

# Town of Litchfield, New Hampshire

## Capital Improvement Committee

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**Meeting Date:** 08/03/20

**Call to Order:** 6:03 pm

**Meeting Location:** Town Hall

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**Meeting Called By:** Capital Improvement Committee  
**Type of Meeting:** CIPC Meeting  
**Facilitator:** Michael Croteau, Chairman  
**Note Taker:** Matthew Sullivan  
**In Attendance:** Troy Brown, Town Administrator  
Ben Sargent, Chief of Police  
Frank Fraitzl, Chief of Fire Department  
Douglas Nicoll, Deputy Chief  
Kevin Brown, Road Agent  
Donna Ferguson, Library Director  
Joan McKibben, Conservation Commission  
Andrew Ruggles, Rec Commission

**Members in attendance:**  
1. Michael Croteau, Chairman (Planning Board)  
2. Sean Flynn, Vice-Chair (Citizen)  
3. Brian Bourque (School Board)  
4. Andrew Cutter (Budget Comm)  
5. Steven Webber (Selectman)  
6. Jay Minkarah (NRPC Director)

**One member was absent:**  
1. Peter Stone (Citizen)

**Memo:** John Brunelle hosted the meeting on Webex

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**Agenda Topic:** Call to Order | **Presenter:** Michael Croteau

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm, the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

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**Agenda Topic:** Public Input 1 @ 6:04 pm | **Presenter:** Michael Croteau

1. None

Public Input closed at 6:05 pm.

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**Agenda Topic:** Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes | **Presenter:** Michael Croteau

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** ( Steve Webber / Sean Flynn ) A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes from July 20, 2020. The motion was seconded.

**Vote:** ( 4-0-0 ) The motion carried.

1. **Fire Department:**

Fire Chief Frank Fraitzl called into the meeting to answer any questions that the committee members had. Andrew Cutter mentioned to the Chief that the committee had discussed the proposal for purchasing two fire trucks. The committee wanted to know if there was an opportunity to acquire one multi-purpose fire truck. The Chief confirmed that the fire department requested two fire trucks over the next five years. One was the tanker, which is 29-years-old. The fire department is proposing purchasing a smaller tanker that would hold 1,800 gallons of water. The decrease in the size of the tanker is because of the increase in fire hydrants throughout Litchfield. The tanker would hold less water, but be able to store equipment, and carry more firefighters. The LFD currently has three fire engines and one tanker. This purchase would replace the current tanker. The priority is replacing the tanker; the fire engine could be pushed out a couple of years. Selectman Steve Webber asked Chief Frank Fraitzl if the committee could push requesting the fire engine's purchase out a couple of years. The Chief mentioned that the fire engine is beyond its life span.

The Chief mentioned to the committee that he just learned that insurance companies do not cover full replacement, once the vehicle is 20-years-old. Neither the fire engine nor the tanker is fully covered by the insurance company, any longer. The Chief also reminded the committee members that the fire truck would not be delivered for one year once the fire truck is ordered. The Chief said that the LFD could have the CIP Committee push the fire engine out a couple of years. Chair Mike Croteau asked T.A. Troy Brown if the Capital Reserve Fund could be increased. The fund's increase would allow the town to pay for any damages that occurred with the older fire engines. T.A. Troy Brown said that increasing the Capital Reserve Fund is something the town could do. The Chief added that he had not heard of a multi-purpose fire truck. A dual-purpose fire truck would be similar to the tanker; The vehicle can transport water, equipment, and a crew of four or five people.

Brian Bourque asked the Chief if the volunteer firefighters could drive their cars to a fire. The Chief said the department shied away from the days where volunteer firefighters carried their gear in their vehicle. The primary reason is the carcinogen stayed on the gear, even after the fire was put out. Brian Bourque then asked what the fire department does when they have two firefighters at the station and have to wait five minutes for the other two firemen. Chief Frank Fraitzl said that the fire department has the technology to see who is coming in. If the additional firefighters were be a couple of minutes late, these firefighters would receive a ride on the second fire truck.

The CIP Committee agreed that they would defer until Jay Minkarah showed up, then they would take action.

