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**Bath County Planning Commission**

**Bath County Courthouse – Room 115**

**February 23, 2015– CIP PUBLIC HEARING**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** John Cowden (Vice-Chair), Trudy Woodzell, John Loeffler, Jason Miller

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Millboro seat vacant.

**PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:** Mike Bollinger (press), Matt Ratcliff, Wayne Hannah, Sue Hirsh, Ellen Miller, Harold King, Mike Spurgeon and Jeff Grimm

**STAFF PRESENT:** Sherry Ryder

**CALL TO ORDER:**

**Vice-Chair Cowden** called the Public Hearing meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**PUBLIC COMMENT—MATTERS UNRELATED TO THE AGENDA:** None

**ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA:** None

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

**Vice-Chair Cowden** asked for a motion on the election of Officer.

**Trudy Woodzell** made the motion to elect John Cowden for Chair and Jason Miller for Vice-Chair.

**John Loeffler** seconded the motion.

**Vice-Chair Cowden** asked if there was any discussion.

**Vice-Chair Cowden** called for a vote.

**Vote: 4 – 0**

## **PUBLIC HEARING(s): FY 15-20 Capital Improvement Plan**

### **Hearing to receive input on requests submitted for FY 15-20 Capital Improvement Plan.**

**Chairman Cowden** opened the Public Hearing for input on the FY 15-20 Capital Improvement Plan request. He reminded those in attendance that the Planning committee is charged with hearing their request and making sure they are part of the Comprehensive Plan and are within the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

**Chairman Cowden:** He made everyone in attendance aware that the final decision on any Capital Improvement lies with the Board of Supervisors. We are here to listen to your requests and pass anything we consider relevant on to the Board.

**Sherry Ryder:** Mr. King will give a brief presentation on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Association as it relates to the departments that have submitted requests. They have all mutually agreed upon the request as presented. He will explain that process and how they arrived at those numbers.

### **Bath County Volunteer Fire /Rescue Association. - Represented by Harold King**

**Mr. King:** As most of you know the Board of Supervisors came to the Fire Chiefs and Rescue Captains and asked that we get together and come up with a plan to help them plan out the Capital expense for Emergency Services going into the future. Last year was the first time we've gone through this exercise. It was very well received and we plan on continuing with this as long as the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission find it a useful tool. One of the things I am happy to report is that we've been lucky enough to have an unanimous approval of the plan by its members. Request are reviewed by all the other leaders of Emergency Services in the county and they are aware the need being presented are of the most urgent at this point and time.

### **Bath County Public Schools – Represented by Sue Hirsh**

**Phase 1: School Bus Replacements: Mrs. Hirsh** gave an overview of the primary needs for safety issues. Starting with school buses. A number of the buses are in excess of twelve years old. Spare buses are fourteen to twenty years old and three of those are of manual transmission. She stated that they are behind schedule on replacing buses.

**Mrs. Hirsh:** We need two 77 passenger buses with cameras – one with AC and storage bins. The School Board requested that we have at least one bus that has a storage bin and AC. This bus could be used instead of commercial transportation on long trips. We had hoped to get a bus last year but we didn't.

**Restroom Project:** Boys & Girls Rest rooms at the Valley and Millboro Elementary.

**Mrs. Hirsh** stated the bathroom stalls at the elementary are rusting and can't be cleaned very well and need replaced. This causes an issue with safety with cleanliness.

**Lighting upgrade with Occupancy Sensors for the gym at BCHS and Valley.**

The old lights take a long time to warm up and come on. This is a problem when the lights flicker during a game at night. The new LED lighting will save us money.

**Truck with a plow** for snow removal. Each school needs one to keep up with clearing the roads. Millboro got the old custodian truck and it has been passed around a lot.

**Football Field crowning and drainage.** This request has been at the bottom for years.

**Phase 2: Public Restroom Project for the High School.**

**Curtains and Carpet for the BCHS Auditorium.** This past year we had the floors refinished and humidity control installed in the auditorium.

**Ellen Miller:** As Sue Hirsh said, school buses are priority 1. Buses are getting old and we don't want buses breaking down on a long trip. A 77 passenger bus is needed for long and overnight trips. The one passenger bus we have is being used on a regular route and is getting old.

**Mr. Loeffler:** Who uses the buses overnight? How many times are they needed and what is the cost of a Charter bus?

**Mrs. Hirsh:** The Band uses them for Washington trips, the BETA Club and others use the buses. The cost for the Charter Bus is raised by the kids. So I am not sure of the cost.

**Ellen Miller:** On sudden trips Charter Buses are hard to find.

**Mrs. Hirsh:** The new bus comes with a lot of new safety devices and better cameras. The buses are fitted for safety devices but don't come already on them. You have to pay to have them installed.

