Approved

Mont Vernon (MV) Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC)

Minutes of the August, 15, 2023 Meeting

This meeting held at the MV Fire Station Community Room was called to order at 7:03pm by Paul Lavertu, Chairman. Also present were committee members: Heather Allain, Tim Angulas, Chris Blunt, Pim Grondstra,Eileen Naber, Secretary, Stephanie Vore Apple andJohn Quinlan, Selectmen's Rep.

First order of business was to approve the minutes from our June 6, June 20 and July 11 meetings.

PL moved we accept them as written, TA seconded the motion and it passed.

Next item was to formulate the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the next 10+ years. Discussion on how to proceed resulted in putting a time-line on the white-board. SVA set up the outline posting years going forward and listing the pertinent departments. Notification on how specific funding was predicted was entered on each item. This chart will be entered into an Excel spread sheet by PL to be sent to all committee members and included as part of the minutes.

HA brought up the subject of Capital Reserves (CR) versus bonding. CB, PG, and EN all agreed that CR's are the most prudent method. However, EN commented that CR's take time to build and many of our needs are immediate. Creating a CR for Fire Department equipment makes sense but it is too late for MV Town Hall office reconstruction. HA suggested using CR for heavy equipment but bonding for buildings. PL recommended that as much as possible we should adopt a pay as you go strategy with CR's especially with current interest rates high.

CB stated that putting more than one bond issue on any Town Meeting Warrant guarantees that all will fail.

The Highway Department(HD) was the first item on our CIP chart. PL asked about NH State funds for highway use. JQ replied that we get Block Grant money each year a portion of which is used to offset town DPW costs. The Selectmen use the funds sparingly, keeping some in reserve each year to be used in case of an emergency. JQ also added that MV does get some Room & Meals taxes and those are usually used to help keep the town tax rate relatively even.

PL said that the salt shed is needed immediately and should be on the warrant in 2024. CB agreed. Ben Crosby, HD Chairman suggested having a 5 million dollar bond issue to be designated for catch-up on all the current road repairs. After discussion we decided that was not to be. It was suggested that the HD budget be increased by $50,000each year to keep from falling behind. A new truck & a grader are yet to be addressed. PL suggested establishing a CR account for each of the upcoming large equipment needs. A grant is being applied for a Needs Assessment for town roads, that if approved, would then help with receiving grants for future repairs and work.

TA suggested that CR account be set up for all Town Buildings to cover repairs as needed. Thus giant renovations will be avoided. PL would also like to see a CR set up for upgrading the McCollom Building once the Town Hall work is completed.

Library Department was next. The committee felt that it was scheduled to be on the Warrant in 2024 and could not be delayed. PL stated once the new library building is complete, the current old library building will be available for town use, once renovations make it ADA accessible.

As it is an old building it should be eligible for grants to cover some of the cost. Once the new library building is occupied the town will have to pay for the upkeep of the current Daland Library Building. PL added, this building could be used for the Town Clerk's office until the Town Hall is completely retrofitted.

The Police Department (PD) was discussed next. Chief Slavin stressed the need to have a building to themselves. This means that the Town Clerk has to be relocated. If the library bond issue gets approved in 2024 the current building will be vacated and can be retrofitted for the Town Clerk.

Renovations to McCollum could then begin in 2026 to retrofit it for the PD. The estimated cost was $1M, but PD said it could be allocated gradually over several years, and they can manage costs.

The PD accounts for new vehicles in their budgets. EN stated that the upstairs of the McCollom Building could still be used for town storage without compromising the Police Station. Currently the Library, Friends of the Library and the Recreation Committee use that space.

The Town Hall was then discussed. Consensus was to proceed with current plan presented by Rebecca Swarz for yearly CR contributions until added matching grants pay for the rehab. After that is completed we can vote a bond for reconstruction for office space.

Fire Department needs were then discussed. The committee was split on whether a new Fire Truck was actually needed. PG stressed the need for more personnel to be the first on the scene of an

incident. HA wondered if a 4-wheel drive vehicle (such as a jeep or other rugged vehicle) might serve that need, thus enabling purchase of a 2 seater fire truck, and perhaps opening possibility of a used one as they are more commonly available. PL volunteered to discuss the issue with MV Fire Chief, Jay Wilson. CB emphasized that the Warrant for a new truck must not be presented in 2024 to give preference to the library bond. All agreed the refurbishment of a truck should be included as a budget item in the year it is needed . Grants for Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) and turn-out gear should be applied for accompanied by CR's.

Our next meeting will be September 5 at the MVFD.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen Naber, Secretary