2. **Police Department:**

Police Chief Ben Sargent called into the meeting to answer some additional questions. Chair Michael Croteau asked the Chief if he had anything new to report. The Chief mentioned that he contacted Eckman Construction. The Chief also was in contact with the architect of the Phase Two police station, and the stand-alone station. Preston Hunter believed that renovating the Town Hall into a police station would be more expensive than building a new police station. Preston Hunter and Kaestle Boos Architectural were looking for the floor plans to Town Hall. Chief Ben Sargent is looking to get a digital copy of the floor plans so he can email the plans to both companies. The Police Chief said that T.A. Troy Brown recommended that he work with Kaestle Boos, and to get a 'Not to Exceed' contract. He mentioned that he had nothing new to report.

At the previous meeting, a motion was approved to accept Option One. The motion also included that the engineering costs would increase to \$200,000 in 2023.

3. **Highway Department:**

At the last meeting, the committee deferred a vote to receive a confirmation on some of the costs. The first motion that was carried was for 2021 \$150,000 for a backhoe and \$70,000 for Ford F-350.

Road Agent Kevin Brown called into the meeting. He mentioned that his vehicles in the Highway Department are aging, similar to the Fire Department's fire trucks. Kevin Brown mentioned that the Highway Department replaced two trucks. The department has a new Freightliner, and a Chevrolet Medium-Duty. The Road Agent said he wanted to run the Chevrolet Medium-Duty for a year. He wants to make sure the truck is what they expect it to be. The department has a 2003 Ford F-350, and a 2012 Ford F-450. The Road Agent wants to replace these vehicles before something happens, and the town is forced into immediately replacing the trucks. Kevin Brown added that the replacement of the trucks should be placed on a schedule. The backhoe just had work done on it, and the repair cost was \$5,200.

Chair Mike Croteau reviewed the minutes from the last meeting and read that the Road Agent was interested in purchasing two Ford F-650's. The Chevrolet 5500 is the same build as a Ford F-650. Kevin Brown believes the Chevrolet 5500 is the correct choice for a truck. Selectman Steve Webber asked how much more it would cost to go to the next size up if the Chevrolet 5500 was the wrong size. Kevin Brown said the town would be looking at \$68,000. The Chevrolet 5500 has four-wheel drive, the same size plows, more horse-power, and one does not need a CDL License to drive the truck. The committee agreed that the rough estimate for the Chevrolet 5500's is \$170,000. Chair Mike Croteau commented that Brian Bourque made a motion that was deferred at the last meeting. The motion included a salt shed in 2022 and a parking lot in 2023. Selectman Steve Webber asked Kevin Brown if it mattered that the salt shed was placed in 2022, and the parking lot was placed in 2023. Kevin Brown responded by saying that the vehicles were the priority, T.A. Troy Brown asked Kevin Brown if it mattered whether the salt shed and the paving of the parking lot were completed at separate times. He said it would be great to have both simultaneously, but they don't have to be.

The committee agreed to wait until later in the meeting to make a decision.

4. **Library:**

Director Donna Ferguson attended the CIP Committee meeting to answer questions. Andrew Cutter mentioned that the committee discussed leveraging the surrounding town's libraries to help save money. He asked Director Donna Ferguson if she knew of any legal restraints with the Aaron Cutler Library. Andrew Cutter provided the example that the town could be responsible for funding and maintaining the facility. Director Donna Ferguson said that she did not know of any legal language that requires the building to remain a library, but believed that question should be reserved for the lawyer.

Director Donna Ferguson said that if the town decided to leverage another town for their library services, the town would need to speak to the other town. She mentioned that the Hudson library is undersized as well. The price for non-residents to join the Hudson library is at least \$50. Director Donna Ferguson asked if the committee was looking to use other libraries as a second library, or a replacement library. She added that there are surrounding towns that are part of a consortium of libraries. One consortium of libraries consists of Manchester, Londonderry, Nashua, and Derry. Director Donna Ferguson commented that the library could get books for Litchfield residents from other state libraries. The problem is that the residents are not able to go to the other libraries.

