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**HUDSON PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
May 13, 2009**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Russo called this Planning Board meeting to order at 7: 09 p.m. on Wednesday, May 13, 2009, in the Community Development meeting room in the Hudson Town Hall basement.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Russo asked Selectman Massey to lead the assembly in pledging allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

III. ROLL CALL

Chairman Russo asked Secretary Stewart to call the roll. Those persons present, along with various applicants, representatives, and interested citizens, were as follows:

Members

Present: James Barnes, George Hall, Suellen Quinlan, Vincent Russo, Terry Stewart, and Richard Maddox (Selectmen's Representative) .

Members

Absent: Tierney Chadwick (excused).

Alternates

Present: Brion Carroll, Tim Malley, Stuart Schneiderman, and Ken Massey (Selectmen's Representative Alternate) .

Alternates

Absent: None. (All present .)

Staff

Present: Town Planner John Cashell.

Recorder: J. Bradford Seabury.

IV. SEATING OF ALTERNATE S AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Russo seated Mr. Carroll in place of the absent Ms. Chadwick.

V. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

Chairman Russo addressed the minutes for the meeting of April 8, 2009. Several members indicated that they had not yet read those minutes, and he asked that the Board members be prepared to review them for the next meeting.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

Chairman Russo stated that there were no items of correspondence pertaining to the items being discussed this evening .

VII. JOINT MEETING

A. New Hampshire Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) staff presentation on the statutory and process requirements for the Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

Mr. Matt Monahan, regional planner from CRPC (Central NH Regional Planning Commission) and CTAP (Community Technical Assistance Program), introduced himself and asked for an understanding of who was present. Chairman Russo noted that all members of the Planning Board were present, except for Ms. Chadwick, adding that Selectmen Maddox and Massey also were present. Ms. Quinlan noted that representatives from the Conservation Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment also were present, as well as three members of the Nashua Regional Planning Commission. Ms. Marge Leonard and Mr. Robert Duhane, sitting in the audience, identified themselves as members of the Hookset CIP Committee, present out of interest in the presentation.

Mr. Monahan introduced a PowerPoint presentation, stating that he was not going to go into the details presented on the slides, which the members could read later, but instead would be presenting an overview, beginning with an overview of the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) process and some FAQ-type statements to clarify some common misconceptions about the CIP process. He discussed RSA 675 through 8, cautioning that RSA 91 -A:2 should be adhered to closely. He noted that the conduction of the CIP process differed in various places, saying that what he was presenting was the way that the CRPC followed.

Mr. Monahan discussed the makeup of the CIP Committee, recommending at least seven members as optimum, and then reviewed the timeline recommended by CRPC, noting that he not only helped some client towns with the CIP process but also served on the CIP Committee in his own community (Goffstown). He noted that some allowance had to be made for flexibility, since the Committee had to wait for the department heads to get material back to the Committee and be available for interviews; he recommended that the CIP Committee work from May through September in order to get the report done before the Budget Committee began its

budgetary process—noting that Goffstown would be starting in two weeks, while Hillsborough had already started .

Mr. Robert Duhane , from Hookset, noted that his town's budget had to be approved by Town Meeting vote, which had occurred the previous day, so the Town Administrator now had to start working on next year's budget and would have to ask each department to start their departmental budgets, which would not be ready until September, so he did not see how his committee could start to do that now. Mr. Monahan said the idea was to complete the process in time for the Budget Committee to be able to make use of it as part of its deliberation process. Selectman Maddox suggested that it was even more important to have the results available before the Board of Selectmen begins its budget deliberation process.

Mr. Monahan discussed his outline for the first CIP meeting, noting what was to be accomplished, including definition of Capital Improvement, examples of typical capital projects, development of the project application, and development of cover letters to boards and departments (as well as the School District) .

Selectman Maddox pointed out that Hudson operated on a different schedule, since its Town Meeting was in March. He suggested that some of the things in Mr. Monahan's presentation were designed for small towns that were new to the CIP process and worked with smaller budgets , noting that Hudson had been doing the CIP process for years, with a \$50,000 cost threshold for CIP items rather than \$5,000, as discussed on the slides .

