

**Town of Goshen
Joint Meeting
Planning Board/ Board of Selectman/Budget Committee
Minutes of July 21, 2022
FINAL**

Planning Board members present (quorum = 3): Alicea Bursey (Chair), Kayla Frink (Vice-Chair), Steve Bursey, and George Hebert

Board of Selectman: Steve Smith, Dianne Craig

Budget Committee: Barbara Paranto, Ashley Cleary, Dianne Craig (BOS Rep.)

Guest (s): Sandra Sonnichsen

Meeting called to order at 6:59p.m.

Chair Bursey opened the meeting and gave some direction regarding the order and purpose of the meeting.

Planning Board Review of Minutes (7/7/2022)

Steve Bursey motioned to accept the minutes of July 7, 2022 “as is”; Kayla Frink seconded the motion. All were in favor. George Hebert abstained.

Planning Board Complaint Received

Chair Bursey received a complaint regarding the gravel pit, and she has asked the resident to bring their complaint before the Board. No date has been set for when the resident will address the Board. *This topic was tabled until the resident can address the Board.*

Board of Selectman Business

Alicea Bursey from the Internet Committee (ZBA) forwarded a request to the Board of Selectmen for a letter of support to be issued on behalf of Consolidated Communications (Fidium Fiber). The letter of support is for use in their application for a state grant. Steve Smith stated that the Cooperative also requested such a letter but that they could speak to the work Consolidated has performed and not to the Cooperative’s work. It was noted that Consolidated provided a form letter that could be used to show support. The letter is due to Consolidated tomorrow, July 22, 2022.

Dianne Craig motioned to write a letter in support of Broadband that will be submitted to Consolidated Communications. Steve Smith seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Capital Improvement Review

Chair Bursey opened the Capital Improvement Plan review portion of the meeting. The Boards reviewed the requests that were presented from the Police Department and Library, and reviewed ideas that were discussed by the Planning Board for the Highway Department and building maintenance.

Police Department: Chair Bursey read through Chief Anderson’s request for CIP which included requests for body cameras, upcoming vehicle needs, upcoming software needs, and monies to be put into the capital reserve fund. Chair Bursey read through a three-year plan complete with tax impact details for addressing the needs of

the department that would have a minimal impact on the tax rate while allowing funds to be saved and larger purchases to be made over time.

Barbara Paronto stated that she thought that the numbers looked good and that she hopes that some of the bigger purchases can be placed in a bond which would help pay for the larger items without taking money away from the capital reserve funds.

Sandra Sonnichsen suggested that grant monies could also be used to offset the cost of some purchases.

The Boards did not have any additional questions or concerns regarding the Police Departments submitted CIP.

Library: The Boards reviewed the Library's CIP requests.

It had been suggested at a previous Planning Board meeting that some of the needs be met by a town building maintenance fund. Barbara Paronto stated that an account for those types of needs may already be in place. There is currently a library fund that is unspecified with \$4,400 available. Chair Bursey will follow up with the Library to see what the parameters of that account are and if there are already plans for the funds.

Sandra Sonnichsen suggested to research additional grants and rebates that could help with some of these projects. She suggested researching a more cost-effective solution to the window replacement problem which could include an energy audit. She also noted that in previous energy audits that she has been a part of windows were not considered to be one of the better ways to produce energy efficiency and take a long time to pay for themselves.

Highway Department: Though no formal requests were submitted by the Highway Department, the Boards discussed some of the larger projects that the Town will have to address, such as Lear Hill Road and regularly recurring road maintenance. Barbara Paronto suggested that a bond is the best way to address bigger projects without depleting the capital reserve funds and minimizing the tax impact to the Town. She mentioned that bonding has not always been a popular topic, however, she believes that with these large projects like Lear Hill, it is the best solution. Steve Smith mentioned that some projects might need to be on a 10–15-year plan due to the cost.

Dianne Craig mentioned that decisions for fixing the roads and other highway department tasks are difficult to discuss until a new road agent can be hired. She stated that the Board of Selectman is in the hiring process and would like to see what the new hire's suggestions will be before too many things are changed.

Steve Smith stated that he is not opposed to bonding, however, he voiced his concern regarding interest rates and inflation. Barbara Paronto stated that yes, interest costs have gone up but she still believes that projects like Lear Hill Road will not get done without a bond. George Hebert mentioned that at the county level, there may be funds available to towns. Alicea Bursey reminded everyone that the town cannot over bond, there are some restrictions. She also shared the timeline for applying and receiving bonding funds for this time next year.

