In attendance at New Boston Town Hall: Peter Hogan, Amy Sanders, Ed Carroll, Zane Merva (alternate).

Staff in attendance: Shannon Silver, Planning Coordinator

Peter Hogan called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm at Town Hall, with a Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Hearing on the Capital Improvements Program, Plan of 2024, as proposed by the C.I.P. Committee.**

Fred Hayes, Chair of the New Boston Capital Improvements Committee, presented to the Board. The Committee’s job is to spread the cost of requested items out over the years. Peter Hogan asked if the Committee makes any decisions to include items that have already been voted down by the Town. Fred Hayes explained that the Committee includes all items, and that the Town then votes to fund these items or not at Town Meeting. The CIP Committee has nothing to do with proposed warrant articles. The Planning Board will vote on the schedule and thus has a say regarding what goes onto the plan. Peter Hogan asked how the Committee justified including a Fire Chief command car on the Plan that the Town previously said no to. Fred Hayes stated that it is not the CIP Committee’s business as to why the Fire Department has that vehicle.

Donna Mombourquette, ex-officio to the CIP Committee and Chair of the Select Board, explained that warrant articles can either have a tax implication or not. If the voters voted down a command vehicle for the Fire Chief, but there is still a need, and someone decides to donate this vehicle to the Town, she does not believe this is a large issue. Donna Mombourquette stated that there was no tax implications for this donation. This donation was likely approved by the Select Board. Ed Carroll explained that this is a big deal, as this vehicle is now on the CIP schedule to be replaced by taxpayers next year at a cost of $70,000. Peter Hogan noted that there is also now a $6,000 maintenance schedule for this car, which is more than leasing a vehicle in the first place would have come to. If the Town wanted to spend $6,000 on a command vehicle, it would have voted to do so.

Fred Hayes explained that the command vehicle cannot be purchased next year, unless approved by the voters. He stated that Peter Hogan simply cares that he does not have a vehicle to use. Peter Hogan stated that that was a foolish comment, as that is not his concern.

Fred Hayes stated that the Board can choose not to vote to approve certain items within the Plan. Peter Hogan stated that the Board has done so for the item in question in the past.

Donna Mombourquette stated that the Board’s position seems to be that there is no need for a command vehicle for the Fire Department. Peter Hogan explained that this was the Town’s position, when it voted against the proposal. Donna Mombourquette stated that the conversation regarding the worthiness of this vehicle is a separate conversation. The Chief was previously using his own vehicle whenever he attended a fire call which is inappropriate, per insurance companies. This information should be vetted as part of the separate conversation.

Peter Hogan noted that the person who was the original proponent for this command vehicle went to every call, including EMS calls. Donna Mombourquette stated that she believes experts in the field, either within the Town’s Fire Department, citizens with experience, or people in other town’s departments, should speak to the need for this command vehicle. Peter Hogan stated that the Town is storing money away for a $70,000 vehicle that the Town’s people have already said no to. He is standing up for the people who voted against this. However, some in Town have stated that the Department Heads know more than the voters do and will make sure these people get what they need. Donna Mombourquette noted that she, and other members of the CIP Committee, are also taxpayers in the Town. Peter Hogan stated that the Town has already said that it does not want this vehicle, nor the continued maintenance costs that come with it.

Zane Merva stated that he is unclear why there are so many emotions around this item. The voters get the final say, but simply because this item was voted down last year does not mean it should not be presented to them this year as part of this Plan. Peter Hogan explained that there was a vote to not give the Department a command vehicle. This has not been put before the voters again but is instead put continuously on the CIP for maintenance of a vehicle that was donated to the Town. This car should not have been registered in the first place and is now off the road. The vehicle is now up for replacement, but it was never approved.

Zane Merva stated that, simply because a mistake was made in the past, does not mean that money should not ever be allocated moving forward into the future. Donna Mombourquette stated that it is unclear why voters voted against it.

In response to a question from Amy Sanders, Shannon Silver explained that the command vehicle was never on the CIP previously. The request came in the year before the donation and was voted down by the Town. In 2024, it comes up for its six-year replacement. Amy Sanders noted that the Chief at the time requested this previously for the CIP, but the request did not meet the criteria at the time.

Peter Hogan explained that a Department Head decided this vehicle was needed and submitted it for the CIP Plan. He asked what justification was made to override the vote of the townspeople.

