

HILLSBOROUGH TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
February 28, 2013

Chairman Sireci called the Planning Board Public Business Meeting of February 28, 2013 to order at 7:30 p.m. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting took place in the courtroom of the Municipal Complex.

Chairman Sireci announced that the meeting had been duly advertised according to Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975 ("Sunshine Law").

ROLL CALL

Mayor Frank DelCore - Absent
Michael Merdinger - Absent
Committeewoman Gloria McCauley - Present
Steve Cohen, Vice Chairman - Absent
Tod Mershon, *Secretary* - Absent
Neil Julian - Present

Sam Conard - Absent
Steven Sireci, Jr., Chairman - Present
Robert Wagner, Jr. - Present
Daniel Marulli (Alt. #1) - Present
Robert Peason (Alt. #2) - Absent

Also present: Robert Ringelheim, P.P., A.I.C.P., Township Planner; Eric Bernstein, Esq., Board Attorney (Eric M. Bernstein & Associates); Lucille Grozinski, C.C.R. and Caz Bielen, Premier Media, LLC, Videographer.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

None

ACCEPTANCE OF RESOLUTIONS

None

PLANNING BOARD BUSINESS

Capital Planning Committee – 2013 Capital Budget Proposals Presentation

Frank Herbert, Capital Planning Committee member, reviewed department heads presented their proposals to the Capital Planning Committee on January 23, 2013. The Committee met again on February 5th at which time the proposals were further discussed and prioritized.

This year we have one very big item which is the Police emergency radio system, projected to cost \$441,000. It has to be completed by the end of this year due to Federal mandates. Normally the roads that have State funding we put at the top of the list. This year we moved that item to #11 because if we did the radio system and the roadways, there would be no money left for anything else this year.

Committeewoman McCauley asked for more information on the ranking of the roadways.

Mr. Herbert said it was strictly based on the dollar figure. Had we kept it at #1 there would not be enough money to do anything else than the emergency system for the Police.

Chairman Sireci called up Lieutenant Darren Powell to give a brief overview of the emergency system proposal.

Lieutenant Powell said several years back the FCC's Narrowbanding Mandate came out. That requires for radio communications that are in the frequency range that our current radio system operates in, had to operate at a narrower band width. Prior to 2011 we explored the idea of migrating to Somerset County's digital UHF system however, at that time Somerset County determined they would not be able to handle the capacity we would bring to their system until they completed their upgrades. The mandate was supposed to go into effect December 2012 however, we were granted a one-year waiver. In the meantime there were some problems with the FCC and the County's 500 megahertz system that precluded us from going to that. In response, Somerset County Communications is building a newer 700 megahertz system. The proposal is the cost for going to the 700 megahertz system.

Chairman Sireci said Lt. Powell gave a very detailed review of the project to the Capital Planning Committee. It is difficult to encapsulate everything into a few sentences. I recall that there are cost advantages in going with the County as well as redundancy.

Lt. Powell said following the mandate is something we have to do. If we were to narrowband our current VHF Analog System a degradation of that system would be expected due to the narrow band length, especially on our portable radios. The County has been doing studies on the new 700 megahertz system. It is expected to give much better performance. Currently the majority of Somerset County Law Enforcement Agencies are operating on the County's 500 and 700 systems. If we remained on our VHF system, we would not have the benefit of interoperating with these other local law enforcement agencies. Our own Fire Department and Rescue Squad operate on the 500 system.

Dr. Marulli asked if the County has already been upgraded to the 700 Megahertz System.

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Lt. Powell said they are in the process of beginning that project and it is expected to be completed near the middle of the year. Rubin Walker, the Somerset County Communications Radio Manager, is here tonight to answer any questions you may have about the County's project.

Dr. Marulli asked how the 700 system is compatible with the 500 system being used by our Fire Departments.

Lt. Powell said currently the Fire Department operates on the County's trunk system in the 500 range. The 500 Megahertz and 700 Megahertz systems will be able to communicate with each other. However, if we remained on our current VHF Analog System we would not be able to communicate on those systems.

Mr. Julian said being that technology changes so quickly, is this something that is going to last for awhile?

Lt. Powell said public safety industries are supposed to be on this system within 11 years so it is expected to last at least that long, unless the FCC makes some unexpected changes.

Dr. Marulli asked about the savings in systems.

Chairman Sireci said it does not matter if you can even get parts for the current system; it is not legal to stay on the current system.

Lt. Powell said Motorola Communications provided me with coverage maps which show what type of coverage is expected with using a portable radio from inside a building on the County's 700 system compared to our current system once it is narrow banded. The coverage maps provided are for information only, not a guarantee of coverage. The other charts show coverage for a portable radio talking out to headquarters on one, and headquarters talking out to a portable radio on the other. The coverage showing for our current system is unacceptable.

Rubin Walker from Somerset County Communications came up to answer technical questions.

Chairman Sireci asked does each municipality have its own service contract or do we join in on a service plan with the County?

