

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
ADVISORY COMMISSION ON CAPITAL EXPENDITURES  
FEBRUARY 1, 2024  
7:00 P.M.  
HYBRID MEETING**

**Members present in person or via Zoom teleconference:** Brad Belcher, Mike Sattan, Jim Irwin, Mark Englander, Alexander Lepage and Don Miner (alternate)

**Absent:** Scott Crosson (alternate)

**Also present in person:** Bill Hawkins, Director of Planning & Development/Engineering Liaison

Chairman Belcher called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes**

**J. Irwin motioned and A. Lepage seconded to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2024 Regular Meeting and the January 30, 2024 Regular Meeting as presented. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Public Participation**

None

**Engineering**

**Pavement Management**

- Current balance of \$1,029,998
  - Very healthy level
  - A lot of this has to do with the change in personnel
    - Town Engineer left in March 2023
    - Used part-time employee during summer months
    - Not as much work was done as usual during the paving months
- FY 24/25 request is for \$900,000
- Mr. Hawkins anticipates receiving LOTCIP annual funds in the amount of \$92,803 which reduces the towns share to \$807,197
- Pavement management covers all of the road work and sidewalk work done by the town including:
  - Paving
  - Crack sealing
  - Curbing
  - Line painting
  - Design
  - Sidewalk work
- Mr. Hawkins feels the \$900,000 request will keep the budget in a good fiscal position while allowing the town to complete a large amount of roadwork they are interested in doing
- Building the funds will also avoid the need for bonding in the future
- New Public Works Director is in the process of creating a 5-year Pavement Management Plan

## **Drainage Projects**

- Current balance of \$64,541
- FY 24/25 request is for \$100,000 and the expectation is that this amount will be requested each year for the next five years
- Mr. Hawkins explained that keeping this balance at around \$150,00 is ideal
- Funds are mostly used for detention basin work, catch basins, driveways, curbing and under-drainage issues

## **Small Bridge Project**

- Current balance of \$115,737 (Total of two accounts)
- Mr. Hawkins is requesting \$25,000 for FY 24/25 because the current balance is healthy, although he assumes this will increase to \$50,000 next year
- These funds cover miscellaneous issues that occur throughout the year such as smaller culverts and smaller bridge repairs for local bridges that have no other funding available. It can also be used for design if necessary

## **Storm Water Management**

- FY 24/25 request is for \$50,000
- Meant to keep the town in compliance
- The town works with a consultant who assists with reports required to the state
- The town will be going out to bid for these services
- Consultant updates maps, prepares the annual report and conducts field observations and sampling required in the town's DEEP storm water permit

## **Russell Avenue Bridge**

- FY 24/25 request is for \$750,000
  - The same amount was requested for FY 23/24
- This will be 100% paid for by the Federal Local Bridge Program which is a reimbursement grant
- Town of Suffield must front the money for the project
- Design and right-of-way acquisition costs will be handled by the State
- Construction costs will be paid by the town and the state will reimburse
- The plan was to request \$750,000 over three fiscal years to cover the costs as the project will be a long process and work is not expected to begin until 2025/2026
- Current cost estimate is \$2.25 million

Discussion ensued among the commission members and Mr. Hawkins relative to the various requests this evening. Mr. Hawkins answered the questions and addressed concerns accordingly.

## **Farmland Preservation**

Funding in the amount of \$100,000 is being requested to increase the balance of the Open Space account to preserve farmland and open space. Currently, the Open Space fund is healthy with a balance of approximately \$1,100,000. The town anticipates closing on a few properties in the near future; 27.5 acres off Overhill Drive for \$210,000 and the Chmiel Farm on Hill Street for \$37,600. Mr. Hawkins also provided information on three additional farm properties that could be up for preservation consideration,

including a 55-acre parcel on North Street, a 58-acre piece on Mapleton Avenue and a 144-acre piece on North Grand Street. If the applications for these pieces are submitted and approved, the balance would be roughly \$625,000 in the Open Space account. The \$100,000 request will increase the balance and allow the town to continue working with multiple properties that have expressed interest in farmland preservation.

Farmland/Open Space Preservation is a highly supported initiative in Suffield. The more funding we have in place, the more properties we can work with at the same time. The town maintains a list of over 10 properties whose owners have expressed interest in preserving their land. The State of CT has been funding the Farmland Preservation Program and allocating money to the DEEP Open Space grant program. Previous requests have been between \$150,000 and \$500,000.

### **Review of Open Capital Accounts**

Mr. Hawkins walked through the accounts with the group and identified those he had familiarity with and those that he needed to research further.

Discussion ensued among the commission members who asked questions, some of which pertained to the information provided on Mr. Hawkins's spreadsheets, additional properties interested in preservation, the approval process, affordable housing issues, and the impact of purchasing development rights. Mr. Hawkins addressed all questions and concerns and provided a status update on the Mapleton Road sidewalk project as well.

Chairman Belcher reviewed the remaining meeting schedule for February and asked for a motion to adjourn.

### **Adjournment**

**M. Sattan motioned and M. Englander seconded to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kristen O. Lambert  
Recording Secretary