Chair Mike Croteau asked how much it would cost to renovate the current library. The committee members agreed that the idea was off the table. The existing library has issues with space; Director Donna Ferguson suggested that the building be used for another group in town. The example provided was a Senior Center for the town. Andrew Cutter said that the next step for the committee is to keep the plan as presented, a project to build a \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000 library. If the project ever comes up, there should be other options that are considered. Over the next five to six years, the town needs to research the Aaron Cutler Library's legal ramifications. Selectman Steve Webber said that the committee would need to allocate funds ahead of time for the engineering costs to do the research. The committee agreed to defer their decision until later in the meeting.

5. **Conservation:**

Chair Michael Croteau mentioned that the Capital Improvement Planning Committee received an email from Kate Stevens of the Planning Board. Andrew Cutter read the email into the record, "Good evening CIP members, if you have not already, please be sure to read the towns' Master Plan, and take note at how often it emphasizes preserving the rural and agricultural character of Litchfield. The Master Plan was created and updated with input from community surveys and in most sections that preservation is the top priority. Please use that to help guide your priorities while creating the Capital Improvement Plan. The budget that the Conservation Commission is requesting for specific parcels of land is small, compared to other proposed needs of each department, but is proportionally large impact of that rural oasis that benefits every town citizen. Mrs. McKibben has worked hard to secure deals with these landowners, and her dedication and the communities trust in her should not be taken for granted. As a parent of small children, I absolutely agree that a new elementary school is needed. However, the majority of the population that moves through the school are only there for a short time. While conservation land can be enjoyed by the townspeople and visitors alike. It is especially valuable that trails could potentially be created by people to access the library, just as trails and sidewalks allow us to access our sports fields. These are not hopeful plans; they are specific parcels that may not be available next time around. Conservation land is something that most don't realize how much they appreciate it until it is too late. Thank you for your time, Ms. Kate Stevens, 9 Evergreen Circle."

Joan McKibben said that the Conservation Commission is requesting \$2,000,000 over five years. Joan McKibben presented the CIP Committee members with a map of Litchfield. She commented that the maps solid colors are what the town owns, and have been purchased with the Conservation Commission funds. The town owns about 300 acres of conservation land. The hashed parcels are made up of the original environmental protection project from years ago. Other parcels, like the one at the end of Meadowbrook Drive, and one up at the north end are pieces of property that are of interest to the Conservation Commission. The properties down to the south are to protect the Chase Brook's watershed, and the one in the middle, north at Darrah Pond, is a watershed protection area. Chair Michael Croteau asked Joan McKibben if the land fund, requested by the Conservation Commission, would be used to pay the appraisal costs. She said that the appraisal costs could come from the land funds, but she was unwilling to eat into the Conservation Committee's land fund.

Selectman Steven Webber asked if Joan McKibben knew when the parcels of land would be available for purchase. She said that the Conservation Committee is working on a grant right now for the parcel of land located in the middle of town. The parcel of land located at the north end of town will be available in about five years. Selectman Steve Webber mentioned that two of the four parcels of land would be available in five years. He added that the Conservation Commission's request for funds could be lowered. The CIP Committee would need to know the acreage and the presumed dollar value of each property. Joan McKibben said that the two properties that would be available within five years would be 50 acres. Brian Bourque mentioned that a Warrant Article would need to be created that specified the property to be purchased. At this time, the CIP Committee does not even know if the property will be available for sale. Andrew Cutter believed that the money should be allocated if the parcel of land becomes available for purchase.

T.A. Troy Brown commented that the Conservation Committee currently has \$700,000 in its land fund. The town also has around \$100,000 in the Farmland Protection Fund. T.A. Troy Brown said that he had been involved in a few purchase agreements, where the property owner wants the land to go to the Conservation Committee. He noted that the Conservation Commission could put down a non-refundable deposit, and the sale of the property is contingent on the approval of the receiving the needed funds.

Jay Minkarah said that the CIP Committee could set up the \$2,000,000 in funding by allocating \$500,000 a year over four years to the Conservation Commission. Andrew Cutter believed that the committee needed to choose one year that they would allocate the funds.

