

UNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Apr 15th, 2021 *DRAFT* Minutes

Unity Barn Raisers Community Center*

* usually meets at the Unity Town Office but are meeting elsewhere for better social distancing.

Note: Decisions and commitments made in bold italic.

Present: Tony A. (chair), Ellen B., Jean B., Kari Hulva, Najean S. Larry King,* Emily Newell*

Unexcused:

Excused:

Guests: Penny Sampson (Selectboard Chair), Blaine Parsons (Fire Chief), Emily Newell, Anthony Seargent, Melody COle, Hannah Cole, ATV Tevor Cole, Scott Montanino (resident), Doug Lakin (Resident)

ITEM 1: Review and Voting of Minutes

Fire Department Request for TIF funding

Introducing the combined rescue/tanker that the Fire DEpt would like to purchase (a used, but 2018).

Blaine: Combine the rescue and tanker they currently have, and replace with 1 truck, downsizing the fleet, downsizing costs and maintenance.

Emily: They are here to see what amount could be approved and funded from TIF to reduce the amount needed to be raised.

Loan: 250,000 (provided as an example). Quotes over 5,7, 10 years. The preferred loan is 7 year, with annual payment of

How much is in the current Truck fund? After 4 years, with continued TIF allocation, there will be \$141,157.

This would require raising 130,000. The annual payment will be made from the truck fund, and then from taxes raised.

Summarized current loans (Town Office and Road Loans) - existing loan payments raised 152,000, but then drops to 40 after a couple of years.

Truck fund can pay for 3 years, then we will have to raise for the final 4 years of the truck loan. Additional TIF funds (40\$) would reduce the amount needed to be raised, and reduces the number of years that funds will need to be raised.

Taking two trucks offline- what is the plan with them, what could be recuperated from sale of them? Blaine says- maybe 20K. The funds would go back to the new truck fund. (THIS would further reduce taxes needing to be raised).

Blaine- a new truck would be around 500,000. Lots of money has been spent in recent years to keep up the current trucks (rescue and tanker) - it is costing more than its worth in repairs.

Larry - what costs do you foresee for maintenance on this truck- is there an adequate maintenance fund to maintain the trucks properly. Could you use more money? Yes.

EMily: They are working to build a capital reserve fund (just established at March 2021 Town Meeting), to pay for future work. Blaine - what is left at the end of a month will turn over into the capital fund, certain contracted services (College, MOFGA, anything "extra") will go into the Capital Reserve.

They are also working on a cost-recovery program (from insurance?) and those monies would go into the capital reserve.

Larry - has anyone been to see the truck? No, it is in Alabama, but they are willing to drive it up for an inspection before the sale is final. This is a company that buys used chassis and adding newer bodies (with a 1 yr warrantee)

Kari: Supports having a new fire truck, and a capital reserve fund. Asking for 56% of the truck to be paid via TIF funds. His understanding is that TIF can pay for public safety to the extent that the district puts an imposition on the town. You can't use TIF for municipal expenses, and the way this is portioned doesn't seem right. His calculations are 82K (at a 32% rate, according to the formula that we had conceived) of TIF can go towards the truck.

Penny says the TOwn has been contributing to the Fire Truck fund (what is the proportion?)

WHat burden does the district put on the town (they came up with the most expansive metric [response to care accidents]). If we can come up with a justification for using TIF to fund a tanker of 56% for a truck that will operate most of the time outside of the district, he is for it.

Blaine, this truck will also replace the 'jaws of life,' too - it will be sent to more than just rescues.

Larry reads from the "cost is made necessary by costs for improvements in the district."

Emily - the truck has the same purpose inside and outside the district. Think of the angle of risk management? Buildings in the district are larger and will require more water.

- Kari says, if you use other metrics, like calls, property values, etc. that would probably show the truck being used more outside the district.

Tony: could we

Penny: A business would be foolish to build in the district without adequate fire protection.

Without that infrastructure, she wouldn't want to build here.

Larry: If the Fire dept didn't get the TIF funds, what would the impact on taxes be to the citizens of Unity? Penny- we would need to ask the assessor.

What would the difference on the mill rate be?

Kari estimates 1.5% tax increase over 10 years (or less, because there is already some funds to reduce the loan).

