

Pownal Budget Committee

March 18, 2021 Public Proceeding Minutes Approved

Members Present:

Bo Chesney, Gennifer Giuliano, John Green, Matthew Roy, Brian Stornelli, Andy Wyatt

Guests:

Heidi Curry, Jon Morris and Andy O'Brien of the Select Board, Paul Schumann of the CIP Committee, Road Commissioner Dick Clarke

1. A quorum was established (all committee members logged in). The meeting was called to order by Chairman Green at 6:37PM.
2. Mr. Wyatt provided draft minutes of the March 4, 2021 meeting. Mr. Chesney moved to approve them as written. Chairman Green seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
3. The Public Comment period was skipped as no members of the public were in attendance.
4. The Select Board Comments period was skipped as the Select Board members in attendance did not have any comments.
5. Chairman Green noted that he has not yet been able to meet with Duane Snow of the Cemetery Commission to validate that the proposed budget is appropriate.
6. Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Schumann presented the proposed Capital Improvement Plan for the next fiscal year.
 - The CIP committee is recommending expenditure from the Capital Plan fund for replacement of two assets: 'Extrication Equipment' (Public Safety) and 'Truck 4 - 2012 International dump truck' (Public Works).
 - The CIP committee is also recommending acquisition of a new wheel loader for the Public Works department.
 - Also on the CIP Asset Schedule is the 'Poland Range Rd multi plate culvert' project for which the CIP committee is recommending bonding \$251,000 starting in the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Clarke notes that the Town is approved for a \$125,000 Stream Smart grant to be applied to the cost of this project. Because of timing, the Town will need to bond the full price, then apply the grant money against the bond. In response to a question from Mr. Chesney, Mr. Clarke said that there are just two bridges for which the Town is responsible for maintenance: Sweetser Road and the Poland Range Rd multi plate.
 - As for appropriations into the Capital Plan fund, the CIP committee is recommending an appropriation of \$152,000 for the upcoming fiscal year.

There was much discussion on options for funding the replacement of the Poland Range Rd multi plate culvert and the CIP appropriation, including use of overlay from current year, excess from the undesignated fund balance, bonding or other funding options to fund the CIP appropriation. Mr. Chesney suggested careful warrant article language to cover questions about the \$125,000 grant for the culvert replacement.

7. The committee deliberations and voting on recommendations was tabled until next meeting.
8. Emergent Comments, Questions or Concerns:

* Bo Chesney * Gennifer Giuliano * John Green *
* Matthew Roy * Brian Stornelli * Andy Wyatt *

- Mr. Chesney and Mr. Wyatt asked that a new edition of the General Government budget proposal be provided, now that the addition to the Town Office staff has been deferred.
 - The committee discussed the possibility of recommending funding sources for department budgets, beyond just taxation. However, the current referendum voting process necessitated by the pandemic makes that impractical and the matter is tabled for this budget cycle. Following the funding source discussion, the Mr. Morris extended an invitation to this committee to participate in the tax commitment process after Town Meeting which would provide this committee a voice in regard to overlay, mil rate, etc. which are unknown during the budget development process.
 - Mr. Wyatt expressed concern for next year's increase in projected revenue from pay-as-you-throw bag sales that he had presented at the previous meeting. Citing discomfort with over-anticipating revenue, he asked that this committee recommend \$30,000, instead of the \$35,000 previously presented.
 - Mr. Morris informed this committee of the challenges associated with providing video streams of meetings from Mallett Hall. The acoustics in the DeWitt Room are problematic. Mr. Morris mentioned costs of roughly \$40,000 for acoustics remediation and a video streaming solution. Ms. Giuliano and Mr. Roy spoke in favor of the effort in general, noting that it increases accessibility for the Town, but expressed concerns over the cost of this solution. Mr. Chesney mentioned the potential for some expense related to this at a future point, perhaps before next Town Meeting. The Select Board does not expect to include it in the upcoming budget year.
9. The next meeting is set for Thursday, March 25, 2021 at 6:30 pm. This committee will deliberate and vote on its recommendations for the Town Meeting warrant. Chairman Green will provide the agenda and a URL for the meeting.
10. Mr. Chesney made a motion for adjournment. Chairman Green seconded. The motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Andy Wyatt