



OLD VALUES - NEW HORIZONS
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
Meeting Minutes
August 30, 2012

The regular meeting of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) was called to order at 7:31pm, on August 30th, by Chairman Rob Gustafson at the Community Development Department.

Present

Rob Gustafson, Chair 2012
Stephanie Wimmer, Vice Chair, School Board Representative
Ruth-Ellen Post, Planning Board Representative
Jennifer Simmons, Citizen Member
Carolyn Webber, Planning Board Representative
Neelima Gogumalla, Citizen Member

Excused

Bruce Breton, Board of Selectmen Representative
Elizabeth Wood, Staff Advisor

I. Chairman Rob Gustafson introduced the members of the board and reviewed the agenda.

II. **School District CIP Presentation**

By: Stephanie Wimmer

Proposal: To expand capacity at the Middle School level by requesting funds that will go towards A&E Fees (Architectural and Engineering). The total cost for this request is \$1,000,000.

Justification: In the last decade, the population in Windham has grown in excess of 25% which has created a significant student population growth in our schools (Golden Brook School, Windham Center School, and Windham Middle School). The schools are operating beyond their educational capacity (core and classroom space). The District is currently short over 20 classrooms and corresponding core space relative to our 2,722 students. This equates to space for approximately 400 students (depending on class sizes) and only meets our current needs, not those required to adequately accommodate our projected growth which is estimated to level at over 3,100 students. Class sizes in our K-8 programs are some of the highest in the State. By adding capacity at the Middle School, it will relieve overcrowding throughout the K-8 system as the added capacity will have a trickle down effect and it will make Windham Middle School an approved Middle School by providing the necessary lab and technology facilities.

Discussion:

Ms. Gogumalla asked what the response was to the recent community survey conducted. Ms. Gogumalla also wondered how much the school district anticipated on spending to upgrade the schools to accommodate the 400 children that we are behind today.

Ms. Wimmer told the Board that 847 individuals responded and the results are posted on the SAU website at www.windhamsd.org. She also said that the cost to add on to the existing middle school or to build a new middle school, to accommodate the 400 children that we need room for, would be approximately \$20-\$25 million. Because the \$711,000 for A&E fees did not pass last March, the School Board is going back to look at the impact of doing nothing vs. adding onto the existing Middle School, building a new Middle School, or maybe something in between. The School Board is waiting to see what happens at the state level regarding funding. Overall, Ms. Wimmer believes that the School Board would agree that a new school, as proposed last year, cored for 1,000 students with initial classroom space for 500, in the long run term is financially prudent for the community. If the voters disagree than the School Board will need to rethink that option.

Ms. Gogumalla wondered how many students would displaced if the additions/new building do not happen.

Ms. Wimmer responded that the students would not be displaced. However, classroom sizes would increase. Rooms would be taken away as they already have been (art rooms, music rooms, etc.)

Ms. Post asked to clarify the accreditation situation at the Middle School as Ms. Wimmer stated that Windham Middle School is currently accredited as an elementary school.

Ms. Wimmer said it depends on what can be offered at that facility. Currently, Windham Middle School does not offer family and consumer science. We do not have some of the technology offerings that would be required at a middle school and our science labs are not where they need to be. We do not have the facility space to offer such courses.

Ms. Post wondered if the School District was able to accommodate the 400 students that we currently need space for than what would happen going forward.

Ms. Wimmer said that the School Board's expectation is that we will need space for approximately 3,100 students (going out 20 years) and we are 400-500 behind right now. If a new school was built, it would be cored for 1,000 students with the classroom size for 500. The school would be built with the ability to add on. This would allow for flexibility. Ms. Wimmer stated that by adding onto the existing Middle School, we would not have the flexibility. The 3,100 students figure is based on the future trending like the past.

Ms. Post also asked what would be the risk of the A & E fees becoming higher if this plan were to be put off.

Ms. Wimmer said that she didn't think that that the A & E fees would grow any higher than inflation.

Mr. Gustafson said the risk may be in the volatility in the construction and building materials.

Ms. Webber asked what year Windham Middle School was built.

Ms. Wimmer said that she wasn't sure and that she would get that information.

Ms. Webber also asked what would be the use of the current Windham Middle School if a new middle school were to be built.

Ms. Wimmer responded that one likely scenario would be to move the 7th and 8th graders to the new middle school, the 5th and 6th graders to the Windham Middle School, the 3rd and 4th graders to the Windham Center School, and the kindergarteners, 1st and 2nd graders to Golden Brook School.

