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TOWN OF NEWTOWN

TOWN OF NEWTOWN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING JANUARY 10, 2018 NEWTOWN MUNICIPAL CENTER, NEWTOWN, CT

PRESENT: Chris Eide, Robert Pickard (7:45 pm), Jordana Bloom, Judit DeStefano, Ryan Knapp, Dan Wiedemann, Paul Lundquist, Phil Carroll, Kelley Johnson, Jay Mategat, Dan Honan.

ABSENT: Chris Smith.

ALSO PRESENT: First Selectman Dan Rosenthal, Public Works Director Fred Hurley, Cyrenius H. Booth Library Trustees Bob Geckle, Tom D'Agostino, Library Acting Director/Assistant Director Beryl Harrison, Director of Planning George Benson, Edmond Town Hall Board of Managers Margot Hall, Operations Manager Sheila Torres, Parks and Recreation Commission Ed Marks, Director Amy Mangold, Assistant Director Carl Samuelson, Newtown School District Interim Superintendent Dr. Lorrie Rodrigue, Director of Facilities Gino Faiella, and 2 press.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Lundquist called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:33 pm.

VOTER COMMENT: None.

MINUTES: MR. EIDE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 3, 2018 REGULAR MEETING. SECOND BY MR. WIEDEMANN. ALL IN FAVOR. (10-0).

COMMUNICATIONS: Mr. Knapp will share a committee meeting process sheet for distribution. Mr. Lundquist will distribute spreadsheet report metrics.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None.

FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT: First Selectman Rosenthal reported that the First Selectmen have been working with Bob Tait on the budget and preparing for presentation. Snow removal costs are up to about \$240,000 so far this year and within budget.

OLD BUSINESS

2018-2019 – 2022-2023 CIP

Mr. Lundquist said the focus on the agenda is the CIP, he recognized the department heads, staff, and board members present. He asked for an overview of CIP items by department and then open the floor to questions and comments from the Legislative Council.

Public Works

Mr. Hurley stated that each year they prepare more work to be done than expected to be done, whether paving or drainage for the increase that was requested in the CIP. It is hoped that within 5 years' time they will be eventually be out of the capital reconstruction of the roads and more of a maintenance of the roads and more sustaining of the roads, with the goal more of repaving the road rather than reconstructing the road entirely.

Mr. Knapp asked Mr. Hurley to address the increase by \$500,000 in bonding for roads, vs. being in operations. Mr. Hurley said the difference of opinion on bonding vs. operation money is that typically a lot of the work done on roads does not necessarily last 20 years, but many do. The work that they do when they have to reconstruct a road are all examples of projects that have more than a 20 year life span, so to have part of the financing in bonding can be justified because of the life expectancy of those types of improvements. They are trying to get paving into more of an operational budget because paving by itself does not normally last more than 20 years. He assured the Council that they have more than a million and half dollars' worth of work to do that would have more than a 20 year life span.

Mr. Knapp asked what has changed with bridges coming out, citing minutes from a meeting 2 years ago, bridges and roads were part of the operational budget. Mr. Hurley responded saying that the Town is at an unusual point right now with two funded projects for bridges other than just the Town funding, Walnut Tree bridge under reconstruction and the other is Toddy Hill. There is money from the state grant and have already up fronted most of money for the design and property acquisition. There is enough money in the current bridge budget to roll through 2018-19 and then pick up needing that funding, \$400,000 listed now, for 2019-2020. Mr. Hurley said it is taking longer to get Toddy Hill and others done, so it causes it to roll right through 2018, 2019, and working with the town engineer on identifying bridges that will need to be replaced in the future.

Mr. Wiedemann asked Mr. Hurley to speak from a safety standpoint to put money into bridges instead of roads. Mr. Hurley said they are on schedule for the bridges, there is no bridge in town that is unsafe, trying to get to them before that becomes an issue.

