

CAPITAL FACILITIES PLANNING & BUDGETING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 12, 2012, Tracy Hall - Multipurpose Room

Members Present: Ed Childs, Neil Fulton, Tom Gray, John Lawe

Members Absent: Barry Rotman, Tom Sterling, Evan Pierce

Secretary: Tom Gray (Acting) **Others:** None

Tom Gray, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:09 am.

1. Review of Agenda. The agenda was accepted as proposed.
2. Public Comments. None.
3. Review Status of Town Communications Plan, Next Steps. Fulton reported briefly on a meeting he had had with Millennium Communications Group, a fiber-optic system provider, and on his subsequent research on a fiber-optic-based communications system with multiple smaller towers rather than the 180-foot tower proposed in the consultant's draft report. He said that a minimum of 10 towers would be needed to achieve radio coverage comparable to the single tower proposed. Towers would be spaced three miles apart (since broadcasts from smaller towers necessarily cover a smaller area). Fulton said there are five basic requirements for a public safety communications system:
 - 1) Cost effectiveness.
 - 2) Reliability - The system must operate even when telephone or electric service is out (in fact, those circumstances are when a public safety system is most likely to be urgently needed).
 - 3) Adequate coverage - As the police, fire, and public works department heads reported at the December public forum, there are many "dead spots" in town due to its complex terrain.
 - 4) Adequate capacity to cover "almost worst-case" needs.
 - 5) Interoperability (ability to communicate with public safety personnel from neighboring towns) - Norwich's fire department, for example, operates under a series of mutual aid agreements and Thetford, Hanover and Hartford personnel and equipment were all present at a recent residential fire in Norwich. Interoperability has also been a major objective of federal agencies (which provide funding) since 9/11, when New York City's police and fire departments were unable to communicate effectively with each other.

Fulton said he had contacted equipment suppliers to develop estimated prices for a multiple-tower system and the result was an estimate of \$238,000 for each tower (\$2.38 million for 10), without including the cost of the fiber-optic network to connect the towers, land acquisition for the tower sites, and other expenses.

Fulton noted that the two towers in the system initially proposed (the one on Hayes Hill in Etna and the 180-foot tower on Public Works property) would be part of a six-tower system for fire departments serving 25-30 communities in the region.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that a new version of the frequently asked questions (FAQ) document on the proposed communications system should be prepared and circulated. Gray agreed to prepare an initial draft.

4. Review of Proposals for Public Works, Fire and Police Facilities Deficiencies and Functional Needs Analysis. Fulton said the Town has received proposals from Mink Brook Management, LLC, and UK Architects, PC, both of Hanover. He said that both firms appear to be well qualified, and that in view of the fact that Mink Brook Management's proposal was substantially less expensive, he would be recommending to the Selectboard that they be selected to perform the analysis. After brief discussion, the Committee concurred with the proposed recommendation.

5. Review Tentative Meeting Schedule. The Committee will meet next at the call of the Chair.

8. Review Minutes. There were no minutes to review.

9. Adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 am.

Approved by the Committee April 12, 2012.

Tom Gray,
Chair

Future Meetings: TBD