Mr. Monahan discussed Meeting 2, saying this was when the CIP Committee should review the applications that had been received, start scheduling interviews with department heads, and schedule the remaining Committee meetings.

Chairman Russo asked about the Master Plan, noting that Hudson typically updated its plan every ten years. Mr. Monahan said there was a 3 -year component .

Mr. Monahan noted that there was homework to be done between meetings, beginning with distribution of the application packets. He then commented on the importance of a CIP Plan with respect to impact fees.

Mr. Carroll asked if the interviews took place during the meeting session, moderated by the coordinator, or as additional dialogs between the meetings. Mr. Monahan said the interview was a process by which the Committee members talked with each department head and pulled out more information than was provided in the application from that department head.

Discussing Meeting 3, Mr. Monahan said this was where the Committee began developing its prioritization of the projects, to determine which projects were more important. He pointed out that it was helpful to have corresponding items in the Master Plan, so that CIP projects could be prioritized by matching them to the goals expressed in the Master Plan, so as to put a number value on each item.

Mr. Hall stated that Hudson had experienced a great deal of controversy about the scoring process, saying there did not seem to be much in this presentation with respect to that. Mr. Monahan said it came from dialog with the department heads; he said the

department heads generally had their own priorities, and the CIP Committee members had theirs, and the Committee compared them, adding that he said he would discuss the scoring process later in the presentation. Mr. Hall objected that it began here, at Meeting 3, as a part of the prioritization process. Town Planner Cashell provided Mr. Monahan with a copy of the procedure document used by the Hudson CIP Committee, and Mr. Monahan commented on some items as he reviewed it. Mr. Hall noted that all of the roadway projects, which basically cost no money, always got Priorities 1 and 2, which upset the other departments—adding that he himself thought this was appropriate. Mr. Monahan said it should be flipped, if the money was coming in from another source. Mr. Hall said his point was that the presentation suggested there was no scoring process, so he did not see how controversy was avoided. Mr. Monahan reiterated that things of little cost should be lower in the priority scale.

Selectman Maddox said the approach being suggested seemed to be another budget process. He said what he and Mr. Hall were looking for was a better system of scoring.

Mr. Schneiderman said comparison of the handbook and the Capital Improvement Plan showed that Class 1 items in the handbook were given the same weight as everything else in the evaluation criteria, so perhaps some adjustment or a 2-step process was needed, in order to avoid controversy. Mr. Monahan said each community had to go with whatever worked for that community. He suggested that the Planning Board members should investigate all possible resources in order to tweak its process.

Mr. Carroll said it seemed that Hudson did not have any way of comparing the value of a thing against its cost, so it appeared that what was being lost was that something that cost a small amount was really worth a great deal of value. Mr. Hall pointed out that the CIP was only advisory, adding that some people got hung up because the highways got No. 1 rating, saying he could not understand this, as what they should be looking at was what the Town should spend for the projects they wanted to do.

Ms. Quinlan said neither Mr. Monahan nor anyone else could provide a bright and shiny rule about prioritization, but Slide 19 seemed to give some guidelines, adding that the CIP Committee had to go through that inquiry process described there. She said the issue should be what the Town needed, which she felt would avoid concern about priority. She suggested that Slide 20 should be given to the applicants. Mr. Monahan said the purpose of a checklist was not to hit every item but to ensure that the Committee had looked at everything that pertained and had enough information to proceed. He said there had to be ways to tweak the scoring system.

Selectman Massey said all capital projects ultimately became a political decision, with a lot of tradeoffs between the departments as to who came first, with further constraint caused by the amount of bonded indebtedness that had to be shared between the Town and the School District. He said the issues of when something was needed had to be considered, noting the crowded conditions of Town Hall as an example, as there was no place to put another person. He said no scoring system was ever going to solve the political process—adding that the budget that a Board of Selectmen would put together would be based on what that Board that year felt was needed, in conjunction with what budgetary funds would be available.

