

TOWN OF AMHERST
CIP Committee

August 12, 2021

APPROVED

In attendance: Steve Coughlan - Chair; Danielle Pray - Selectman Alternate; John D'Angelo - Selectman Ex-Officio; Jullie Patterson - Citizen At Large Member; Christy Houpis - Planning Board Representative; and Amy Facey - SAU.

Staff present: Natasha Kypfer - Town Planner.

Department Heads present: Eric Hahn and Eric Slosek - DPW; and, Craig Fraley - Recreation Director.

Chair Steve Coughlan called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. +/-.

Eric Hahn and Eric Slosek introduced themselves prior to the start of their presentation.

The first project Eric Hahn discussed is the recurring bridge and water crossings request concerning their repair and replacement. There are three state-defined bridges [see RSA 234:2] that have been identified as structurally deficient and need to be addressed. The way the funding with the state works is an 80/20 match, with DPW fronting the money and then getting a reimbursement. The two prioritized for this year are by Caesar's Brook / Boston Post Road and Thornton Ferry Road #I. Director Hahn explained the benefit of foresight for bridge repairs: if a bridge fails, the road will have to be closed, and if it is not in the funnel for the bridge state program it will cost one million for the Town. Similarly, when culverts are addressed prior to failure, the repairs can prolong their lifespan significantly. Director Hahn called out two by name; one at Thornton's Ferry Road #II at Spring Road, where repair will prolong its life by ten years, and the twin culverts at 485 Boston Post Road, which the department is keen to work on before failure.

In response to a question, Director Hahn stated that there are a total of 25 bridges in Amherst, eight of which are along Route 101 and thereby are state-maintained, making the remaining 17 Town-maintained. Of the municipal bridges, he noted that two are not in use: the Boston Post Road "beautification" bridge and the defunct bridge along Pine Road, by the Smokehaus restaurant, which used to be along the old Route 101.

Jullie Patterson asked what constitutes a bridge being placed on the "red list" and it was explained that the state completes inspections, rating bridges based on eight components, and further clarified that the Town is responsible for maintenance. Christy Houpis asked whether climate change impacts are factored in to the bridges and water crossings. Director Hahn explained the NH DES carries out hydrologic flow calculations and they are proactive in planning ahead for water flow. Assistant Director Slosek shared how 2018 was the fifth wettest year on record, and that DES is proactive with water flow concerns.

The second project request is related to the Transfer Station. Director Hahn explained it has been in its current configuration since 2008, and that its ~ 200-foot sorting line lacks a slip free deck. The proposal is to install a contiguous truss roof, spanning end to end of the deck, which will allow for safe and easy traverse for residents, as well as DPW staff. It is noted that people tend to not recycle while it is raining, and that recycle is paid for by the ton (\$76 per ton); when the recycle is water-saturated it costs more and the value is diminished when the load is wet. The provisions are in place to support the carriage style roof, but this request has been pending and pushed out for eight years. Director Hahn explained there is lead-time in order to complete the design and bid component, and that the project cannot be encumbered into the following FY.

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Amy Facey asked whether the DPW could give the schools notice on road work so that the school bus company can be aware of the best routes to take. Assistant Director Slosek explained that the DPW is on a first-name basis with the bus company and that they are in constant contact. Amy asked how SAU can be notified about road work; it was explained how the Town webpage is updated as well as notices placed on the DPW Facebook page, but that she can also be included specifically on communications.

Craig Fraley introduced himself to the group prior to the start of his presentation.

The first project discussed was the tennis court replacement, which will be funded from user fees and the revolving fund. Director Fraley explained one third of the revenue for projects comes from tax funds, with the remainder coming from user fees. He noted how, unfortunately, Covid hit the programs hard last year, including at Baboosic Beach, which is where the bulk of Rec Department revenue comes from. Once the AMS tennis courts are resurfaced, the plan is to install basketball courts perpendicular, and potentially pickle ball courts (which is the fastest growing sport amongst senior citizens). This project will take all summer long but is planned to be completed in tandem with road construction, as that equates to a ~ \$40K cost savings.

The second project is the department's recurring request for a Community Center. Director Fraley noted there is a huge demand for this, as Amherst lacks indoor space where activities can take place during the school day, as well as a location providing court space in the evenings, after school hours. He cited the example of this year's 32 basketball teams which have to make do with access to only two gym spaces. Similarly, a big impact for this upcoming school year are the new times which will hurt programming because a 7:00 PM start time is not practical. Amy Facey commented that a gym is planned in the proposal for the new school.

In response to a question from Danielle Pray, Director Fraley commented on the funding that resulted in the acquisition of Buck Meadow last year, in partnership with the Conservation Commission. Buck Meadow is a forty-acre parcel, for which a LWCF (Land & Water Conservation Fund) grant aided in 50% in-kind matching.

In response to a question from Jullie Patterson, Director Fraley stated that the proposed Community Center would be open to the public, serving the ages of residents from toddlers through adults, and would be membership fee based. He continued by explaining it would provide a space for a senior center, which the town currently lacks, and it could house Rec offices. He noted it would be modeled after the community centers in the cities of Concord and Dover, which have been built within the last 15 years. Director Fraley noted that they already have the land ear-marked, but that he is not at liberty to discuss its whereabouts.

The committee briefly discussed the upcoming meeting schedule. There is no meeting needed on August 19. At the next meeting, on August 26, both BPAC and the Schools will each present. Both Danielle Pray and Jullie Patterson noted they are unable to be in attendance. The question arose of whether it was necessary to add an additional meeting to the calendar to allow for the balance of the spreadsheet figures. It is suggested to earmark Thursday, September 2nd as a placeholder for this task.

The last item of business to complete was approval of minutes from the August 5, 2021, meeting.

The committee approved the meeting minutes of August 5, 2021, as presented.

Voting: 6-0-0; minutes approved unanimously.

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97 **At 5:08 p.m. +/- Chair Steve Coughlan adjourned the meeting.**

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99 Respectfully submitted,

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101 Natasha Kypfer

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106 Minutes approved: August 26, 2021