Ms. Webber wondered what the build out for residential homes was.

Mr. Gustafson said that he looked at that based on the information he got from the Building Department. He doesn't think that it is a fixed number though as zoning continues to change.

Ms. Wimmer also added that population studies are difficult beyond 5 years as the children are not yet born. Ms. Wimmer also explained how the classroom model is different now versus in the past as our classrooms are now all inclusive.

Ms. Simmons asked what the funds, being requested for, would go towards for A & E fees.

Ms. Wimmer said the School Board will decide by the end of September or beginning of October. The School Board is currently gathering information to determine what is needed for the students and what the community is willing to support.

Ms. Simmons wondered when the School Board would hear about state funding.

Ms. Wimmer answered that for anything being voted on next March will not be receiving funding. Ms. Wimmer's understanding is that potentially \$10 million would be available next September for those schools with a plan. The School Board's thinking is that they need to have a plan ready to submit by September 2013, so they will be able to go to the state to be valued for potential funding.

Ms. Simmons wondered why the request for A & E fees, in 2012, was \$711,000 and is now \$1 million.

Ms. Wimmer said that the original numbers, in 2012, were for approximately \$1 million. When the CIP told the School Board that there was \$711,000, they shaved off a lot of what they wanted to do and did what they could for \$711,000.

Ms. Webber wondered how school vouchers would affect the school budget.

Ms. Wimmer said that she didn't know, but she would look into it.

Ms. Post asked if the Facilities Masters Plan was complete.

Ms. Wimmer said that the Facilities Master Plan is complete. If the \$711,000 had passed on the March 2012 ballot, that would have needed to be factored into the impact fee. However, it did not. The Plan is on the School District's website.

Ms. Gogumalla asked if there were comparisons to Windham's class sizes/needs to those in other towns such as Amherst and Bedford.

Ms. Wimmer replied that she didn't know. She did know that our class sizes are larger than the other towns and they have more capacity than Windham.

Mr. Gustafson asked Ms. Wimmer to remind him what the amounts of \$160,000 and \$140,000 that were passed, 2 and 3 years ago, were for.

Ms. Wimmer said that those amounts were for Master Planning.

Mr. Gustafson asked who would be evaluating the options, how that would be presented to voters, and would that be decided before the warrant article.

Ms. Wimmer responded that the School Board will be evaluating the options and will make a decision by October. The School Board is still focused on the Middle School. It is just a matter of building a new school or adding on to the existing school. The voters will know what the A & E fees will be directed towards. Ms. Wimmer assured the Board that it will be very clear.

Ms. Wimmer also reviewed the Capital Expense chart with the Board.

III. Review Departments' responses to CIP Request for Proposals

The following departments will not be submitting applications:

- Tax Department
- Assessing Department
- Cemetery Trustees
- Senior Center
- Town Clerk's Department
- Planning Board
- Windham Economic Development Department
- Community Development Department
- Administration
- Board of Selectmen
- Library
- Local Energy Committee
- Housing Authority
- Rail Trail Alliance
- Cable

Mr. Gustafson read that the Maintenance Department may have a request; however, if a request is made, it will be submitted by the Board of Selectmen on behalf of the Maintenance Department and the request is not expected to be submitted until after the CIP has completed its project rankings.

Ms. Wimmer wondered what would happen if the request came in after our project rankings.

Mr. Gustafson said that he wasn't sure that it would make it into our plan as there has been a push to make sure that the Board has the work finished up well in advance of the budgetary process.

IV. Review and accept the Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the August 22nd meeting and the minutes from the August 25th site walk will be reviewed at the September 12th meeting.

V. Review of Future CIP Meetings:

Mr. Gustafson told the Board that before the next meeting, he would send out a chart that will be used for the rankings. The chart will list all of the requests with a date and dollar amount. He urged the Board to review the rankings from I-VI. The information can be found on the town website. The rankings will occur at the September 12th meeting. At the September 26th meeting, based on the rankings, the numbers will go into a financial plan and will be discussed. Mr. Gustafson also said that we will need to determine our town's valuation to determine our total budget.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:16 p.m. by Ms. Wimmer and seconded by Ms. Webber. Vote: 6-0

The next general meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. on September 12, 2012 in the Community Development Department Meeting Room.

Minutes submitted by: Jennifer Simmons

Approved by: [Type name here]