

**Finance Committee
Town of Buckland
Minutes of Meeting
February 7, 2022**

This meeting was conducted remotely in accordance with the provisions of the Governor's March 12, 2020, Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Present:

Finance Committee: Larry Langford, Bruce Lessels, Dena Willmore, Paula Consolo

Town of Buckland: Heather Butler, Town Administrator, Barry Delcastilho, Selectboard, Pamela Guyette, Assessor, Carol Foote, Recreation Committee, Cindy Schwartz, Recreation Committee

General Public: Sarah Concannon, Collins Center Director of municipal services, Marilyn Kelsey, resident of Buckland

The meeting was called to order by Chair Langford at 4:02 P.M.

Dena Wilmore moved to approve minutes of January 22, 2022 with change made by Paula today. Paula Consolo second, unanimously approved.

Sarah Concannon described the Collins Center scoring methodology

Sarah Concannon reported on the work the Collins Center will be doing for the town of Buckland. As part of their work, the Collins Center will share their capital project scoring methodology with the town. Sarah explained how that scoring works using a power point presentation that explains the criteria.

Town administrator typically manages the process of scoring capital projects.

Question from Dena - Buckland has historically handled roads separately from other capital projects. It makes sense to include roads in this process, but our road needs are so great that we wouldn't be able to fund any other capital projects. Sarah explained that some communities exclude roads from the process for that reason.

Projects generally either get the full point total for a given criterion or not. Usually doesn't make sense to give partial points except in the few cases where that's shown as an option.

Question from Barry - can a project be given negative points if it creates an ongoing increase in cost for the town? Sarah explained that it's typically not done, but also that this scoring is not meant to be the final word for capital projects.

Carole and Cindy presented the recreation committee capital project request for 2023

Cindy and Carole have been working with the rec dept's design consultant. They presented the current plans for the project.

Normally, the designer would put together a design, check estimates before bringing it to us, but timeline is so short that we had a design before we had estimates. Presently at 1.8 million dollars. Presently have commitments of \$1.45 million. Design fee is \$168,000, which leaves \$1.28 million for the project itself.

When Bruce and Zach met with Cindy and Carole in October to review their capital request, they presented the \$95,000 request as designed to cover cost overages and initial startup costs.

Security system, solar panels, parking lot paving are not included in the present project cost. The rec committee is working on ways to reduce project costs.

Cost of building materials is the main driver of this increase in project cost. By mid March they need to start to put the project out to bid.

Dena - free cash this year was over double what we expected. Has the rec committee talked to anyone on the selectboard about allocating some of this free cash to the project? Heather says the selectboard is aware of the request and will talk about this tomorrow night at their meeting.

Dena also asked if there is any appetite on the part of the Fin Comm to borrow in order to get the project across the line. This hasn't been discussed.

Paula asked how the design fee was determined. Heather explained that Kuth-Ranieri was the only bidder on the design RFP. One reason the design fee for a pool project is high is that this one company has to pull in costs and plans from a number of different subcontractors.

Other capital budget items

Heather - Our highway equipment is in difficult shape. We're already over budget on equipment repairs.

Dena - thought she heard that the excavator could be used to load salt into the trucks. Heather confirmed this. Could loader be rented when needed rather than purchased?

As of July 1 we'll have a balance of \$356,000 in chapter 90 money. This can be used for equipment if we choose.

We presently have two F550's, one of which is frequently in the shop. We presently have a loader.

If the hwy dept had to pick two of the three items they want to replace (loader, F550 dump truck, mini excavator) which two would they choose? Heather asked them and the response was that the loader and dump truck are the priorities and mini ex can be rented when needed.

Can we look into buying a backhoe for the building and grounds tractor to do most of the work of the mini ex?

Historical society capital request - should be in buildings and grounds budget. We have to get used to putting all building items in b and g budget. This lets us look at all these items in one list so we can rank order them as a group.

How much of \$360,000 free cash do we want to spend on OPEB, capital items, building and grounds?

Dena - start with \$100,000 into OPEB. The rest should go into capital. Then use \$100,000 of chapter 90 on equipment and remainder on road work.

Barry - Borrow for the pool so future users of the pool are paying for it.

Present borrowing is about 5% of total town expenses and 10% of our total operating expenses.

If we were to borrow for the pool, the town would be the borrowing agent. We would need to borrow about \$450,000.

Asked Heather to come back with a couple of different capital scenarios for our next meeting on February 21.

How much can we buy using free cash and minimally funding OPEB, using chapter 90 to fund equipment so that next year chapter 90 can all be put toward roads?

Removed 5th hwy position because we don't seem able to find that many people.

Police regionalization group is pursuing a shared chief between the two towns. Shared interim administrative services person should be implemented by mid-March or early April this year.

Heather is pursuing a \$200,000 grant for researching combining the two town's police departments. There would be two police stations - Shelburne station would be the primary station and Buckland's would be a "redundant station" to be used as backup when needed.

Public Comments:

Lynn Kelsey - As a senior on a fixed income, the hwy dept would be priority over finishing the rec center. How financially healthy do we look in comparison to our neighboring towns? Larry

Langford said he thinks we look good in comparison. Paula - we have been frugal and having stabilization accounts for capital purchases has helped us.

Meeting adjourned at 5:48 pm - moved by Dena, second Paula, unanimously approved.