Mr. Walker said the County has its own stand alone contract with the County. As far as the users and portables, those are covered through the County but you pay your own bill for that particular item. We have a contract that is a flat level price where everyone pays the same price.

Chairman Sireci asked Mr. Walker to explain how the trunking works.

Mr. Walker explained what you currently have in place is a conventional repeater system. The trunk system operates similar to that in that you are not assigned a specific channel; it is assigned on the fly. The new 700 system that is going into place is interoperable with the County and State systems as well. When our officers go out on a task force they only have to take one radio. The trunk system itself has 4 levels of redundancy: site trunking; wide area trunking; fail soft which is like conventional repeater systems; and a back-up level with the State. The system is widely used throughout the State and the Country.

Lt. Powell continued with a review of the 9-1-1 System and battery back-up saying with the current 9-1-1 System, the public safety answering point is Somerset County Communications. When they get a 9-1-1 call that comes through their system they transfer the information up to us for some of the calls so our dispatchers can speak with the caller and get the information from the caller. The equipment that does that is 7 or 8 years old and is nearing the end of its expected life. Our vendor has told us that as of March 31, 2013 they will no longer be able to support that particular equipment due to the software that it works off of. It will still work past that time but they will no longer be able to provide us with a maintenance agreement on it. They will fix it if they can but cannot promise for how long it will be able to be fixed. They gave us an offer of a new system that will take us forward for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Herbert added the current system operates off of Windows 2000.

Lt. Powell said as for the battery back-up, if we were to lose our primary generator, there are certain areas at Police Headquarters that will be serviced by this new battery back-up system. That gives us about 1 hour to react to the failure of our main generator. That gives us an hour to either get the main generator up and running or find an alternate source like a portable generator to maintain power to the Police Department and certain sections of the Municipal Building for emergency services.

Mr. Herbert noted with this system there is no stepping on another since it is computer controlled. It is a smart system that can prioritize the users, say the Police over DPW.

Mr. Herbert said two main criteria for the prioritization of the list was based on public safety and getting the most benefit

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to the community for the money spent.

Chairman Sireci said items 1 through 7 are all related to saving lives and handling disasters.

Mr. Herbert continued with the presentation. Item #8 is the pipe/electric locator for DPW.

Mr. Ringelheim said the auditors looked at the Parks and Recreation item and recommended that they could take that money from their own budget so that item has been removed.

Mr. Herbert said we allowed \$75,000 this year for sidewalk replacement.

Chairman Sireci said that money comes from a separate fund that is funded by developers so it does not impact the main budget.

Mr. Herbert said item #10 is for the most important of the road overlays for Homestead Road. In past years this would have been item #1 because we expect to get at least half of that paid by the State Grant. We moved it down this far to be able to include other items. I believe revised numbers have come out for this item.

Mr. Ringelheim said the budget on the Overlay for Homestead is just under \$455,000 but the Engineering Department is going to be applying for the State grant where at least \$150,000 of that will be granted. The Finance Department informed me that there is another \$250,000 in left over Capital Street Improvement Funds that can be applied towards this particular item. That leaves only \$55,000 that will need to be funded.

Chairman Sireci called up Assistant Township Engineer, Thomas Belanger to discuss the Overlay.

Mr. Belanger added my February memo revised the estimate for Homestead Road where the proposal was reduced to \$412,050 which means we can fund the project for approximately \$12,000 after the other monies have been applied. We have been getting good prices for asphalt but our bids may come in even lower.

Homestead Road is a main access road and has been beat up over the past few years with the bridge replacement. We have been receiving State grants every year. We just have to fund the difference in the grant. If you do not do the project they take the money from you. We have 250,000 miles of roads we have to maintain in the township.

I put in for 2 other projects as well, one of which is for Weston Road. The Senior development there is obligated to do some paving from the Manville border out to Sunnymead Road. They ended up going bankrupt so we had to deal with the bonding company. Due to the cost we just ended up paving the frontage of the project since the bonding company would not pay for the entire length of the road. We have to fund the 2 end piece so that we can complete the project. We project the cost at \$189,000 to complete that project from end to end. That road is narrow and in poor condition so it is a good project.

Chairman Sireci said Hillsborough Road which was put as a low priority this year would be an excellent candidate for next year's grant application.

Jim Haurey, Communications Department Head, was asked to speak on the phone system.

Mr. Haurey said the same telephone system, originally through AT&T, has been in place since 1990. It has been 'manufacturer discontinued' so we cannot buy any new parts or handsets. We are at capacity for the amount of digital phones so we can only add analog phones at this time. We are also oversubscribed which means we cannot handle the calls at busy times.

