



TOWN OF WARNER

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Planning Board - CIP Meeting Minutes of September 22, 2021

Town Hall Lower Meeting Room at 7:00 PM

I. OPEN MEETING

Chairman Ben Frost said this meeting would be about reviewing the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) proposals from the Police Department, Emergency Management Department and the Transfer Station (as part of the Department of Public Works).

II. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP)

A. Police Department

The Chairman began by congratulating Chief Bill Chandler on his recent retirement announcement.

Chief Chandler said he annually reassesses the department's fleet of vehicles. Based on that, he pushed the planned replacement of a 2016 cruiser from 2022 back to 2023; as a result, he wants to present a warrant article to voters at the next Town Meeting for \$15,000.

Chief Chandler also noted that in 2021, the department received a new cruiser, but that vehicle is not yet on the road because it's not totally equipped. Some parts are still back-ordered and the cruiser needs its console, siren, lights and cage function installed. As a result, the 2021 current budget balance is off about \$12,000.

The Chairman said the department's proposed CIP pushes the replacement of its SUV back one year, to 2025. Chief Chandler said the current vehicle seems to be in good shape; however, that information could be reset before the annual Town Meeting based on a more recent evaluation. If that occurs, the warrant article proposal would be raised to \$20,000.

There was a brief discussion regarding the use of hybrid vehicles. Chief Chandler said that Warner's department is small, so he wants to wait until larger departments have more experience with hybrids so there's a better understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of their use in police work.

B. Transfer Station

The Chairman greeted the Transfer Station's Foreman Varick Proper. The Chairman explained that the Fire Department representatives would not be attending the meeting as

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planned, so he invited Proper to present his CIP proposals, specifically the plan to update the Transfer Station.

Varick said the facility has not seen significant improvements since it was hastily constructed in 1989 and it needs a major renovation. The cost estimates he's submitting now reflect two main changes: replacing and relocating the compactor, resulting in two compactors on the property; and repaving/resurfacing the whole facility. These changes would include restructuring traffic flow to accommodate the sharp rise in usage and make the operation more efficient.

1. Equipment

Varick said that an independent contractor's assessment of the station's aged equipment produced a report that concluded, "In our opinion, it is not worth investing capital (for repair or refurbishing) in your equipment." It may be possible to coax one or two more years out of the current equipment but anything past that would be highly questionable, he said.

Varick is waiting on some cost estimates for replacement equipment. A horizontal baler would cost roughly between \$300,000-to-\$400,000. A decision on that purchase should include an estimate on return on investment (ROI), which may be \$20,000 annually over 20 years. He added the facility is getting comparatively good ROI at this time, including some of the best prices he's seen in over 10 years.

Board member Andy Bodnarik asked him if investing in new equipment might be problematic if the Transfer Station grounds are redesigned, as the Foreman has suggested. Varick said those changes would have to be taken into consideration; for instance, a new compactor location would improve traffic flow. If the plant reduces the number of compactors or skid steers, there would have to be more storage space in the redesign plans, allowing for commodities to be stored until the equipment is available for use.

The Chairman asked that the CIP proposal include estimates on the entire replacement equipment costs moving forward, so the Town has some idea of the impact on the capital reserve appropriation numbers for future years. Varick said he's included an "ultimate" \$146,000 figure (and \$15,000 in reserve funds), although it's not earmarked to a specific fiscal year. He added that the reserve fund figure should probably be raised; the Chairman agreed, noting that loan interest rates are likely to go up.

The Chairman asked Varick to make some annual expenditure projections. After some discussion, the Foreman agreed to come back to the Board next week with the information. "We have to act on the whole CIP by October 4," the Chairman said.

2. Facility

Varick said more than five years ago, he proposed relocating the current compactor, which would allow for two compactors on the grounds; that project alone would call for \$100,000 for the relocation and paving. For some time, the repaving portion of the project was assumed to come out of the Department of Public Works (DPW)'s paving budget but that appears unlikely now.

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He said the original estimate for the compactor project was \$100,000; but the repaving/resurfacing now would likely cost about \$140,000. He also warned that asphalt costs continue to rise and said that it was unclear at this time if some Town-owned materials and/or machinery would be used for the work.

Varick said that he's reached out to engineering firms to get some information about the project, especially because there is ledge underground but he's not received any feedback.

The Chairman asked him to submit a CIP request to include a year-by-year breakdown of how the Town could set aside the approximately \$300,000 needed for both parts of the project. Varick said he hoped to have a better estimate of the project after hearing from the engineering firms, but he agreed to the request.

Varick reported that use of the Transfer Station has increased. It rose significantly during the height of the coronavirus pandemic last year. People emptied out their homes of unwanted materials and ordered new materials, producing boxes, etc. He also noted the facility needs to be able to continue operations during every portion of the pending projects.

C. Emergency Management Department

Ed Mical said that he's moving forward with plans for the Kearsarge Mountain Emergency Road project. There is now money approved at the annual Town Meeting in March in the capital fund, and he's asked the Board of Selectmen to transfer some into the operating account so he can put together a feasibility study for engineers to evaluate. Ed said he plans to include the information previously developed with the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission about the emergency access issues.

Ed said he's not making any CIP request related to the project because he won't have any idea how much it will cost until the feasibility study is done. He noted that four different alternatives to the road have been discussed, including one that would use land partially in Salisbury and another that would require an easement to use land owned by Magdalen College.

After a brief discussion, the members agreed to leave the project's line item in the CIP at \$0.

III. ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:12 p.m.