Jean asks- in 2027, there is nothing left in the fire truck fund, so without TIF , it is 3 years of payments not covered (2026-27). Last payment is fiscal year 2028-2029. Money doesn't have to be raised from taxes until 2024 (a portion for 2 years) then the full amount for 3 years.

Kari - there are aFire station bond could be restructured-

Emily, we could come back and request funds from TIF in future years, we don't have to do it now, but it would be easier since it is front of mind.

Kari says, if the state doesn't agree with this, the taxpayers will have to pay for it. He would vote to pay from town budget/ taxes for the whole amount at a Town meeting. He thinks that the

town should be voting to support maintenance and yearly funds to maintain equipment (small town short sighted - you're not raising taxes, but you're eating the capital). Blaine's annual reports show how the capital reserves and maintenance funds should be used.

Kari thinks

Jean is a solution to suggest we call a special town meeting to allocate funds for the truck at a special town meeting?

Penny - EDC is a recommendation/ advisory committee. The next point is Selectmen. They can recommend or not. Then it would go to a special town meeting (that has to happen anyway, because we need a town meeting to have the authority to take out the loan). The intention is to bring it to a special town meeting before the end of the summer and to have an article to ask for the loan, regardless of the 40,000\$ that is being requested here.

Scott -Does it matter if EDC makes a recommendation? Kari says each article should go through the proper process.

Larry - where do we stand for the grant for a ladder truck (the grant is 46K, won't know the result until September).

What is the timeline on the truck? We need it soon, the seller is holding the truck for now, so we can get through the process of EDC and special town meeting.

Tony moves to recommend the additional 40,000\$ from TIF to the fire department to purchase a combined rescue/tanker truck. Najean seconded the motion. Votes for 4, opposed 3, the motion carries.

Penny says that, since Tony has timed off the committee, we only have 6 people and we do not have a full committee. There was some discussion if this is a valid vote, without a

ITEM 2: ATV Community Grant Application

Melody. Need to move trail head away from Envirem (due to safety concerns and a new weigh scale). This will require gravel and a culvert to prepare a new, safe area. This trail gives access to Main street (and businesses there). A new club is forming in Detroit and they want to work to get the trail there, and the trail allows access to Kanokolus. Requesting 1320\$. Labor will be provided by volunteers and Envirem (including an excavator).

Emily asks- we could use existing allocations? Yes. Penny asks- where should we take the funds? From COmmunity Grant fund, or from the Trail fund?

Emily moves to approve the request.

Emily amends the motion to take from trail fund, Larry K seconds - Motion passes

The request will go next to the selectboard next week for final approval.

ITEM 3: New EDC Members and Chair

Tony is no longer a member of the EDC, he has timed out. We need to elect a new Chair. We also have had two new appointees (Emily Newell and Larry King).

Discussion about EDC membership - what is the process, and what criteria are selectmen using to appoint people to the committee? Penny suggests that they need to get to know the nominees before appointing them.

Doug Lakin and Scott Montanino are interested in joining the EDC.

Scott- a long history living in Maine. Family camp and summer home in Franklin. Has recently moved from San Francisco - a landowner since 2017. Building a homestead and want to build revenue streams from the homestead. He wants to be involved and play a role in the future of the town. He enjoys the town so far, and he wants to add to it.

Doug Lakin - Has been living in Unity 11 years. Woodworker, educator, general maintenance person. Currently working with the Ecology Learning Center. Registered Maine Guide with a good idea of the recreation industry in Unity (and upcountry). An interest in staying in the community and seeing it succeed. Wants to be proactive and forward looking.

Jean nominates Kari Hulva to be chair, the vote or in unanimous.

A selectperson has to be on the committee to facilitate communication.

Scott Montanino

Doug Lakin

Jean wants people who want real economic development.

Najean introduces a new grant for UBx to support Marketing for the Market of Unity. They are thinking of expanding to radio ads, too.

Kari is in support because it has a proven track record of success and the receipts have to go back to the town office. Jean concurs.

Larry moves to approve the Marketing Grant to UBx for 500\$ for the Market of Unity. Kari seconded the motion.

5 in favor, none opposed, 1 abstention. The motion passes.

(Ellen says do we need to have a 500\$ limit? Kari says, it is in the bylaws, we could change it - it serves as a guideline for applicants).

Adjourn 8:02.