Mr. Duhane said the Town of Pittsfield had an item on the warrant to sell the town, saying a good CIP Plan had to be sold to the voters.

Mr. Monahan referenced Slide 25, saying the Board had to think about how much the Town could go into debt, how much could be erased to accommodate the budget, etc.—with the fundamental question being how much would the voters be willing to pay in taxes, as the project would be out of luck if the people did not want it.

Mr. Monahan noted that Pittsfield had a dire economic situation, so that community had tried to pull in a broad-based coalition, and the members of that broad group then were able to get things passed in Town Meeting. He suggested that this needed to be considered in setting up the committee, saying as many people as possible should be pulled in, to get maximum interaction from different points of perspective.

Mr. Carroll suggested that Pittsfield had looked at value to cost, saying he did not think the Hudson CIP Committee did a good job of that.

Mr. Monahan referenced Slide 32, *Roadway Management Plan*, saying the information could be put in a software program to determine the optimum one of a number of possible solutions, thereby prioritizing the components.

Mr. Barnes said the bottom four of the suggested evaluation criteria looked at cost benefits, just as Mr. Carroll was suggesting. Mr. Carroll said he felt the relevance of the value was not made known to the public at the time of voting, and he then expressed a belief that the value got reduced in its effectiveness by the current process. Mr. Barnes said the feedback he was getting from some people was that the process was broken before it got to the warrant. Mr. Monahan said the Pittsfield process with respect to the \$100,000 investment bill was specific and appealed to net gain, so that people could see the benefit.

Ms. Stewart expressed a belief that certain departments or boards did not recognize the importance of participating in the process, saying this was a real problem. Mr. Monahan noted that RSA 674 -7:2 said every department, etc. *shall* transmit to the CIP Committee. Ms. Quinlan suggested that this language would support subpoenaing the representative. Mr. Monahan pointed out that the cover letter sent to the boards and departments should point out the benefits of having the representative attend the CIP meetings. Ms. Quinlan said she felt the Board should talk to the Town Attorney to see if the Committee could get an administrative summons—adding that the viewing public had to understand that the results had impact on every dollar spent by the town, and departments that did not send representatives to the meetings were collectively and individually failing each and every taxpayer. She then asked if the CIP Committee meetings were televised, saying they should be if they were not.

Mr. Monahan said the department heads should be told that the taxpayers wanted to know that the committee had gone through a vigorous process.

Mr. Duhane said this was again a sign that the plan had to be sold to the public. He said the Planning Board had the chance to tell the voters about this tool.

Selectman Maddox said what was needed was a program that worked, and that provided benefit to the departments and to the public, as well as giving more guidance to the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee .

Mr. Monahan noted that the discussion had hit on making sure the process was clear, saying the make-up of the CIP Committee could go a long way in making the process work and making the process as transparent and vigorous as possible.

Mr. Barnes said a shortcoming of recent CIPs was that they seemed to be narrowly focused, looking out just a few years. Mr. Monahan said the department heads should be reminded that the 6-year process moved forward, so it behooved them to plan out in advance. He said the process should result in the department heads prioritizing their stuff.

Mr. Carroll expressed concern that the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee might not follow the CIP, so that it might not have actual weight. Saying the Board wanted to make the process more involved, he asked those selectmen present if the Board of Selectmen would really use it if it were more selective. Selectman Maddox said that would depend who was on the Board of Selectmen at that time, saying the political process sometimes took control. Selectman Massey added that the CIP Plan needed to be in three pieces, because the cost of sewer and water improvements were not borne by the taxpayers, so he felt they should be in a different category. He said the current Board of Selectmen would look at the CIP Report, but he would separate those items in terms of priorities.

Ms. Quinlan said putting things before the voters would be arduous, saying the projects could not be prioritized to everyone's satisfaction. She said the Board needed to make sure that people participated, as well as getting the Selectmen to understand how important this process was. She said it was necessary that those department heads coming in with large projects participated and took the process seriously.