Mr. Honan asked about the bridge entrance to I84 from Route 34. First Selectman Rosenthal noted the governor's decision to push out work in transportation. Mr. Hurley said that decision may affect Pecks Lane, Route 25 work, and additional work on Churchill Road may also be delayed.

Ms. DeStefano asked about the reason for reduction in line item, Mr. Hurley said it is more of a budgetary change, paving by outside vendors, not affecting manpower.

Mr. Wiedemann commented on the outside vendors able to do the work. Mr. Hurley said the spring time is easier to get vendors, he added that Newtown has a good reputation for paying vendors and gets from 4-5 and up to 12 bids.

Mr. Mategat asked how roads are chosen. Mr. Hurley explained that there is a material survey of all the roads in the town, the town is broken up into 4 quadrants, crew leaders and staff are asked for updates and rank order within their district. Mr. Hurley said the department will vet the roads, multiple people will evaluate, the 700 roads, and consider necessity, cost, and location.

Mr. Carroll asked about chip seal, Mr. Hurley explained they are not using straight chip seal anymore, they are using a fiber mat as was done on Greenleaf Farms and Equestrian Ridge, which has held up well and will evaluate in the spring time, goals include extended life and cost savings.

Mr. Lundquist asked about bumping up the capital road program to \$3.5 million, what is the incremental work to be done. Mr. Hurley said it was already in the budget, put more in initially. Mr. Hurley said the modified budget moved the roads where they should be, they have defined where the

money will be allocated. First Selectman Rosenthal said the amount will possibly be closer to \$3.25 million.

C. H. Booth Library

Mr. Geckle announced the hiring of a new director, Douglas Lord, who will start on January 16. The library budget encompasses a five-year plan that includes buildings and grounds capital, and strategic initiatives capital. Mr. Geckle reviewed history of building upgrades, the new addition completed in 1997, requires new infrastructure upgrades. Three overarching issues resulting from the strategic planning process which was started about a year and a half ago, include: spatial utilization in the building, marketing the library itself, and aligning the organization with strategic initiatives of the library. The new director will play a key role in aligning the organization with the strategic initiatives. Marketing initiatives have been addressed and include website design, logo, new rooster, communications collateral. A consultant specializing in architecture of libraries has been retained to address library space issues to match strategic initiatives.

Ms. DeStefano asked about the skylight roof repair. Mr. Geckle said that it was in Phase I and being addressed.

Mr. Knapp asked why technology is in capital instead of operations, other departments have technology in their operating budgets, also replacing furniture, especially technology which does not have a useful life of 20 years, and to bond it for 20 years, whereas it may be better in the operational budget. Secondly, Mr. Knapp asked if a café can be done with current borough zoning regulations. Mr. Geckle replied to the café as far as we know, yes, it is within regulations, it would be run by a third party, and of modest scale. Mr. Geckle said that furnishings would be part of an area of refurbishments. Furniture that would allow flexibility and part of a larger flexible space project. Technology on an annual basis in the operating budget, every 3-4 years library specific technology upgrades need to be undertaken, this is not maintenance but a major upgrade as had been done in the past and were part of capital. Mr. Knapp suggested to look at capital nonrecurring, with 3 year obsolescence. Mr. Geckle said that along with the space plan is the relocation of equipment, IT cabling costs, for example.

Mr. Eide asked if technology decisions and purchasing are done in coordination with the Town's technology department, citing the example of shared services between the Board of Ed and the Town. Mr. Geckle said no, the needs are library specific, an outside firm manages it, the Town's IT department was consulted in the past and in agreement.

Mr. Wiedemann said the software would be library specific, but the Town should be able to help and provide more purchasing power with the hardware, Mr. Geckle will look at that. Mr. Wiedemann asked about any glaring ADA compliance, Mr. Geckle said from a safety standpoint no, but when they take on an upgrade of an area, they must undertake ADA compliance requirements.

Mr. Lundquist asked about Year One breakout of \$350,000. Mr. Geckle said \$190,000 for buildings and grounds capital and maintenance \$160,000 for space utilization capital.

