

**Town of Northwood
Planning Board Meeting
October 7, 2021**

DRAFT MINUTES

1 **Present:** Chair Tim Jandebour, Vice Chair Joe McCaffrey, Betty Smith, Selectmen
2 Representative Hal Kreider, Lee Baldwin, Bob Strobel (Alternate) and Duane Curry
3 (Alternate).

4 **Voting Designation:** Tim Jandebour, Betty Smith, Joe McCaffrey, Hal Kreider, Duane
5 Curry, Lee Baldwin and Bob Strobel.

6 **Town Staff:** James Burdin, Town Planner, Linda Smith, Land Use Specialist, and
7 Susan Austin, Land Use Assistant.

8 **Minutes: September 27, 2021**

9 **Ms. B. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of September 27, 2021. Mr.**
10 **Curry seconded. Motion carried 7/0.**

11 **PUBLIC HEARING: CIP**

12 Chair Jandebour stated that he understands that most of the board is a bit concerned
13 with the CIP and the way it is developed now. He stated that they were looking at the
14 way it's developed now and an alternative based on an article by Dave Stack. He stated
15 that his concern about it was the fact that the CIP is not a wish list. He stated that he
16 plans to have a conversation about the CIP in the future.

17
18 Chair Jandebour reopened the public hearing.

19
20 **Ginger Dole, Rochester Road**

21 Ms. Dole states she went back and reviewed the video of the meeting when the
22 department heads presented their information to the planning board. One of the
23 questions that she had when the ambulance fund was being discussed was the
24 average amount that was provided to Bob Strobel for inclusion in the CIP of \$90,000
25 per year. She adds that there are two vehicles currently under lease which total
26 eighty-six thousand dollars per year and we're going to be paying for those for several
27 more years: the tanker until 2025 and the ambulance until 2027. She expresses
28 concern regarding the additional vehicles being requested to be funded out of the
29 ambulance fund:

- 30
- 31 • 2023 Fire Engine \$750,000
 - 32 • 2024 Ambulance Replacement \$200,000 and ATV \$25,000
 - 33 • 2025 Forestry Truck \$300,000

34 Ms. Dole notes that in 2013 we had a new ambulance (which was paid off in 2014)
35 and that year the defibrillators were purchased and the fire chief wants to replace this
36 year. She adds that at first she felt the cost of \$37,000 is high but upon researching it
37 appears reasonable.

38 She states that the Planning Board can't answer those questions but she hopes the
39 selectmen rep will bring the questions back to the fire department to understand how
40 these costs can be handled with the anticipated revenue.

41

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1 Ms. Dole states that the Highway Department is pretty much in the same condition. In
2 2015, we bought a dump truck with a plow and spreader, and we paid for it all in one
3 year by cleaning out the capital reserve fund for the highway department, plus another
4 \$12,900 from the unanticipated fund balance. In 2019, we approved a dump truck for
5 \$161,670, with seven payments of 26,000 that won't be paid off until 2025. In 2018
6 we bought the backhoe for \$100,000, and that payment of \$20,300 should be paid off
7 next year. She notes that right now we're paying \$46,000 for two pieces of equipment
8 out of the capital reserve fund, but traditionally we've only put \$15,000 to \$18,000
9 each year into this capital reserve fund. She adds that she hopes the department
10 heads and the selectmen will look at the available funds in the capital reserve
11 accounts and the projected costs before they present warrant articles to voters. She
12 adds that any additional funds needed for purchases will need to be raised through
13 taxation.

14 Ms. Dole states that when you look at the equipment purchases they don't include the
15 \$850,000 to redo the Ridge Station or the \$2,000,000 several years from now to do
16 something more. She adds that there was discussion about a bond being proposed.
17 She states that she considers the list a wish list for the future and hopes that any
18 items that come before the voters in 2022 be reviewed for funding availability, and
19 whether it is needed at this time. Ms. Dole states that she has concerns about the
20 defibrillators being from a different manufacturer than previously used and would like
21 to know details comparing the cost and features of these items.

22
23 Chair Jandebeur stated that the board did question the defibrillators at length and
24 why the different companies. He stated it is his understanding that the company that
25 they are with now was outdated and they were no longer going to support those
26 defibrillators which played a part in the decision to go with a different company who
27 might support models after five years or seven years. The board did get an email
28 regarding that, so that's something if you want to see town staff could supply it.

29
30 Chair Jandebeur turned the Chair over to Vice Chair McCaffrey so he could add public
31 comment.