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** (Brian Bourque / Steve Webber) A motion was to place \$2,000,000 in the Capital Improvement Plan for the year 2026.

**Vote:** ( 2-2-0 ) The motion failed. (Sean Flynn and Chair Mike Croteau voted 'no')

Andrew Cutter asked Sean Flynn and Chair Mike Croteau what they did not like about the motion. Chair Mike Croteau said that he agreed with the \$2,000,000 figure to help preserve land, but he believes the committee may need the money before 2026. Sean Flynn agreed that the Conservation Commission already has \$700,000, but he would like to see the Conservation Commission receive the \$2,000,000 sooner. Andrew Cutter suggested allocating \$500,000 in year 1, year 3, and year 5. The Conservation Commission would receive \$1,500,000, plus they already have \$700,000. If they spend \$700,000, then in year six, they could come back and request a Warrant Article for \$700,000. Brian Bourque said that the Conservation Commission requested the \$2,000,000, and the funds should be broken up over a few years.

Motion 2:

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** (Steve Webber / Sean Flynn) A motion was made to place \$666,666 in years one, three, and six.

**Vote:** ( 4-0-0 ) The motion passed.

## 6. **Recreation Commission:**

Andrew Ruggles, 54 Century Lane, mentioned that he was asked by the Recreation Commission to present their plan to the CIP Committee. The Rec Commissions plan is to have the Darrah Pond Parking Lot regraded and paved. Andrew Ruggles asked if the CIP Committee had a copy of the presentation that he sent the committee. None of the CIP Committee had received a copy.

One of the most significant safety issues, especially during the winter, is the Darrah parking lot. He compared the parking lot to a giant skating rink. The Rec Commission asked Andrew Ruggles to put together a presentation for the Capital Improvement Planning Committee. These are the numbers he came up with:

1. The parking lot is approximately 45,000 cubic feet.
2. He believes that the parking lot would need at least a 16" gravel subgrade.
3. He believes that the parking lot would need a 4" binder.
4. Four catch basins. Each catch basin can drain about 10,000 to 15,000 lbs/ per sq feet.

<b><u>Description</u></b>	<b><u>Calculation</u></b>	<b><u>Estimated Sub-Total</u></b>
<b><u>Gravel</u></b>	\$29 per/cubic yard (2,300 cubic yd * \$29)	~ 65,000
<b><u>Grading</u></b>	\$0.34 per/cubic foot (45,000 cubic ft * \$0.34)	~ \$15,300
<b><u>Pavement</u></b>	\$87 per/ton (815 tons * \$87)	~ \$71,000
<b><u>Catch Basins</u></b>	4 catch basins @ 2,500 per catch basin	~ \$10,000
	<b><u>Total:</u></b>	~ \$161,300

Andrew Cutter asked Andrew Ruggles what year the Rec Commission would like to request the parking lot be completed. Andrew Ruggles said that the Rec Commission would like the paving and regrading down as soon as possible. Selectman Steve Webber confirmed that the parking lot is terrible during the winter. Andrew Cutter asked what work was currently being done at Darrah Pond. Selectman Steve Webber mentioned that the Communication Towers were being installed.

Chair Michael Croteau asked if the Rec Commission had looked at the grants or other forms of funding. Andrew Cutter said that he had not looked at other sources of funding. T.A. Troy Brown commented that the type of grants available is for towns looking to build a new facility. Funding to pave a parking lot would be tough to receive. Andrew Cutter asked Andrew Ruggles about the striping of the parking lot. Andrew Ruggles agreed that he should have added a cost for striping the parking lot. Selectman Steve Webber asked T.A. Troy Brown about his knowledge of the cost to stripe a parking lot. T.A. Troy Brown estimated the cost to stripe the parking lot would be around \$8,000 to \$10,000.

Brian Bourque agreed that the parking lot was long overdue to be paved. The reason that Darrah was chosen over Sawmill was, primarily, because of the drainage issue. Darrah Pond has the field, Talent Hall, and Darrah Pond. Talent Hall is used by Pickleball, basketball, baseball, and softball leagues.