Mr. Lundquist commented on the \$1.6 million over five years and asked for an understanding of what items are most core to their strategy. Mr. Geckle said that they have been very tempered in their approach and have captured and prioritized all of what is most important. In 2018-19 building security is a must-have. Engineering services - there are no as-built drawings, site survey. The study room flexible space – there is current demand for flexibility for space demands for meeting rooms, business outreach, cannot handle the demand for space in the library right now. Mr. Lundquist asked how they are building for the future and attract people, and current dealing with existing capacity. Mr. Geckle referred to after-school hour tutoring space demands. The meeting room kitchen, built in

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1997, is to refurbish and make larger, room rental is a revenue source. Mr. Lundquist asked if the kitchen, referred to a teaching kitchen is a professional kitchen. Mr. Geckle said no, it is a modest kitchen for a cooking class or for program needs. In the children's area seating is needed for parents, grandparents, caregivers, needed while children are engaged in programs.

Mr. Lundquist asked about the Maker Space, Mr. Geckle referred to the Trustees special fundraiser for the Maker Space raising \$28,000 and a matching grant of another \$28,000. Ms. DeStefano commented that she has seen the Maker Space utilized by many people. Mr. Geckle referred to the use of the 3-d printers for creative projects, business incubator sound booth, space for people to collaborate.

Mr. Lundquist asked about the overall perspective of where library is going and how does that fit or compete with Edmond Town Hall plans, and the new community center and should it all fit under a capital improvement plan. Mr. Geckle responded to working closely with Edmond Town Hall and that the library does not compete with ETH, not sure of the programming of the new community center but will look to how the library can partner and collaborate with the new community center in some way.

Ms. Bloom suggested to first look at the Edmond Town Hall kitchen space for programming needs like cooking classes before enhancing the library kitchen needs. Mr. Geckle reassured of communication between the library and ETH and not looking to compete. Ms. Torres said this is an important point and ETH has a commercial kitchen that is used to support the room it is next to posing some limitations on space rental availability.

Mr. Honan said that he supports the work of the board of trustees of the library, applauds their efforts on the CIP, and will support their strategic plan.

Mr. Wiedemann asked about contracting out parking lot work, Mr. Geckle said that the library pays for the material and Public Works coordinates the work. Mr. Hurley said work is done by either staff or contracts out.

Mr. Knapp asked about the need for a central communication process for coordinating space rental in all locations in the town. Ms. Torres said that is of concern and look for strong communication. Mr. Geckle referred to a rental schedule for the library that can be shared. Mr. Lundquist agreed with communication necessary to coordinate space needs among all available/possible spaces.

Land Use

Mr. Benson said that due to specifics that are known, the unsure nature of the type of grants, and open space opportunities that will come up in the future, it is important to have the money in the CIP in order to demonstrate that the money is in the CIP to eventually receive a grant, it shows intent of the Town to bond, and provides the chance to reach out for grant funding. Though the money may or may not be used within a specific year, it is important to have a placeholder, without being specific, and will come back to Council for approval at the appropriate time to show what the money will be used for.

Mr. Knapp asked to clarify placeholder but not appropriation. It may be in the plan but not appropriated yet, is that enough for the grant process, Mr. Benson said that it would be enough for the initial grant sequence, need to come back to Council for the specific allocation of money.

Mr. Knapp asked about open space projects happening down the road, Mr. Benson said there is no way to predict. For example, the sidewalk grant, had a month to put it together, the money was in the CIP which was used to start the process, then asked for the money to be bonded. Mr. Knapp referred to the CIP as a vetting document. Mr. Benson explained that in past 10 years they doubled their

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money with grants, some grants are only 10 or 20 % from the Town. Depending on state grant money, remediation work, working with DEEP, somethings are specific, some are not.