32
33 **Tim Jandebeur**, (speaking as a Northwood resident)

34 Mr. Jandebeur states what bothers him the most is the excavator for \$120,000. At the
35 meeting it was brought up that they rented one for \$3000 a month; they rented it for a
36 month and needed a little more so they rented it for an additional month. He adds that
37 if you took 20 years of \$6,000 that's \$120,000 dollars which would rent/lease it for
38 two months every year, and then if it breaks down it's not on us. He adds that this
39 makes no sense to buy it for \$120,000 and that is just one item in the CIP. He notes
40 there are have several items that he would like to go over but not tonight. The math
41 doesn't add up. If you took \$120,000 and put it in the bank, and every year take out
42 six thousand dollars and rented or leased an excavator at the end of 20 years you'd
43 probably have \$30,000 or \$40,000 in interest from that money. Obviously, each year it
44 would get less interest but you'd end up ahead because you don't have to pay the bills
45 when it breaks down. The choice is to lease two months out of the year, which is more
46 than what we needed for, or to buy it outright with other problems of housing it and
47 any mechanical issues. Anybody that works with excavators knows that they're one of

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1 the highest maintenance cost repair items out there. He concludes by noting there are
2 a lot of issues with excavators and recommends determining which the best way to do
3 it is: either lease or outright purchase.

4
5 **Duane Curry** (Speaking as a Northwood resident)

6 Mr. Curry states that this town's been around for a long time, and he is amazed that
7 each one of these departments doesn't have a specific budget. He states he does a
8 capital improvement plan for his condo but is sure he doesn't have a wish list like this.
9 He notes he has to have a realistic amount of money at his department and whatever
10 it is each category is allowed to spend. We are talking about adding more equipment?
11 We should know how much money that we have and we should know how long the
12 equipment is going to last and projected maintenance costs. He states this is a very
13 distressing discussion tonight. He adds that he thinks it's urgent to determine if this
14 is either a wish list or you need to get a realistic capital improvement plan. He adds
15 that he agrees with Mr. Jandebaur that we should know which is better: leasing or
16 outright purchase. There needs to be some homework done to make sure that this
17 capital improvement plan ties into the budget not the wish list.

18
19 **Chair Jandebaur:** Mr. Jandebaur states he just wants to reiterate again that the
20 planning board's job was to take what was supplied to us by the department heads
21 and put it on paper and to spread it out and try to even that out to mitigate taxes so
22 that there's not a wave to taxes, not a up and down. To be fair, under our current
23 system, the select board has yet to look at this. He adds that he would like people to
24 know that they will look at this and they will make decisions, decisions that should be
25 made in the right manner. He notes that's part of his problem with the system as it is
26 now and he wants to be fair to the selectmen and to everybody else right now.
27 He adds that the board needs to revamp the system and we're going to discuss that
28 but, this is what we have for now and when we're done this is going to go on to the
29 select board. They are going to do their job with it and that's the way it is and that's
30 the way it should be. He states he wants to change the process and notes the board
31 will get into that in future meetings. He concludes by stating he wants everyone to
32 understand we've only done our little part of the job. There's still the select board that
33 has a larger part of decision making in this entire process. Please understand that and
34 that's coming and it's not over.

35
36 **Ginger Dole:** Ms. Dole states she has been on many boards and committees and is
37 aware that the CIP plan is the instrument to let the town become aware of major
38 upcoming expenses. She agrees that the selectmen are going to be taking these
39 suggested requests under advisement and the years in which the department heads
40 feel that they need particular purchases. She adds that by the time the public has an
41 opportunity to weigh in on any of this is at the public hearings for the budget
42 committee in January based on what warrant articles the selectmen choose to bring
43 forward to the budget committee. She notes that whether the budget committee votes
44 to recommend or not recommend, they'll still be on the warrant. It just shows whether
45 the budget committee recommends a particular article. She adds that attending the
46 meeting tonight, perhaps she went about it the wrong way and if so, apologizes, but
47 this seemed to be the only opportunity that any of us could come and voice some

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1 concerns prior to the selectmen sitting down and beginning to do their work. She adds
2 this was her opportunity to be able to remind people, whatever the funding sources, to
3 look and see how much money you've got there first and whether or not there's
4 enough there to do what already has to be done, because it's already been approved in
5 years past, in addition to whatever might be forthcoming. She adds that she is
6 interested in hearing what alternatives to this process may be discussed in the future.
7

8 **Bob Strobel** responds to a couple of comments. One of the items that are requested
9 from each department is the life time of the capital purchase that's being made. He
10 adds that the requirements of proposing a project or item are: principal primary cost
11 of ten thousand dollars or more and a lifetime of at least three years. One of the pieces
12 of information to know is how long it will last so we know we can add it in.
13

