

Public Works Consolidation Review Committee
Draft Committee Minutes
August 2, 2017

Committee Members Present: Elaine Sopchak, Chair, Michael Plageman, Vice Chair, Susan Cook, Justin Rabidoux, Andrew Brown

Public: Kevin Collins

Others Present: Dennis Lutz, Public Works Director, Ricky Jones, Village Public Works Superintendent, Lauren Morrisseau, Finance Director and Catherine Hammond, minute taker.

Agenda item #1: The meeting was opened at 7:02 PM.

Ms. Sopchak requested that the Agenda order be changed to discuss Item 5 before Item 4 and the Committee members concurred.

Agenda item #2: Public to be heard

Kevin Collins was present. He is vice chair of the Village Capital Committee and was there to observe.

Agenda item #3: Approve minutes of 19 July 2017

Susan Cook MOVED and Elaine Sopchak SECONDED that the minutes be approved. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Agenda item #5: Discuss Engineering, current procurement practices and costs

Lauren Morrisseau handed out information on engineering costs incurred by the Town and the Village over the past four fiscal years. Committee members and attending Town staff had extended discussions about the process each community uses to obtain engineering services, including the procedures both follow when VTRANs or other grants are involved. Justin Rabidoux brought up the issue of using retainer firms by setting up pre-qualified lists for various types of work. This led to discussions on the need to update the Village/Town Purchasing Policies including establishing the procedures for and use of retainer firms. Engineering in the Town covers a broader area of responsibility including managing of budgets, overseeing, and providing direct and daily support to all departments in the Town from buildings to utilities, long term planning, development review and inspection, development of the yearly capital plan, engineering assistance to Parks and Recreation, etc. In the Village, the engineering services are more aligned with larger projects, input into the capital planning process, plan review, and assistance to the Superintendent when needed. The Town engineering staff

generally uses outside firms for project designs; the Village uses both outside firms and Hamlin for actual preparation of design plans.

Agenda Item #4: Discussion on infrastructure management, the capital planning process and rolling stock.

The Committee first discussed paving. Village paving is paid for through the Village street department operating budget. In the Town, normal overlay paving is paid through the operating highway budget. Money for the Town paving fund comes from the general fund, not the highway tax. It is possible to combine both the Village and Town highway costs—including paving—into one budget, which would result in all residents paying equally for capital projects in the entire community. CCRPC is looking into a standard paving program for the Village and Town, separately and combined, prioritizing what streets need to be done and in what order. The study will be completed by this Fall.

Staff provided input on how each community manages its capital project planning. They are very different in their approach to funding and in the development of project lists for inclusion. The Town has a two-cent capital tax and the Village transfers money out of the general fund into the capital account. The Village tends to have much larger projects on its list; the Town tends to have shorter range projects tied to more immediate needs. The Village has an appointed Capital Committee to recommend projects that then go to the Trustees for approval. In the Town, the Public Works Director requests projects from the public, the Selectboard, and the staff and then develops a plan for public and Board input. The Town receives significant revenue from impact and other fees that help provide added funding for capital projects; the Village generally does not have this source of revenue. Both use grants as much as possible to reduce the impact of projects on taxpayers in the community. The Committee consensus was that they recommend commissioning a study of the two systems, preferably by an impartial third party that is knowledgeable about funding capital projects.

The Committee discussed how each community budgets and plans for rolling stock purchases. It was clear that both communities use essentially the same methodology on funding. However, some departments carry separate rolling stock numbers in their budgets that are not included in the larger rolling stock fund. One example is the police department, which manages its vehicles as an operating budget line item. It appeared from the discussion that combination of the rolling stocks into a single fund, supported by transfer of costs yearly from the various operating budgets, may be a possibility for consideration.

Agenda item #6: Public Works Survey

Discussion on the content of the survey was postponed until the next meeting.

The agenda for the next meeting will focus on evidence of continued quality of services. Ms. Sopchak requested See-Click-Fix statistics reports from the Village and the Town. The

Committee agreed they could begin discussing initial recommendations also look at the Charters for potential necessary changes.

The next meeting will be August 16 at 7:00PM. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.