Mr. Pickard asked about the concern of not having more specifics at the time of CIP planning, is this a concern and has it been done this way in the past. Mr. Benson said that sometimes they know what project, but many times no, either way they have to come back to Council for approval.

Mr. Eide asked about the Town's obligations with brownfields. Mr. Benson spoke to the need to bring up to a certain level and address liabilities.

Mr. Pickard referred to liability, safety, attractive nuisance concerns, for acquired properties, make sure it is safe.

Mr. Wiedemann asked if money is not in the CIP could fund balance be used to back up grant process. Mr. Benson said funders need some assurance that the money will be there, earmarked, and having in the CIP facilitates the process. First Selectman Rosenthal spoke to the need for money in the CIP to move tactically on open space opportunities. Mr. Wiedemann expressed concern of putting a placeholder in the CIP when there is already a CIP that doesn't meet goal of 8.5% in five years, already over the 8.5% and in violation of goals. Mr. Lundquist suggested to save the debate on CIP vs. the use of fund balance for future discussion and continue with questions. At the next meeting, Mr. Tait will be asked to provide feedback, explain financials, and speak to the precedent.

Edmond Town Hall

Ms. Torres said that she has been asked to look at pre-prioritization for air conditioning project. Safety and security first then revenue generation. Repair the A/C unit in the Alexandria Room and use the rest of the money to move up the theater safety project. Ms. Torres referred to previous comments about space rental and added that ETH is required to rent space. Ms. Torres is focused on what makes ETH unique, a theater, gymnasium, and rental space, these are multiple streams of revenue. ETH does generate revenue but cannot make it without Town support.

Mr. Honan asked about priorities of renting out space, 4 days a week the Alexandria Room is rented out by the bridge club. Ms. Torres said rental of the Alexandria Room is just about at capacity. Mr. Honan said that space is lacking in Newtown for after-funeral gatherings, consideration of ETH for gatherings.

Mr. Knapp said 2017-18 would need to be amended. First Selectman Rosenthal said that is accurate. Ms. Torres said that some items in last year's CIP need to be pushed forward. Mr. Knapp asked about prioritization and ability to generate revenue. Ms. Torres spoke to safety issues as a high priority. Ms. Torres said that the gym could be used for events and it thinking of broader uses for the gym.

Ms. Johnson expressed concern about the safety on the stage and asked about a loss of revenue. Ms. Torres said that she is hesitant to book certain acts. First Selectman Rosenthal spoke about proposing the change to 17-18 appropriation, he said there is an investment component to A/C and stage, the rigging on the stage is of safety concern, limitations of bringing acts, addressing safety will help with a revenue standpoint, focus on areas that are working for them.

Mr. Lundquist said that Council will want to get a sense of revenue opportunities, or missed revenue opportunities.

Mr. Wiedemann expressed concern of all safety concerns and pushing out other safety items. Ms. Torres recommends the A/C in the Alexandria Room and theater safety. The other safety issues are not as much a priority as areas are closed off to the public, example stairs near her office.

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Mr. Pickard spoke to the point Mr. Wiedemann raised of addressing all safety issues. First Selectman Rosenthal said to look into safety. Mr. Pickard suggested to look into safety inspections and evaluate priorities.

Mr. Knapp asked about work quoted in the past, state wage thresholds, price may be lowered perhaps, and asked for a requote.

Mr. Eide asked about CIP items funds not appropriated. First Selectman Rosenthal referred to the breakdown: \$571,000 ETH A/C work, \$273,000 for the library, \$400,000 for Treadwell pool deck.

Ms. Johnson, advocating safety, researched safety and referred to lights that burned hot, safety concerns, ropes, and fire concerns. She also suggested to maintain an inventory of meeting rooms and develop of calendar of availability.

Parks and Rec

Mr. Marks said the Parks and Rec department and commission evaluate projects each year, review CIP criteria, and weigh the requests, then divide into CIP or capital and plan for the next 10 years. The focus is on maintain or improve existing facilities. Ms. Mangold pointed out the change in 18-19, \$400,000 for Eichler's Cove, from bonding at \$200,000 and \$200,000 covered by revenue to \$400,000 in revenue only.

