

Friday, October 13, 2023

# Hanover Capital Improvement Program Committee

---

## Meeting Minutes

### I. Welcome:

#### A. Introduction:

1. In attendance (in person) are committee members Nicolás Macri, Brian Edwards, Jennie Chamberlain, Ellen Bullion, Kimberly Hartmann, John Dolan, Peter Kulbacki, Carey Callaghan, and Alex Torpey (via phone).
2. Each committee member introduced themselves.

#### B. Policies:

1. These meetings are open to the public. Nicolás Macri will take minutes for this meeting until we vote on a Secretary for the committee.
2. This is the committee's first year of meeting, but it will continue meeting beyond this year. This being the committee's first meeting for this year's budget cycle means that this year's operations of the committee will have to be at an accelerated pace.

#### C. Public Comment:

1. No members of the public were present, so no public comments occurred.

### II. Organization:

#### A. Review:

1. What do Capital Improvement Programs (CIPs) do? They help towns actualize the goals of their Master Plans.
2. They usually work off of a fixed asset inventory, but Hanover's has not been updated in a long time, so Bullion is working on updating that inventory.
3. They are required for towns wishing to adopt growth management ordinances or impact fee ordinances. They require authorization by the Town Meeting, which occurred in May of 2023, and need at least 1 member of the Planning Board (which is Edwards).

4. They seek to address capital improvements over at least 6 years (with 6 to 10 years being typical), classify projects according to urgency and need, and include a timetable for implementation of projects.
5. Chamberlain noted that CIPs can help towns account for planning and design costs of projects.

### III. Discussion:

#### A. Current CIP Process:

1. Kulbacki maintains an asset sheet with any capital assets (largely listing equipment) worth above \$10,000, including what the expected life of the asset is and the cost at purchase. The sheet includes many smaller items like lawnmowers and line strippers.
2. Currently, Kulbacki notes how much money is needed to repair and replace equipment and requests this amount from the budget to keep things balanced each year.
3. Kulbacki notes that some funds could be consolidated. Each of the reserve funds were set up at the Town Meeting, so merging them would require the action of the Town Meeting. Hanover has 13 capital reserve funds of this nature.
4. We have 425 capital assets on this sheet. This does not include buildings but instead only equipment or portions of buildings like roofs.
  - a) Some of these include components of the same system, like in wastewater management, given that some items need replacement faster than others.
5. Bullion notes that Hanover does have a fixed asset inventory, but the inventory is not updated or complete.
6. Kulbacki maintains an inventory of pipes and other structures, but this has not been shared with Bullion and others at finance. Dolan notes that in principle, most items are out there somewhere and just need to be brought together, but Bullion notes that some new items from the past 2 years need to be included.
7. Currently, Kulbacki goes around to various department heads (police, fire, public works, fleet, water, wastewater, highways) and asks if anything

changed each year to see what funds are needed for replacement of capital assets, with this process usually occurring shortly before the Town Meeting.

8. There was no public process in this current procedure, besides the work of the Hanover Bike Walk Committee's Walk Bike Plan.
9. For this upcoming year, we have last year's projection of funds in and funds out. We should consider factors like lost purchasing power when evaluating these projections.

B. Master Plan:

1. Edwards notes that the currently adopted Master Plan is from 2003, and the Planning Board is responsible for producing the Master Plan. A few years ago, around 2021, the current drafting process for a new Master Plan began.
2. An advisory committee for developing this new Master Plan is working on this and consists of many members, including Beth Esinhart from the Planning Board, a Dartmouth College student Eric Hryniewicz, the architect Chris Kennedy, Selectboard Vice Chair and Dartmouth College planner Joanna Whitcomb, and others, maintaining a representative group.
3. These meetings are open to the public, and they have received a modest amount of public feedback.
4. The Hanover Master Plan Advisory Committee is promoting public feedback sessions at the Howe Library next week. All documents relating to the new Master Plan are posted on the Master Plan website, which is [hanovernhmasterplan.com](http://hanovernhmasterplan.com).
5. Vicki Smith, a retired senior planner for Hanover, has stayed on to finish this new Master Plan. A renowned consulting firm VHB is also working on the new Master Plan.
6. Final drafts for many chapters are now posted on the Master Plan website for public input.
7. The Planning Board will consider at their November meeting the input received on the new Master Plan at the public feedback sessions and to incorporate the changes, which will be a struggle since a proposed church on Greensboro Rd which was very controversial will also be discussed at that meeting.
  - a) This project was affected by the legal process and a new state law.

- b) This may cause this Planning Board meeting to not have an abundance of time to discuss the Master Plan.
- 8. Chapter 1 of the new Master Plan is a good snapshot of the overall document, with subsequent chapters going into depth. Housing and transportation are big issues, and Chamberlain has been assisting on these chapters.
- 9. Edwards hopes that the Planning Board will formally adopt the new Master Plan later in November of 2023.
- 10. Dolan asks Edwards how the Planning Board will incorporate the feedback from the public received at these sessions.
  - a) Edwards notes that surveys and other feedback forms will also be available.
  - b) Edwards says that the Planning Board will receive all feedback and have to make a decision at their meeting on what to do about the feedback and whether or not to make changes.
- 11. Callaghan asks how the public feedback sessions will be structured.
  - a) Chamberlain notes that it will be divided based on the chapters of the new Master Plan and will have staff there to receive feedback on different sections.
  - b) These public feedback sessions (“open houses”) will be at the Howe Library (13 South St) downstairs in the Mayer Room. These are on Wednesday, October 18, 2023 from 11:30 AM to 5 PM and on Thursday, October 19, 2023 from 9 AM to 12 PM.
- 12. Not all chapters of the new Master Plan will require action by Hanover as some will require the actions of private developers, so not everything applies to the CIP.

