

Town of Concord
Capital Planning Task Force
Minutes
Jan 6, 2020
Selectmen's Hearing Room

Present: Cynthia Rainey, School Committee member; Stephen Crane, Town Manager; Todd Benjamin; Hugh Lauer; Elise Woodward; Terri Ackerman, Select Board member. Also present: Dee Ortner, Fin Com liaison; Ian Rhames, Assistant School Director of Finance & Operations; Karlen Reed. Absent: Dr. Laurie Hunter, School Superintendent; Kerry LaFleur, Finance Director, and Jared Stanton, Director of Finance and Operations, Concord Public Schools.

Mr. Benjamin called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM on January 6, 2020.

After discussion, the minutes of the December 10, 2019 meeting were approved as amended.

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the November 10, 2019 meeting as amended.

Role of the Finance Committee Liaison/Observer

Chair Benjamin distinguished between an observer and a liaison, citing a conversation he had with the Town Clerk. A liaison takes a more active role than an observer. Ms. Woodward noted that the Task Force charge specifically cites the Fin Com liaison, indicating that this person is to take an active role but is not able to vote. Ms. Ortner agreed, stating that she had discussed her role with the Finance Committee. Todd stated that he appreciates the Fin Com participation and thanked Ms. Ortner for her assistance.

Proposed Workplan and Schedule

Ms. Woodward outlined her strategy for her proposed workplan and schedule, which includes a March public hearing and an April report to the Select Board. She suggested that the Task Force try to streamline and eliminate some of the categories, in order to keep the report as concise as possible.

Ms. Rainey suggested that we discuss and consider specific options, such as status quo, full-fledged capital committee, best practices of other communities, etc. Ms. Ortner suggested that we also solicit electronic comments from the public, in addition to the public hearing. Mr. Crane asked whether the purpose of the public hearing is to solicit comments, questions and concerns from the public before we do the bulk of our work, or do we need a public hearing to get input on our draft report? Mr. Lauer favored the former, while Ms. Woodward suggested that Envision Concord and the charge of the Task Force already includes many public

comments. After discussion, it was agreed to try to schedule the Public Hearing on March 2 or another day that week.

Town Boards and Committees to Contact

Ms. Woodward opined that the goal is to get a really integrated approach. Ms. Ackerman agreed and stated that this integrated approach will require a “buy-in” from all groups, including School Committee and CMLP. Mr. Lauer inquired why we need to contact any committees at all. Mr. Crane recommended a check-list of criteria, such as expected timeframe, links to affordable housing, sustainability, etc. that all future capital projects would have to follow. It was agreed that the Task Force will send a letter to every Board and Committee, inviting them to give feedback to the Task Force.

Key Questions

Mr. Crane stated that while volunteers have begun to work on some of the key questions, some of the most important key questions do not have anyone volunteering for them. These include J6 and L14.

Mr. Crane reported that he and Superintendent Hunter collaborated on a statement that includes the recommendation for regular joint meetings of the SB and SC.

Ms. Ortner reported that she had drafted definitions of Fiscal Sustainability and Transparency. Mr. Benjamin inquired whether defining “fiscal sustainability” should be a duty of the Task Force. There was agreement that Fiscal Sustainability should be referred to and utilized, based on the definitions put forth by Envision Concord and the Finance Committee. For transparency, it was agreed that the threshold of \$1 million should be in 2020 dollars.

Ms. Rainey, Ms. Ackerman and Mr. Lauer will report at the next meeting.

Possible Next Meetings- Tues Jan 14, Wed Jan 29, Tues Feb 11, Wed Feb 26.

Items for discussion include:

- Continue reporting/discussing Key Questions
- Finalize date for Public Hearing
- Discuss input from other town committees
- Discuss Best Practices- other towns and Division of Local Services
- Begin to develop specific options for a Capital Planning process
- Continue streamlining Table of Contents for Letter of Transmittal

Public Comments

Ms. Reed suggested that the Appendices for the report include the current Capital Plans from the Town, School, and Enterprise Funds.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Terri Ackerman
Clerk, Capital Planning Task Force