14 Mr. Strobel notes that you would have to look at all the department requests. One of
15 the items that we had included previously from department requests was an item
16 defined as priority item. What was the priority of the project? Was it coming in, for
17 instance, for the elementary school roof? Was it a piece of the scuba gear self-
18 contained breathing apparatus for fire department that just needed to be replaced
19 because of age? Did it need to be replaced because it was out of certification? That was
20 answered differently by every department to the point it was extremely difficult to
21 incorporate into the plan, because different people/departments interpreted priority as
22 differently. As a result of that, he did not include it in the department request forms
23 for version two because it largely it didn't serve any purpose. That might be something
24 that we might want to reconsider when we talk about the process again. The planning
25 board is given the department requests without a filter. We went round and round on
26 that for version one. He adds that he would caution the board that if we do get into a
27 process of "what vetted projects should be included in the CIP", that we don't defeat
28 the purpose of the CIP. To begin with it is planning towards responsibility that is one
29 of the reasons it was given to us. He notes it is not a political aspect; it is not
30 considered if this is a worthy project before it's even given a chance to be analyzed.
31

32 **Duane Curry:** (Speaking as a Northwood resident)

33 He states that when you see something like this it's a lot more complex than when you
34 look at it to begin with, but there are some basic things. He notes that when the fire
35 chief spoke there was no priority, there was no comment about what things we were
36 already obligated to. He adds that that there was no indication of we're obligated to
37 right now (lease payments), and here's this new wish list to be added. None of that
38 information was presented. Part of the process should be the fire chief supplying
39 information of what really is important based on the budget that they already have,
40 and how much budget is left. That's what's missing in this.

41 This document doesn't serve the purpose. How do you make a decision if you don't
42 know what the fire chief thinks the priorities are? We discovered at the August
43 meeting that we didn't know the real true lifetime of this stuff that we're buying. We
44 didn't know what the maintenance agreements were, or when they were going to
45 expire. There's got to be more information as part of more discussion."
46

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1 **Bob Strobel:** He states one of the reasons he took this on is that it's very similar to the
2 road plan that he had done many years ago. It was forecasting out road deterioration
3 and road repairs and how much in ten years is that going to cost. You don't know the
4 cost of asphalt or whether the road's going to wash out or need unexpected repair. The
5 plan is a ballpark figure for 10 years out. As you get closer to moving from a forecast
6 to an actual budget, that's when you get into the information of which particular
7 manufacturer is used. That's the job of the budget committee and the board of
8 selectmen. The CIP is a planning tool to say to forecast what for need ten years out.
9 If it's in next year's budget it is the board of selectmen's job to have a warrant article.
10 The budget committee's job is to review the costs and need, and make their
11 recommendations.

12
13 **Joe McCaffrey:** He states that both Bob and Duane are making useful points. We're
14 short of information. The Planning Board is in this awkward position of doing
15 preliminary gathering and we don't have the mission to do what the budget committee
16 or the select board has and that is to delve into the actual details and why something
17 is necessary. He adds that we are in a position to do some preliminary information
18 gathering including asking a few more questions. He adds that our initial questions
19 that go out to different agencies; fire department, police department, etc. need to be
20 more specific and require at least preliminary justification for the request. By having
21 to do that in the early stage, that's going to be something that is going to put them on
22 record.

23
24 **Bob Strobel:** He states that one of the check columns he used is one that he hid. If
25 you look at the orange, the fire department ambulance requests over the life of the
26 CIP, it's not on the printed out spreadsheet because it's just one of the things that
27 were used to make sure that the amount requested is balanced with the amount that
28 is planned. He adds that you can look at the ambulance equipment request which is
29 orange and is 2.75 or 2.7 million over the entire lifetime of the 10 years of the CIP.
30 Below that in parentheses is the actual ambulance fund projected income or revenue.
31 2.7 million is proposed in purchases, with a projected income or revenue of \$900,000
32

33 **Selectman Kreider:** He states he is disappointed with some of the comments he has
34 heard. We had a process, it was well publicized, and we did it this way for several
35 years. It's the Planning Board's process. If we're unhappy with it, we should be
36 unhappy with ourselves. He adds that he is more than a little bit disappointed that
37 board members are making disparaging comments about employees that did exactly
38 what they were requested. He notes that it is these types of remarks that makes it
39 hard to hold on to people.

40
41 **Chair Jandebaur:** he states that he was a little bit confused and intimidated. He
42 thinks what confused us is what we could or couldn't ask. He adds that if the system
43 stayed exactly the same that next year he would be much better at it with practice.
44 Second, regarding tonight's meeting, he notes that he understood that tonight was a
45 time when Planning Board members could also speak their minds so that's why he
46 did. He adds that we're seeing clearly why we need to look at this system and why we
47 need a committee. In Mr. Stack's committee there is a specified budget committee

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1 member. He would like that to stay. In the new system that budget committee member
2 is not specified. He adds that we could do a lot better with a new system.