C. School Boards:

- 1. Hartmann notes how the SAU 70 School Board is looking to begin a planning process, having just adopted a new strategic plan in August of 2023.

- a) This plan contains lots of goals on various topics, which the administration is looking to determine how to implement and what to request in terms of budgets.
2. The SAU 70 School Board seeks to develop longer-range financial plans for their capital assets like their school buses and other items, so this would be analogous to the CIP.
3. Developing this strategic plan sought data, doing a facility audit on all buildings in the school district (including Marion Cross Elementary School in Norwich, VT).
4. This effort to implement this newly adopted strategic plan is in its nascent stage. Hartmann suggests that one of the goals of a CIP is to have a “smoother” tax rate.
5. Callaghan asks about the “fiscal cliff” in Norwich, VT.
  - a) Hartmann says that all debt of the Dresden School District will be paid off. Dresden School District cannot have reserve funds, so they borrow more often, such as the efforts required to renovate Hanover High School and Richmond Middle School.
  - b) The split between Hanover and Norwich, VT is roughly based on the student population, which is a 70/30 split.
  - c) Vermont state law on school funding recently changed, prioritizing rural schools (which Norwich, VT does not qualify for). This will affect how much money Norwich, VT will contribute.
  - d) The estimated impact of this change is to increase property taxes by 25% to 27%, at no fault of the towns or school districts but due to this change in Vermont state law.
  - e) Hartmann is not sure what the impact of this property tax change will be in the minds of Norwich, VT voters, who tend to outvote Hanover residents at the school district elections each March. This could cause budget cuts depending on how the elections go.

#### IV. Organization (Continued):

##### A. Officers:

1. Dolan has expressed interest in chairing the committee.

- a) Dolan says that the goal was to begin the CIP process in the spring of 2023 in time for the Town Meeting of 2024. Given that the committee's first meeting is in October of 2023, Dolan says that the committee will need to work to produce a deliverable to the Selectboard by January of 2024.
  - b) Challenges in working and meeting during December of 2023 will make this harder. Dolan says his goal would be for the committee to produce a draft by Thanksgiving.
  - c) Dolan would seek to educate the committee on what we would need to have by April of 2024 to be prepared for the subsequent year.
  - d) Edwards notes that the new Master Plan may not be adopted by the end of 2023, which could affect the CIP. Chamberlain notes that it would be strange for a surge of public input at the end that would require a massive change in the new Master Plan given the 2-year engagement process.
  - e) Chamberlain notes that the CIP should gather input from all agencies in the town, like parks and recreation, instead of only the departments that Kulbacki spoke with in the previous past process.
  - f) Dolan says that he understands Chamberlain's concerns. Dolan says that he will not be available after Thanksgiving and proposes that we have a Vice Chair and nominates Chamberlain. Chamberlain thinks that that could work well. Dolan suggests that this would help ensure that Dolan does not forget anything.
2. The committee voted unanimously to appoint Dolan as Chair, Chamberlain as Vice Chair, and Macri as Secretary.
    - a) The committee will take a look at the Hanover Bike Walk Committee's bylaws to form the Hanover Capital Improvement Plan Committee's bylaws.
  3. The committee discussed meeting each week at 10 AM on Fridays in the Hanover Town Hall Boardroom.
    - a) Bullion said that she may not be able to attend each meeting but that she would be downstairs if not present.

4. Callaghan suggests that the committee members attend the public feedback sessions for the new Master Plan, suggesting that this be the topic of next week's meeting.

B. Regulations:

1. Chamberlain notes that New Hampshire state law sets a number of regulations on CIPs, saying that this committee has to aid the Selectboard and submit a CIP in time for consideration into the budget.
2. All departments of the town and any affected school boards are required to provide the information necessary to create a CIP. Chamberlain notes that the committee should define a submission period.
3. The town manager and representatives of the Selectboard and Planning Board must be on the committee, which they are, and the committee must receive the approval of the Town Meeting and be appointed by the Selectboard, which has occurred (with the adoption of Article 32 at the Town Meeting of 2023).
4. The committee's meetings and documents are public.
5. Having adopted a CIP, the town could adopt a growth management ordinances and an impact fee ordinance.
6. Chamberlain notes that applying for grants will be easier with a CIP given the assistance in planning.
7. Dolan asks what file-sharing platform we should use. Bullion and Chamberlain suggest using Hanover's OneDrive.
  - a) Not every member has a town email, so the committee will need to see how to provide access to members who are not staff or Selectboard members.
  - b) Dolan seeks to establish a shared file system so that we don't have to track printed papers. Chamberlain will look into establishing a system.
  - c) Hartmann recommends BoardDocs given her experience on school boards.

V. Discussion (Continued):

A. Other Business:

1. Chamberlain says that the committee should come up with a timeline for approaching the town departments.
2. Bullion says that the committee could make a draft request form to start gathering information, suggesting that more structure would be helpful.
3. Chamberlain says to define a submission period.
4. Callaghan notes that the committee needs to decide a timeframe for the CIP (a minimum of 6 years) and a dollar threshold.
  - a) Dolan suggests that we delay that decision to next week's meeting.
5. Bullion will bring the listing of the capital reserve funds and their stated purposes to next week's meeting.
  - a) Chamberlain asks about other funds that are not the 13 capital reserve funds and would like to know more about those other trust funds.
  - b) Bullion states that Hanover has 267 trusts to maintain, with many being cemetery trusts.
  - c) Chamberlain notes that the American Rescue Plan Act funds should also be considered, with Bullion saying that those funds include \$900K that is unallocated, though Callaghan notes that the Selectboard is in the process of allocating those and analyzing with their restrictions.

B. Adjournment:

1. The committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 12:13 PM.