Additional discussion was had regarding the potential financial direction of the highway department. The Board discussed setting up a capital reserve fund as well as researching grants, bonds, and other financial aid that could be received. Dianne Craig suggested the SEIDS grant which would aid in infrastructure. George Hebert suggested seeing what could be done through the county including the use of SEIDS funds. Barbara Paronto suggested getting someone experienced to look at Lear Hill Road and come up with a hypothetical plan.

Sandra Sonnichsen brought up Lempster Coach Road and the bridge, stating that some of the grants that have been applied for are requesting an in-kind contribution. She suggested that volunteers might be able to post road construction signs and asked if it would be possible to run the grader down the road to smooth it out which may be counted as part of the in-kind contributions. The Board of Selectman noted that the Class VI portion of Lempster Coach Road was still under the emergency lane provision and thought that her request was possible.

Steve Smith again mentioned that the Board of Selectman would like to wait to make any final decisions until the new road agent can be hired. Alicea Bursey suggested adding money to the capital reserve fund so that when the new road agent is hired, there will be money set aside for them to work with. Dianne Craig stated that it wouldn't be a bad idea to put money into a capital reserve fund, but the BOS would like to hear from the new candidate about improvements and needs that they might need. Steve Smith thanked Dianne Craig and Heather Peckham for stepping up during this interim time to help with the finances and assignments given to the BOS.

The Planning Board discussed large-scale bond projects, which included, restoration and maintenance of town buildings, Lear Hill Road, road restoration, bridges, equipment, etc.

Fire Department: Though no requests were submitted by the Fire Department, the Boards discussed some of the projects needed by the Fire Department, such as a new fire truck and a new building. It was mentioned that the fire department may qualify for a large amount of grants.

Dianne Craig asked Sandra Sonnichsen if she believed that there was enough space on the land for a new building. Sandra Sonnichsen stated that the septic would be large enough, however, the space on the land may be too small for a bigger building. She also mentioned the erosion problem behind the building and asked if there was any way to restrict mowing near the riverbank to ensure that more erosion damage doesn't occur. The Board of Selectman mentioned that they would discuss it and if possible, could make a recommendation that the area behind the fire department near the riverbank is not mowed. It was also suggested that an erosion study be done as noted in the Hazard Mitigation Plan and possibly having an educational information session regarding the current erosion problem.

The Boards discussed potential warrant articles for the capital reserve funds. The Boards agreed to recommend putting \$15,000 into the Municipal Town Building Fund in fiscal year 2023. The Boards also agreed to recommend putting \$15,000 into the Roads Maintenance Fund.

The Board of Selectman, Planning Board, and Budget Committee had no further questions or concerns.

All Capital Improvement Plan topics were discussion and recommendations only, no votes were taken and appropriate measures to bring these suggestions to the Town Meeting would need to be followed.

The minutes will be reviewed by Chair Bursey, Chair Smith and Barbara Paronto before they are posted in their draft format. The final copy will be approved by the Planning Board during their August 4, 2022 meeting.

There was a brief discussion regarding wages and raises, Steve Smith stated that the Town employees are vastly underpaid, and he would like to see this situation improved. Barbara Paronto stated that wage increase was never done consistently which is why there has been such a problem in this area. She further shared that ultimately the Budget Committee has no say over raises, that they review budgets and make recommendations on budget amounts/line items not individual needs such as raises. The issues of raises remains with the BOS. Steve Smith agreed but stated that he would like to see a solution to the problem because many people who work for the Town are severely underpaid.

Alicea Bursey briefly discussed Current Use laws and some discussion was had regarding the impact of those laws on the tax base. However, most of the regulations are state monitored and would have to be brought before state representatives.

Other Business

- **Performance Review for Secretary:** The Board tabled this discussion for a future meeting.
- **Spreadsheet:** The Board tabled this discussion for a future meeting.
- **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be the first Thursday of the month – August 4, 2022.

Standing/Upcoming items

- Capital Improvement Plan Review
- Master Plan Review - Pending
- Solar/alternative energy RSA and town regulation discussion - Pending
- Rand Pond Beach Discussion for inclusion in Master Plan - Standing Item
- Member Discussion - Standing Item
- *Budget due December 1, 2022*
- *Annual report due February 1, 2023*
- *Annual audit of CIP (May/June)*

Dianne Craig made a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectman portion of the meeting. Steve Smith seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passes.

Board of Selectman meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Kayla Frink made a motion to adjourn the Planning Board portion of the meeting. Steve Bursey seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Melissa Salinardi
Recording Secretary