Selectman Steve Webber said that the committee should defer the plan until later in the meeting. Chair Mike Croteau mentioned that he wanted to know if the Rec Commission had any plans to build a new recreation facility. Selectman Steve Webber reminded him that the Warrant Article failed this year. Steve Ruggles commented that the Warrant Article was non-binding. The Rec Commission wanted to see if the town was interested in having an engineering study performed. The majority of residents responded by voting 'no.'

Andrew Cutter asked about fixing the flooring at Talent Hall. Andrew Ruggles agreed that Talent Hall has issues, but added that if the Rec Commission starts spending money to repair the flooring, the bathrooms would need to become handicap accessible. He mentioned that if the town began investing money into upgrading Talent Hall, the town would be spending good money on a building that needs to be replaced. Andrew Cutter and Chair Mike Croteau agreed that both the Rec Commission and the town need to create a plan to replace Talent Hall.

Vice-Chair Sean Flynn asked if the Rec Commission had looked to increase the parking lot size and make the parking lot more constructive. Andrew Ruggles said that he could look into the idea, but that would increase the project's cost. He mentioned that the Rec Commission is having an issue with people driving their cars past the gate at Darrah Pond. Andrew Ruggles said there might be a way to increase safety and allow people to drive their cars down to the basketball courts, playground, and the pond.

T.A. Brown wanted to know if the paving could be performed in two phases. He suggested, realizing money is tight, paving one side of the parking lot and leaving the other side gravel. The members of the CIP Committee commented that in the long run, paving the parking lot in two phases would likely increase the cost of the project.

7:45 pm - Brian Bourque informed the CIP Committee members that he needed to leave the meeting. This left three voting members.

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**Agenda Topic:** Other

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

**1. Jay Minkarah**

Jay Minkarah suggested that the easiest thing to do would be to allow him to enter the information into a spreadsheet and allow the members to review the spreadsheet. He mentioned that the CIP Committee currently has high years in year one, year three, and year six. If Jay Minkarah was to remove the funds allocated for the Rec Commission and the Conservation Commission, the CIP Committee would be averaging \$3,500,000 to \$3,800,000 per year. He mentioned that previously the committee had discussed spacing out the DPW projects. Jay Minkarah does not believe there is much benefit in spacing out the DPW projects. He suggested that every project that was approved should be placed on a spreadsheet. Everything that the committee has not taken action on, leave as requested.

Andrew Cutter commented that would mean the CIP Committee would not take action on the Fire Department, Highway Department, the Library, and the Rec Commission until the committee meets again. Andrew Cutter said that he prefers that the committee decide on the four remaining departments; and then make changes. In 2021, the CIP Committee will have fire trucks, most of the Highway Department requests, the Conservation Commission, and the school's energy-wide district project. The committee agreed to take action on the four remaining departments.

## 2. Fire Department

Chief Frank Fraitzl presented the need for the tanker, and the fire engine for 2021 and 2022. There is an option to defer the fire engine until a later period, but the dollar amount does not change.

1. \$662,000 for 2021 purchase of the pumper truck
2. \$623,000 for 2022 acquisition of the fire engine

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** (Steve Webber / Chair Mike Croteau) A motion was made to put the tanker and the fire engine in for 2021 and 2022, as proposed.

**Vote:** ( 3-0-0 ) The motion passed.

## 3. Highway Department

Road Agent Kevin Brown desired to keep the Chevrolet 5500 and test the truck this winter. The Road Agent believes the Chevrolet 5500 will be the right vehicle going forward. Andrew Cutter asked if the committee should budget using the Chevrolet 5500 priced at \$70,000, or the Freightliner price. Selectman Steve Webber mentioned that he believes the committee should budget for the \$170,000 if the Chevrolet 5500 is not a workhorse. Andrew Cutter suggested that the committee place the two trucks in 2022 and 2024, push the parking lot, and the salt shed to 2026.

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** (Steve Webber / Chair Mike Croteau) A motion that the CIP Committee adds to the plan \$170,000 for a truck in 2022, and a truck in 2024. The salt shed, for \$200,000, and the parking lot, for \$150,000, would be pushed to 2026.

