

MINUTES

Special 10-Year Strategic Planning Committee Meeting Wednesday, November 29, 2017 @ 7:00pm Norma Drummer Room/Seymour Town Hall

Members Present: Trisha Danka, Rory Burke, Don Smith and Kathie Vrlík (7:26)

Members Absent: Corey Marchetti and Stephan Behuniak

Others Present: Bruce Baker

Item #1: Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:22 PM.

Item #2: Pledge of Allegiance

All present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item #3: Public comment

There was no public comment.

Item #4: First Selectman's update

Community Services

Kurt – Community Services is growing rapidly and a lot of programming is hitting capacity. There are also physical space restrictions, both inside and with regards to parking. Further, the State has included \$4 million for bonding for the top floor of the Community Center that would be utilized as an adult daycare facility. Staffing will also be a concern and will need to be reconfigured to maybe have one daytime program manager and one at night. We may also need to bring in part-time site managers for the weekend. We will also need to look at office staff and maybe expanding the part-time assistant and think about a third program manager. The new Superintendent has been very cooperative with allowing use of school facilities for programming and changing policies to accommodate increased attendance by children. The Food Bank and Boys & Girls Club are both going well but I know the Boys & Girls Club is running into space constraints as well.

Trish – Will the State budget situation impact these plans?

Kurt – The Community Services Director has made great strides in making programming come as close as possible to breaking even. Some will never produce revenue. We used to lose \$40,000-\$50,000 a year on the summer camp program and came very close to breaking even this year.

Trish – Do we have anything in the capital plan for a new bus?

Kurt – We've started looking into it and getting a bigger one to increase program capacity for \$120,000-\$130,000. It would be built into the capital plan.

Don – Does it change the licensing requirement for the driver?

Kurt – Our current driver is certified but we would keep that in mind. We also have cars for smaller items like driving seniors to doctor appointments. Also, Charter Revision is looking at consolidating Recreation, Seniors and Parks completely to streamline scheduling and budgeting.

Land Use

Kurt – Not much has been done for land use but we expect big changes in the near future.

Public Health & Safety

Kurt – There is a push by the COGs to look at regionalization of emergency services. Regionalizing fire departments would be nearly impossible because they are fiercely independent. In terms of Police Departments, Beacon Falls and Oxford are interested and a plan is being formulated. This will not be a short-term change.

Financial

Kurt – Fund balance is at \$6,823,073 or 12.4%. Seymour received the 18th largest cut in the State out of 169 municipalities. This seemed to be based on the towns' financial positions, largely their fund balance. I ask that you change the language to unencumbered cash balance in the plan. The State will continue to look at the fund balance but S&P will consider unencumbered fund balance.

Trish – Can we guarantee the money will be used for its state purposes?

Kurt – We will put in the same mechanism as fund balance, but we can't restrict it entirely. We will be holding a fiscal summit soon to try and completely restructure the budget to more efficiently categorize our unencumbered cash balance. The auditors will help dictate the process. With regard to debt service, we're keeping an eye on what is likely to happen in the State in the coming years. We're trying to keep as much flexibility as possible. Currently, our debt service is scheduled to stay level for a few years and then decrease steadily. We are going to S&P tomorrow to get a new rating because we're trying to restructure our debt and extend it out an additional 5 years to provide us with more flexibility in the short term. We would save \$600,000 in the current fiscal year and \$950,000 for the next several. We are retiring 56% of debt in the next 10 years and 65% within 12, which is the target. We can use this money to address our long-term liabilities including our OPEB. S&P is rethinking how they address Connecticut ratings. Several towns have been placed on a watch list already. They appreciate that we're proactively addressing a problem and not trying to mask an underlying issue.

Trish – Do they not care about addressing aging infrastructure?

Kurt – We still have the proactive road account and the \$1.5 million in bond funds to address the buildings as well as \$2 million for roads. The next big ticket item will be Bungay School, likely in the early 2020s, which coincides closely with a drop in debt service. We continue to make investments in equipment including Public Works trucks and vehicles for municipal employees. We are also looking at scheduling fire apparatus purchases so that it can be built into the budget. S&P is okay with us paying for one in cash because it's a long-term liability. Our ration will be at 5.8% and will decrease annually unless we add debt. We did not make a 2017 OPEB contribution because of the uncertainty with the State, but it is ready to go now that we have a budget. S&P is aware of that. We are looking at self-insuring for healthcare with the large amount of cash we have on-hand. We can use the savings to build up a reserve fund to cover that and I expect a decision to be made by February. Changes to the MERS plan are on CCM's legislative agenda again so hopefully the State will eventually concede. The Finance Director is expecting the CAFR to be awarded again this year for the fourth consecutive time. When we look at the budget, we are looking at ending the bifurcation wherever possible. For example, technology, which has already been functionally joined, and operations, which is in process. The projection for next year actually includes a slight decrease in spending but the Board of Education is coming in at approximately 1% in preliminary numbers, approximately \$200,000 overall. If not for the State cuts, we might have been able to lower the mill rate.

Economic Development

Kurt – The Greenway Trail is 8 weeks behind schedule because of a contractor error but it's being resolved. They will be finishing within the next 30 days but it should be turned over to us around then.

Trish – Are we removing the economic development corporation item?

Kurt – it comes down to capital and projects and currently we don't have either. If we had one there might be opportunities. I wouldn't remove it because it should continue being considered, but maybe extend the deadline. Currently, we have enough cash on hand if something does come up.

Technology

Kurt – Everything is going very well. Projects turn over quickly and we are moving forward.

Infrastructure: Municipal Property

Kurt – The biggest item is the building work with the bond funds. Town Hall, the Police Department and the Library should be in good shape when that is completed. The streetlight project is moving forward and savings are projected to be better than expected. I think 2019 is still realistic for asset tags, but we'll check back in. The equipment has been audited and a replacement plan has been created so that is the next step.

Regionalization

Kurt – We're constantly looking for opportunities. We're looking into HR currently. We have money in the budget but next year has a full-time position with increased pay. We're looking at sharing with surrounding municipalities to decrease expenses. We're also looking at combining everything with the Board of Education including finance, legal and others. Regionalization is hamstrung by union restrictions and CCM is pushing it legislatively. It is not to the detriment of the employees. For example, we cannot combine municipal custodians with school custodians even though they are in the same union with the same representative. The State is also reducing funding for regionalization

Professional Staff

Kurt – We may have to push out performance measures until HR is in-place. Rory is working to implement the Public Works software program fully to track data but it doesn't translate across departments. It will be a good exercise in selecting which data to track.

Volunteer Boards

Kurt – With Charter Revision, we're looking at reducing both the size of boards and the number of boards. We hope to combine some and eliminate others. This is due to a lack of interested and qualified candidates.

Item #5: Open discussion

There was no open discussion

Item #6: Public comment

Bruce Baker – I think the plan is great as well as what you're doing but it scares me that whoever succeeds Kurt can do whatever they want. I think we need a Town Manager.

Item #7: Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at PM.

Motion: Kathie Vrlik
Vote: 4-0

Second: Rory Burke

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rory Burke', with a stylized, flowing script.

Rory Burke
Recording Secretary