3
4 **Vice Chair McCaffrey:** he states he made no reference to anybody working in town He
5 adds that we haven't been able to hold on to people for reasons that have nothing to
6 do with anything he said or anybody on this board. He notes we only have one original
7 staff member left in this town over the past 10 years. There are reasons for that that
8 has nothing to do with this board. He adds that he clearly spoke to a partially
9 functional effort which has been pointed out. He states this is the most we produced
10 on any previous year. He adds that we have now come to the awareness that this
11 needs improvement.

12
13 **Mr. Burdin:** he states that he is sensing that many of us are frustrated with the
14 process and with the result to a certain extent that we've come up with this year. He
15 adds that he would like to refocus on our acknowledged plan for the process this year.
16 There were understandable concerns about setting up a better way to do things but we
17 also had an existing framework within to work this year. He adds that he would like to
18 bring us back around to the CIP as it exists, and respectfully suggests that we're
19 approaching the point that the planning board should be thinking about tying a bow
20 on its involvement in the CIP for this year, adopting a document and passing it along
21 to the other boards to do their job with it. He states that if the board ready to make a
22 motion to adopt tonight that would be appropriate and if the board is not ready to do
23 so, he suggests that you think very carefully about what specific changes you would
24 like to see before you adopt the CIP for this year and we prepare to do that at a future
25 meeting very soon. He also suggests that we have the conversation about what process
26 we would like to follow in the future as a separate and distinct conversation, but also
27 that we do it soon. He notes his primary reason for that is that he believes some of the
28 concerns expressed with the document that the Town Administrator put together have
29 to do with how towns can decide to do a CIP. You can either delegate a CIP to the
30 Planning Board or you can delegate a CIP to a committee and the decision about who
31 that gets delegated to is a vote at town meeting and the only way to switch from one to
32 the other is another vote at town meeting. The statute regarding a Capital
33 Improvement program says that a town can decide either to grant that authority to the
34 Planning Board or it can grant that authority to some other subcommittee (the
35 makeup of which is not defined by statute) and can be defined by the town itself.
36 Northwood can decide whatever works best for Northwood he states his only concern
37 is making sure that if we want to change, we need to make that decision with enough
38 time to get a warrant together for town meeting to put before the voters, because if we
39 can't get that done we can't change to a different system. He adds that he believes a
40 lot of the concerns that you had with Walter's adaptation of Dave Stack's process was
41 that Walter was looking at the system that Northwood had voted on in the past and he
42 was trying to change that to make it fit what we have now. He notes that he
43 understands that may not have been what you wanted and he is trying to encourage
44 everyone to find a consensus in time to take the necessary steps.

45
46 Chair Jandebour closed public comment.

47

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1 **Ms. B. Smith made a motion to approve the CIP as presented. Selectman Kreider**
2 **seconded. Motion carried 6/0/1. Mr. Strobel abstained.**

3
4 **INTERNAL BUSINESS**

5 2022 Budget

6 Ms. L. Smith stated that she presented her department budgets to the Town
7 Administrator and the Finance Director. She stated that she adjusted one line, the line
8 for Contracted Planning Services (Mr. Burdin) as of January 1, based on the fact that
9 the contract hourly rate is going from \$60 an hour to \$65 an hour. The contract cost
10 is a \$2,600 difference over the last year.

11
12 Master Plan Warrant Article

13 She stated that she distributed a sheet about the Master Plan and associated costs
14 since the board had discussed doing a warrant article for the Master Plan. Mr. Burdin
15 stated that if the board would like to put the Master Plan and any changes to the CIP
16 on the warrant, they would need a decision by December.

17
18 **Ms. B. Smith made a motion to ask for \$18,000 in a warrant article so the town**
19 **can complete the required sections to update the Master Plan. Selectman**
20 **Kreider seconded. Motion carried 7/0**

21
22 Zoning Amendments

23 Mr. Burdin stated that right now they only have one note in the Google Drive related to
24 zoning amendments. He stated that the last 4 years have been busy with zoning
25 amendments, so his suggestion is that they take a year off, in part because the last
26 time they updated the site plan regulations was in 2011, and subdivision was 2004.
27 He suggests that the regulations to be considered are related to vesting milestones, for
28 instance, how the board requires bonds or other performance guarantees on projects.
29 Considering that the board would like to reserve November for only CIP discussions,
30 he would like to suggest that rather than work on zoning amendments for town
31 meeting this year that they spend some time this winter reviewing site plan and
32 subdivision, which don't have to go to the voters at town meeting.

33
34 Adjournment

35 **Ms. B. Smith made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 pm. Selectman Kreider seconded.**
36 **Motion carried 7/0.**

37 ***Respectfully Submitted,***
38 ***Land Use Staff***