**Vote:** ( 3-0-0 ) The motion passed.

## 4. Library

Director Donna Ferguson presented to the committee the need for \$3,000,000 to build a new library. Andrew Cutter pointed out that she did not say what the Aaron Cutler building's future should be. The committee would be making a motion on the new library without understanding the bigger picture. Selectman Steven Webber commented that the committee was not provided with a new library location, what would happen to the old library, and engineering costs. Jay Minkarah mentioned that the committee could either hold off on the vote until the next meeting or agree to do nothing. Andrew Cutter asked T.A. Troy Brown if he knew how many people lived in Litchfield, that would be eligible for a library card. The committee estimated the population of 8,300 people. They cut the number in half to 4,150, then multiplied by \$50. The total came to \$207,500. The current library costs per year are \$225,000 to \$230,000.

**Discussion:** Andrew Cutter wanted to know if deferring on the library now meant that the town would need to wait six years before bringing the subject up again. Jay Mankarah said the plan's life is six years, but the town could return to the project in two years. Andrew Cutter then questioned if building a new library would be more difficult since the library is not in the plan. Jay Mankarah agreed that building a new library would be more difficult. Andrew Cutter asked T.A. Troy Brown if something happened to the library, could Capital Reserve Funds be used to fix items. The example provided was the septic system needed to be replaced. T.A. Troy Brown said the town could fix the septic. The town has the Building Facilities Fund. He also commented that the Library Trustees have a trust fund.

T.A. Troy Brown suggested that the town keep one Capital Reserve Fund. The fund is used for all town facilities, and the town deals with emergencies as they come up. After a major repair, the town comes back the next year and asks the residents to replenish the fund. T.A. Troy Brown mentioned that the Building Facilities Fund is typically capped at \$50,000. He suggested that the Board of Selectmen revisit the fund, and consider increasing the amount.

**Motion:** (Steve Webber / Chair Mike Croteau) A motion was made to table the discussion on a new library.

**Vote:** (3-0-0) The motion passed.

5. **Rec Commission**

Andrew Cutter mentioned that the CIP Committee should factor in some fluctuation of prices because of the oil; and striping the parking lot. The rough estimate for the total is \$175,000. Jay Minkarah had mentioned earlier putting the Darrah parking lot in either 2022 or 2024. The members agreed that the parking lot needs to be paved. T.A. Troy Brown suggested placing money in the 2021 budget to have an engineer create a design for the parking lot. The parking lot would then be graded correctly and paved in 2022. The estimated cost for engineering design is \$8,000.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Calculation</u>	<u>Estimated Sub-Total</u>
<b>Gravel</b>	\$29 per/cubic yard (2,300 cu yd * \$29)	~ 65,000
<b>Grading</b>	\$0.34 per/cubic foot (45,000 cu ft * \$0.34)	~ \$15,300
<b>Pavement</b>	\$87 per/ton (815 tons * \$87)	~ \$71,000
<b>Catch Basins</b>	4 catch basins @ 2,500 per catch basin	~ \$10,000
<b>Additional Costs</b>	Increase in oil costs, and striping parking lot	~ \$13,700
	<b>Total:</b>	~ \$175,000

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** (Steve Webber / Sean Flynn) A motion was made to allocate \$175,000 in 2022 for re-grading and paving of the Darrah parking lot.

**Vote:** (3-0-0) The motion carried.

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**Agenda Topic:** Public Input 2 @ 8:22 pm

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

1. None

Public Input closed at 8:23 pm.

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**Agenda topic:** Old Business

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

1. None

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**Agenda topic:** Next Meeting Date & Time

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

1. **Next Meeting:**
  - a. Monday, August 17, 2020 @ 6:00 pm.



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**Agenda Topic:** Adjourn the Meeting

**Presenter:** Michael Croteau

**Discussion:** None

**Motion:** ( Steve Webber / Chair Mike Croteau ) motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Vote:** ( 3-0-0 ) The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Approved by the Capital Improvement Committee:

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Michael Croteau, Chairman

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Sean Flynn, Vice Chairman

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Brian Bourque

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Peter Stone

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Steven Webber