Mr. Honan applauded the efforts of the Parks and Rec department to bring area public spaces to the beautiful, quality spaces seen around Town today. Mr. Honan asked how Eichler's Cove revenue is raised. Mr. Samuelson and Ms. Mangold explained revenue is generated rental fees and storage fees, which are in high demand and at capacity.

Mr. Eide referred to skating at the pavilion in the past, Ms. Mangold and Mr. Marks indicated yes, that is planned for the future.

Mr. Wiedemann asked if the pool/beach pass revenue could help support Eichler's Cove, yes, Ms. Mangold said a portion of that revenue supports the Eichler's Cove fund.

Mr. Mategat asked about \$400,000 in 18-19 CIP, Mr. Marks explained it is for the septic system for the bathrooms, structure, and the bathrooms themselves.

Ms. Johnson asked to comment on past CIP parking and revenue at Eichler's Cove, Mr. Samuelson said it is a bit too early to tell, still limited by parking.

Mr. Honan inquired to the Leap of Faith program at Eichler's Cove. Mr. Marks said that it is a complicated issue, study issue, need to upgrade within a certain amount of grace time, looking at that project and facility for waterskiing.

Mr. Lundquist said the CIP with a 5 year snapshot is intended to reduce debt burden. Think about value engineering system and realize a financial destination. Mr. Marks indicated that pickleball courts are one of the most requested activities, widely anticipated and utilized by seniors. Ms. Johnson spoke to the popularity and space limitations for pickleball. Mr. Mategat asked about possibility of creating pickleball courts in-house. Mr. Samuelson and Mr. Marks explained some work can be done in-house, some is beyond in-house capability. Mr. Eide asked about a revenue side to pickleball. Ms. Mangold said lessons and tournaments are ways to generate revenue.

Mr. Knapp asked about the field next to public works. It is privately owned.

Education

Dr. Rodrigue spoke to the prioritizing of CIP projects and coordination with Board of Ed committee members and Mr. Faiella. Updating schools and safety issues. Next year, the Middle Gate roof. Mr. Faiella said the roof is from 1999 and slated for summer of 2019, which is just about how long a single pbc roof lasts.

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Mr. Lundquist asked why to replace right at 20 years. Mr. Faiella reported that an infrared scan roof showed wet spots in the insulation and multiple leaks.

Mr. Wiedemann asked about any grants available. Mr. Faiella said that there are no grants on roofing, but reimbursing by the state, 31%, but due to state budget issues to not count on that state reimbursement money.

Mr. Knapp asked Mr. Faiella to speak to projects shuffled around to different years. Mr. Faiella, with coordination with Mr. Bienkowski, to balance out the bottom line year by year, keep costs down to make more equitable. Hawley boiler replacement will be an energy conservation project, significant savings with rebates from Eversource.

Mr. Honan questioned the replacement of the turf field, Mr. Faiella said replaced after 8-12 years usually, determination made when tested with a piece of machinery.

Mr. Pickard asked about gym floors that seem in need of repair in Middle Gate and Head of Meadow. Mr. Faiella to look into, not a CIP item, but a repair item.

Mr. Eide asked about an energy conservation project, Mr. Faiella indicated cost savings in tens of thousands of dollars over the years.

Mr. Lundquist concluded the CIP discussion and said the CIP will be the primary topic at the next LC meeting. He referred to the discussion about land use, brownfield remediation, open space, and how it was handled historically, he does not want to micromanage the process or reinvent it if there is precedent, but to move forward with understanding of the process. He said to be prepared to take action on the CIP at the next LC meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

VOTER COMMENT: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 10:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

June Sgobbo
Clerk

These are draft minutes and as such are subject to correction by the Legislative Council at the next regular meeting. All corrections will be determined in minutes of the meeting at which they were corrected.