Fred Hayes stated that the current command vehicle on the CIP Plan was placed on six years ago and comes up in 2024. There will be a warrant article to approve this. Peter Hogan asked if this will be a standalone article and if the Board can then choose to vote against it. Fred Hayes stated that it would, and the Board can.

Zane Merva stated that the point made about insurance for the Chief’s individual vehicle is a good one. This liability is not fair for the Chief to shoulder.

Amy Sanders noted that each Board member will have his/her own opinion. She would like to continue with each of the other CIP Plan items.

Ed Carroll asked if the Board could request the Fire Department to come before it to discuss its vehicles/trucks. Shannon Silver stated that this discussion could happen at some point in the future. Peter Hogan stated that he would also like to hear from the Highway Department regarding their vehicles/equipment.

Peter Hogan asked how many cars the Fire Department is requesting for the future. Fred Hayes stated that the only current request was for one. Peter Hogan stated that, if one of the cars had not previously been sold, the Department would have two.

In response to a question from Peter Hogan, Fred Hayes stated that the CIP Committee started to create the existing list approximately a month ago.

Ed Carroll asked if the discussion regarding the Fire Department vehicles could be put to the side until the Fire Department can come before the Board. The Board agreed.

Regarding the Bridge CRF, Donna Mombourquette explained that the engineering plans for bridge reconstruction are currently being reviewed by DOT. The engineers currently employed for the project, Hoyle Tanner, should be the ones making sure the bridge is installed properly by the contractors. There will be many eyes on this project making sure it goes to plan.

**Peter Hogan moved for the Town Bridge Repair/Replacement CRF to move forward. Seconded by Ed Carroll. Voting: 3-0-0** **motion carried unanimously.**

**Peter Hogan moved for the Fire Department Vehicles Annual CRF to move forward, with a note that the Department should come before the Planning Board for further discussion on this item. Seconded by Ed Carroll. Voting: 3-0-0** **motion carried unanimously.**

**Peter Hogan moved for the Highway Truck Annual CRF and Highway Heavy Equipment** **CRF** **to move forward, with a note that the Department should come before the Planning Board for further discussion on this item. Seconded by Amy Sanders. Voting: 3-0-0** **motion carried unanimously.**

**Peter Hogan moved for the Road Improvements** **CRF to move forward. Seconded by Ed Carroll. Voting: 3-0-0** **motion carried unanimously.**

**Peter Hogan moved for the Transfer Station Vessel Composting Station CRF and Transfer Station Trailer CRF to move forward. Seconded by Ed Carroll. Voting: 3-0-0** **motion carried unanimously.**

**Peter Hogan moved for the Emergency System Maintenance** **CRF to move forward. Seconded by Amy Sanders. Voting: 3-0-0** **motion carried unanimously.**

**Peter Hogan moved for the Library Expansion CRF and Library HVAC System** **CRF to move forward. Seconded by Ed Carroll. Voting: 3-0-0** **motion carried unanimously.**

There was discussion regarding the Library’s HVAC system.

There was discussion regarding the construction of the Tunnel/Rail Trail/Parker Road CRF item being left on the Plan as a placeholder item. The School Bond addition item was also discussed.

**Peter Hogan moved to submit the CIP Schedule, as presented to the Select Board. Seconded by Ed Carroll. Voting: 3-0-0** **motion carried unanimously.**

**Miscellaneous business that may come before the Board and/or Planning Board discussions.**

1) Approval of the October 24, 2023, meeting minutes, with or without changes. (distributed by email)

**Peter Hogan moved to approve the meeting minutes of October 24, 2023, as amended. Seconded by Ed Carroll. Voting: 3-0-0** **motion carried unanimously.**

2) Letter copy dated October 24, 2023, from Maralyn Segien, Town of New Boston Executive Assistant, to Ben Kent, re: appointment to the Economic Development Committee, for the Board’s information.

The Board acknowledged this letter.

Shannon Silver noted that the Southern NH Planning Commission dues have increased for 2024 by $3.38, leading to a total cost of $4,206.75.

**Peter Hogan moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:31pm. Seconded by Amy Sanders.**

**Voting: 3-0-0** **motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted, **Minutes approved:**

Kristan Patenaude December 12, 2023