Older phone systems were either analog or digital. The call went from your phone via cable. The newest technology is Voiceover IP where the intelligence still does the switching of the calls but rather than hardware based with cards it is a computer with software. If the system were just within our building, we would call it an IP based PBX. However, the Board of Education has a solution in place from Cisco. If having our own we would need to have at least 2 servers, if 1 goes down the other kicks in automatically. I have had some meetings with my counterpart at the Board of Ed, Joel Handler, who speaks highly of the system and says they have not had any major problems. We talked about the possibility of doing shared services where the municipal side has the call managers. Part of the Cable Franchise Agreement years back, dark fiber optic cable was run from the township to the municipal building, to the schools, EMS buildings and Fire. We are able to use that to sync up to the Board of Ed's Voiceover IP solution. That would lower costs being that we have phones in place and the equipment that lets us interface with the Board of Ed's call manager servers. The vendor recommends an upgrade every 3 to 5 years. Being that the Board of Ed. just went through that, there would not be a need for any upgrades for several years. There may be some software or incremental upgrades that come into play though.

We have had 4 "100 year storms" within 10 years. VOIP would make it easier if something gets knocked out, to be functional as long as the High School is still operational. With VOIP as long as you have an internet connection to your network you can get your phones running. There is a way to use your router so that you can receive calls at home but one

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would think they are getting the municipal building.

Mr. Herbert pointed out that during Superstorm Sandy we did not have internet connection for days. Where does that leave the Police and other emergency services?

Mr. Haurey said the big thing with the cost savings for VOIP was for corporations who had businesses around the world. The voice traffic is being put on your data network. Since you are paying for the data network you are bypassing the phone company.

Mr. Herbert asked if Comcast loses power, is there still a back-up with the telephone company with the emergency lines?

Mr. Haurey said usually you keep your fax machine lines as analog circuits so that if you do lose power they are still hooked into the central office of the phone company. I have done Voiceover IP previously with AT&T and Lucent.

Chairman Sireci asked if there have been generalized failures of telephone service at the municipal building.

Mr. Haurey said yes. The worry is that we are on borrowed time. The system is not even supported anymore as of the early 1990's. Handsets only come with a 30 day warranty and the failure rate is fairly high.

Committeewoman McCauley asked for review of the cost.

Mr. Haurey said the \$140,000 is for the shared services with the BOE. The variables are the handsets themselves which range in price from \$100 to \$400 each. For the Municipal Building, the Police and DPW, the cost for the equipment is roughly \$72,500. On top of that there are fees for the installation, configuration and training. It is running with a data network so there are firewalls involved which allows the traffic to go through but keeps the hackers out. The cost for that is approximately \$50,000. The handsets can range from \$30,000 to \$42,000, depending on the models chosen.

Our voicemail has gone down a few times now. With the VOIP you can record a call as it happens. The Police do not currently have that option. The VOIP uses a universal box which goes to your e-mail account. There are other options as well.

Since it is running over your data network we would no longer need a data tech for the computers and a phone tech for the phones if there was a problem. Now it can be handled by 1 person because it is all programmed through the computer network. With the shared services with the BOE, we will be able to do our own programming but the BOE would take care of anything major since it would be covered through maintenance under their vendor.

I am not sure if the Police will come on board with this since they also have mandates. Something like this would have to pass through the Attorney General and State Police. If the Police go on their own, they would still get the same equipment quoted but there would be an extra charge for having a call manager which could be an additional \$30,000. They would be totally separated and not on our data network.

Mr. Herbert said items on the lower end of the priority listing are: DPW tractor; replacement of the door locks for the building; miscellaneous drainage improvements; auto flagger which would eliminate the need to have 2 flagmen since one can operate 2 flags; 20 shotguns for the Police; Hillsborough Road Overlay which we talked about; and at the very bottom was the more expensive VOIP system.

Chairman Sireci noted without sharing services with the BOE, the VOIP system goes from \$140,000 to \$275,000. There is a savings of half the price. The BOE system already has redundancy built in.

Chairman Sireci thanked Mr. Herbert and the Capital Planning Committee. He then asked the Board if there were any changes that needed to be made in the ranking and prioritizing of 'high', 'medium', or 'low'. The Homestead Road Overlay should move up to a high priority if the grant comes through.

Committeewoman McCauley suggested that the Capital Planning Committee not prioritize based on mandates because should there be an opportunity to fund a project by other means, the Planning Board and Township Committee may not be aware that a lower ranked project is actually a priority.

Chairman Sireci noted Weston Road would be a good project for next year. It is not in as great a need as Homestead Road.

Chairwoman McCauley recommended the new VOIP telephone system be ranked as a high priority being that the services can be shared with the BOE, resulting in a much lower cost.

Chairman Sireci said sidewalk replacement has its own individual fund so it just needs to be part of the list. The only high priority item not related to public safety is the pipe/electric locator. The VOIP shared telephone system and Homestead Road Overlay do not need to be moved up in ranking, just changed to high priority items.

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A motion to recommend the 2013 Capital Budget Recommendations Summary, as amended, to the Township Committee was made by Mr. Wagner, seconded by Dr. Marulli.

Roll Call: Dr. Marulli – yes; Mr. Wagner – yes; Committeewoman McCauley – yes; Mr. Julian – yes; Chairman Sireci – yes. Motion carries.

BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Submitted by:

Debora Padgett

Planning Board/Board of Adjustment Clerk

Approved