Town Planner Cashell said the sole purpose of the CIP program was to aid the Board of Selectmen and the Budget Committee in their consideration of the annual budget. He said the CIP Committees of the past few years had followed the law and done everything in accordance with the process outlined by the RSA, although there had been a lack of participation by certain departments. He noted that some department heads were able to go to the Board of Selectmen during the year and make requests or to determine if the budget would be available; he said the process was working, although not working perfectly, saying that this Planning Board was performing the task required by the RSA. He then said the question this year was whether this process had to be followed on an annual basis, saying he had been trying to advocate a 3-year interval, feeling the process would get more participation that way .

Mr. Carroll said he had a feeling that department heads did not think it was worth the effort, as they did not see the fruits of their labor. If the Board of Selectmen could not say they would follow the CIP Plan, he said, people would not think it was worth participating. He said it seemed to him that the Board of Selectmen, which had told the Planning Board to create this, should be following the plan.

Selectman Maddox said the selectmen tried to use the CIP Plan as a tool, but they had no control over the School District, which had a much large percentage of the town budget, as well as the Library. He expressed hope that there would be more participation from the School Board, now that Mr. Hall was functioning as a liaison. He then expressed a belief that the CIP process was “off-Broadway,” in that it gave the department heads a chance to promote their wants.

Town Planner Cashell said the Board of Selectmen ultimately had to allow a warrant article to go to the people. Selectman Maddox demurred, pointing out that an article also could be partitioned by the voters or submitted by the School Board. Mr. Cashell expressed a belief that the economic times had caused the people to pull in ranks and vote “No” for everything last year. He said how well the voters were doing financially affected the decisions in the voting booth.

Mr. Monahan said the process was messy, in that it contained competing opinions, adding that he thought voters would take it more seriously if they saw that there was broad-based participation—adding that having a School Board member on the Committee would make the resulting document carry more weight.

Town Planner Cashell said he thought it was a good process, saying he enjoyed doing it. He expressed a belief that the Library, Fire Department, and Police Department had obtained good results because of their participation in the process.

Mr. Monahan said the CIP articulated a set of projects that were not random and had a lot of thought behind them. Mr. Cashell said he thought the Board of Selectmen was very cognizant of the voters’ tax dollars.

Chairman Russo asked how the Board wanted to wrap this up. Selectman Massey asked if there were citizens on the CIP Committee. Town Planner Cashell said there was one. Selectman Massey expressed a belief that having two or three citizens would be worthwhile, saying that would provide leverage and help sell the process to the community.

Ms. Margie Leonard, a visitor from the Hooksett CIP Committee, said she was a newcomer to that committee, saying this first year had been a little confusing, but she had found this workshop extremely helpful in helping her understand better how town officials functioned. She expressed appreciation for the program.

Mr. Monahan said he thought he had gained some useful information from this meeting, which he would use elsewhere. He then referenced Slide 53, noting that there were many resources available to the Planning Board and the CIP Committee.

Town Planner Cashell said this was what the Planning Board had needed to get the process back on track, adding that it would be great to have more participation.

Chairman Russo expressed thanks to Mr. Monahan for the program. Ms. Quinlan suggested that the Planning Board members read through the documentation and have another meeting at a later date.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Selectman Maddox noted that Dr. Ebeed's lights were on until midnight tonight, and he urged all Planning Board members to go view the lights on their way home.

IX. NEW BUSINESS/PUBLIC HEARINGS

No **New Business** items were addressed this evening.

X. ADJOURNMENT

All scheduled items having been addressed, Selectman Maddox moved to adjourn; Mr. Carroll seconded the motion.

VOTE: Chairman Russo called for a verbal vote on the motion. All members voted in favor.

Chairman Russo then declared the meeting to be adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

Date: May 13, 2008

Vincent Russo, Chairman

J. Bradford Seabury, Recorder

Terry Stewart, Secretary

These minutes were accepted as submitted following review at the 06-10-09 Planning Board meeting.