole...It's to their advantage to have their Business Manager on this committee, but is that really to the town's advantage? The police don't have someone, fire department, library doesn't have someone. I think even if you had the superintendent on the committee it might feel like a conflict of interest. If you had someone from the school committee, you wouldn't, they're fighting for their own area. I think that might be an argument but...



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Mr. Gennette: Let's say this. Let's redraft the bylaws to be sent to the Town Warrant to drop back down to 5, and keep the committee as it is, to redefine the position for the school to say as appointed by the Chairman of the School Committee. Let's get legal to kind of look at that whole thing and we can kind of go from there. Is that ok with you guys.

Mr. Vitorino: Is it 5?

Mr. Carpenter: We were adding 2.

Mr. Strange: Are we removing a member of the Board of Public Works and going back down to 1 citizen?

Mr. Gennette: Yes. The Board will consist of 5.

Mr. Carpenter: Where our article says deleting one member of a Board of Public Works and replacing with 2, we're not going to replace anything.

Mr. Strange: We're going to replace 2 private citizens with 1 private citizen, then the board would be 6.

Mr. Vitorino: We're going back to 5, I get it.

Mr. Carpenter: You'd be removing 1 member of the Board of Public Works and changing 2 private citizens back down to 1.

Mr. Sanches: Right because you've had that 2nd citizen open the entire time.

Mr. Vitorino: We talked about adding that when we changed the bylaws around. We're not getting a long line of applicants so just go back to 1.

Mr. Strange: Would I be replacing the School Superintendent or his designee with 1 member of the School Committee?

Mr. Gennette: Yes. Whatever is in line with what ours is drafted for, kind of stay in that same terminology. One member of the Board of Public Works, one member of the Finance Committee, you know. Moving on to the second article. Article 32, to see if the town will authorize the Board of Selectmen, this is different, this isn't us, right? This is the bridge replacement, I apologize. We're going to be talking about this. On the agenda, on the 3rd one down is discuss 2 bridge repair projects for West Street Bridge and Cottage Street Bridge.



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A little bit of background here on West Street Bridge. This was something that Springfield sent us, sent the Board of Selectmen documentation for a while back when they knew it was going on. Their estimates have come in, so now we're going to be reimbursing them for the cost, up to \$250,000. Tony, in the notes for free cash we're going to have \$250,000 in free cash coming out to cover the cost of the West Street Bridge project and compensation to Springfield, who's spearheading the project just to get that West Street out of the way. We don't have to make a vote on that. The Board of Selectmen has already chosen to do that, so I put it on here just to make sure that our records were covered. Next year we weren't going, where did our 250K go? Article 32 reads to see if the Town will authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire land and/or rights in land parcels for the purpose of obtaining a secure and public right of way. This will allow for the construction of roadway safety improvements under a project known as Ludlow Bridge replacement L16-026 Piney Lane over Broad Brook MA DOT project file 609120, also known as "The Project". Do you have any background on this Mr. Carpenter?

Mr. Carpenter: I couldn't even tell you where Piney Lane is right now.

Mr. Gennette: OK so we'll hold off on that. We don't have to worry too much about that one. That's not us anyway?

Mr. Strange: No.

Mr. Gennette: That was the Board of Public Works one. Is anything else on this ours?

Mr. Strange: Article 34 deals with West Street and Cottage Street Bridge. I printed this out just so you could have the proposed article as written.

Mr. Gennette: I appreciate that. Article 34, just to follow up on that West Street Bridge, which is the one in Springfield, to see if the Town will vote to appropriate, borrow or transfer from available funds any amount of money to be expended under the direction of the Board of Selectmen to make repairs and improvements to the West Street Bridge and to the Cottage Street Bridge, including the payment of all costs, incidental and related to the project.

Mr. Carpenter: Is that the \$250,000?

Mr. Gennette: That's the 250K. We put a cap on that at the Board of Selectmen's meeting. They were expecting that to cover all the projects, cover everything by their estimates.



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Mr. Sanches: Is 250 covering West Street and Cottage Street?

Mr. Gennette: Yes.

Mr. Strange: No. They're 2 separate projects. The West Street Bridge is estimated to be up to \$500,000, of which we would split half of that with Springfield. The Cottage Street Bridge we're splitting with Wilbraham and that estimate is \$100,000 for us.

Mr. Gennette: I thought the vote we made was all included.

Mr. Strange: It was 2 projects. The vote was up to \$350,000 but it included both projects.

Mr. Gennette: Oh, \$350,000 that included both projects. I apologize.

Mr. Sanches: Tha will be 350 in free cash?

Mr. Strange: Yes.

Mr. Gennette: Any other questions on the bridge projects? No? Alright. Board of Selectmen updates about the CIPC recommendations. I don't know if you guys watched the Board of Selectmen meeting regarding the golf cart leases. It was a 4-member meeting that night. We were talking about it, and it didn't pass, our request didn't get past that first time around because the 3-year cart lease was brought into question. Selectman Rosenblum had questioned the cart least. I told him what Ryan said when he was here, that they wanted to go to a 4-year lease. The requests were shot down at that meeting because we wanted to get more information about the 4-year lease. It turns out that we can't go over a 3-year lease without changing the bylaw. Marc got in touch with Westover Golf, and they came to terms with whatever the agreement was going to be as far as the bylaws go and that they were going to move to a 4-year lease on it. We approved the recommendations this past meeting. They went through but there will be an alteration to the approval of it from the 3-year lease to a 4-year lease, providing it passes town meeting. Next year we'll also see that change. Any questions on that? Alright. Discuss the Weapons Police Platform. I'm really concerned about this one. I haven't heard a whole lot about it. I just don't want it to get swept under the rug. I just want to make sure we're doing the things we need to do to make sure that that's going to happen. I think, was that 75?

Mr. Strange: 74 and change.

Mr. Gennette: We're pretty good to get that?



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Mr. Strange: Yes, that's going to be funded through free cash similar to the West Street Bridge and Cottage Street. There's funding in the budget for it.

Mr. Gennette: Perfect. Any questions about the weapons platform? That wasn't through our regular approval process. We actually denied those.

Mr. Carpenter: That's the one that we sent up to the Selectmen, right?

Mr. Gennette: Correct. Then the last one on the list is to discuss the status updates regarding the bonds. We were supposed to meet with David Eisenthal the other night for the Selectmen's meeting and he didn't come in. One of the reasons I'm was interested in talking to him was to see if any of our bonds are callable. How leveraged out are we? Those kinds of things. Are interest rates decent? What's the market look like now that the interest rates are starting to go up? What's our position? What's our credit worthiness and all that? We didn't get an opportunity to talk to him. I was hoping to have a discussion with the bonds tonight as a follow up to what happened there. That didn't happen. Other than that, that's all the agenda. I don't think we have too much more here gentlemen. Is there any topic that you guys would like to discuss further? Questions or anything? No? Any closing comments? Hearing none. I think that's it gentlemen. This was a pretty quick meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Carpenter to adjourn at 5:52 p.m. Mr. Vitorino second. All in favor. Motion passed 4-0.

James T. Vitorino
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