



TOWN OF BROOKLINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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Minutes *Public Works Study Committee* *October 12, 2017*

Meeting attendees included: Eric Pauer, Jerry Farwell, John Carr, Linda Chomiak, Tad Putney, Eddie Arnold and Ryan Pauer.

Minutes

The August 31st minutes were approved with one amendment.

Review of Finalized Peer Group Data

Tad reviewed highway spending and capital reserve information he had researched and finalized on 23 peer towns. Since the last meeting, he had obtained the missing information for two of the towns and also had sent draft exhibits to some of the towns for their review of the data. The town of Auburn advised that the figures for their town were missing amounts that they had in their operating budget, but not in the highway budget, that were used in 2016 and 2017 for road reconstruction projects. **Tad** said he has added those figures into the finalized exhibits. The finalized peer data shows average spending per mile of just over \$19,000 for the peer towns versus just under \$14,000 per mile for Brookline. It was noted that the peer towns have average capital reserve funds for highway-related equipment and projects of over \$200,000 while Brookline currently has no money in such a reserve.

Addressing the Future of the Brookline Road Agent Position

Attendees discussed alternatives to the current road agent approach in Brookline. **Eric** suggested one alternative is to pay the road agent/public works director as a full-time employee. The individual would be responsible for administering bids and contracts for much of the work in town as well as overseeing winter storm plowing/sanding as well as some daily maintenance duties. **Jerry** said he feels it is time for the town to have a full-time person in the job; he is spread too thin to fully address town road needs. **Eric** suggested in hiring a full-time person, we should have an incentive in their pay that retains them through the winter season with a potential payment in May or June.

Potential March Warrant Articles

Two potential warrant articles were discussed. The first was to establish and fund a Highway Capital Reserve Fund for public works equipment. **Linda** referenced the last meeting's minutes, which identified about \$760,000 in costs for equipment and a building and raised the question over what number of years it should be raised. **Jerry** suggested \$75,000 as a reasonable figure to raise in the first year. **Tad** asked Jerry if it

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would be reasonable to reduce the annual resurfacing budget from \$250,000 to \$200,000 for the next several years and put \$100,000 into the Capital Reserve Fund each year, which would result in only a \$50,000 increase in taxes, but \$100,000 per year to the Fund. **Jerry** said that approach made sense to him and the other attendees agreed. The second warrant article was to fund the hiring of a full-time DPW Director. If approved, the warrant article would also eliminate the Road Agent position effective in March 2019. All attendees agreed with the need for this warrant article. It was agreed that March 2018 – March 2019 would be a transitional year with both an elected Road Agent, presuming one runs and is elected in March 2018, and a full-time DPW Director, if approved and hired around June 1, 2018. **Jerry** suggested the likely pay level for a DPW Director would be in the \$70,000-\$80,000 range. **Eric** asked if the person would participate in the NH Retirement Plan. **Tad** said yes, so long as the employee is full-time.

Capital Reserve Planning

Tad suggested that the committee's final report should layout a 5-6 year plan for funding the Highway Capital Reserve Fund. All agreed. There was initial discussion about appropriating \$100,000 in 2018 and 2019, which would fund the first three purchase priorities noted in the last meeting's minutes. In 2020, a bond could be proposed for a highway building at the Transfer Station, which would have no tax impact that year and another \$100,000-\$200,000 could be added to the Highway Capital Reserve Fund, depending on needs at that time.

Office Location

Attendees discussed potential office locations for the DPW Director. The current conference room in the lower level of the town hall was mentioned. **Jerry** asked if there was any office space in the fire station. **Tad** said he would check on the possibilities of these two locations.

Next Steps

Jerry said that a job description is needed for the new position and he will put some thought into it. **Tad** suggested we are at a point where a draft report can be put together for review by the committee. All agreed and he said he would put it together and circulate it to members about a week in advance of the next meeting.

Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, November 9th at 6:30pm. Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm.

Minutes submitted by Tad Putney.