**Mr. Loeffler:** On your list there are seatbelts. Many buses don't have seatbelts.

**Ellen Miller:** We have preschool kids on these buses now.

**Mrs. Hirsh:** Buses come outfitted for seat restraints, but they are not already there. They are at an extra cost. Some of the buses are getting close to 200,000 miles.

**Trudy Woodzell:** You didn't get any buses last year?

**Ellen Miller:** No, some of the Capital Improvement money we had last year went to the cameras, door locks, and security at all three schools. Now you have to buzz people in at the

school door. After that there was no more money for a bus. Now the schools are in dire need for restroom repair. These restrooms are used by the public too.

**Mr. Loeffler:** Is there a material that is less expensive than stainless steel for the bathroom partitions?

**Mrs. Hirsh:** The frames are stainless steel and the walls are composite material. The material on the commodes are eaten away on both sides of the seat at both schools.

**Mr. Miller:** Do you have a break down on the cost for the stalls and labor?

**Mrs. Hirsh:** No. The estimates are from last year. The company agreed to adhere to the same cost for this year.

**Mr. Miller:** How many stalls total?

**Mrs. Hirsh:** Each school estimate is done separate. Millboro – 21, Valley – 23, High School – not attached.

**Mr. Loeffler:** Last year, you said that the Capital Improvement funds were used on school security? Are the buses part of the School budget or by Capital Improvement money?

**Mrs. Hirsh:** Yes, Ellen stated that. I believe, we didn't get any Capital Improvement money last year. I have always understood, buses came by this way.

**Chairman Cowden:** By this way? You mean? Capital Improvement or School budget?

**Mrs. Hirsh:** By this way I mean Capital Improvement. It's how it's always been done before.

**Mr. Loeffler:** 200,000 miles is a lot of miles for a bus carrying 66 kids.

**Vice-Chair Miller:** How about money for a car?

**Mrs. Hirsh:** We have one new car for staff to use. That money came from the School budget.

**Mr. Loeffler:** What's the salvage value for buses?

**Mrs. Hirsh:** Not much. At auction this year the bus brought around \$1200.00. This year the auction brought in more money than before.

**Mr. Loeffler:** How much does it need to cost to be considered by Capital Improvement?

**Sherry Ryder:** It needs to be \$30,000.

**Ellen Miller:** The auditorium project is on hold right now. We are waiting to see if the new units work on controlling the humidity before we install new carpet and curtains. The old curtains have been around for a long time. They came from the old auditorium.

**Trudy Woodzell:** How long will it be before we know if the units are working?

**Mrs. Hirsh:** We should know by this spring.

**Vice-Chair Miller:** I have another question on the bathroom stalls. Could we have the maintenance department put up the stalls to save on labor?

**Mrs. Hirsh:** We have only one maintenance person. We also plan on getting more estimates too.

**Chairman Cowden:** On the crowning of the football field, is it not draining?

**Mrs. Hirsh:** That's part of the problem. Others know more about it than I do. Irrigation is also needed.

**Ellen Miller:** I have seen rocks sticking up out of the ground. We have lived with these problems for years.

**Chairman Cowden:** Let's get on with the other request. The Service Authority's request was approved already last year.

**Mr. King:** After we submitted our CIP request for this year, Mr. Harrison came to me and asked the association to go back and redo the way they make a CIP request for equipment. Instead of asking for a partial amount each year or taking out loans, we were instructed to ask for the full amount the year we actually need it. This would level and balance the plan and level out the peaks and valleys. The new plan is not as smooth as we would like, but it meets the objectives Mr. Harrison gave to us.

Why fund the Emergency Services? To protect the people, the emergency services people, to immunize the loss of life and property here in Bath County. The County's insurance rates are affected also. We need to allow our volunteers to do their job safely. To eliminate the liability of the County and service organizations. To insure the liability and safety of the equipment for our service workers. We are not wanting to increase the number of trucks, only replace them. Many of those trucks are beyond their Safety dates now, which is set by the National Safety Services.

Our first step was to set up a plan for five years. We then took it out to twenty five years to have a greater view on what needed to be done. We still plan on applying of grants, but our higher per-capita cost goes against us due to distance, to and from disasters. Grants only ask how many calls you go on per year not distance. Fund raising will still be a great part of our budget. The

chart you see on the screen shows where each piece of equipment stands as far as usability. The burnt orange color shows the changes Mr. Harrison asked for.

**Mr. King** talked about the condition of each truck on the chart and the grading system that was used to know when a replacement would be needed. We all have seen each other's equipment and know the conditions that exists. Each department graded their own equipment and then the Fire & Rescue Association, together as a whole, agreed to the grading of each piece. The choices we made were agreed on by all the members. Our request, in front of you, is the greatest priority for this year.

**Mr. King:** We try to reuse or trade as much as possible. Those who can repair a truck, like Barry Marshall in Williamsville, is very helpful in extending the use of equipment.

**Mr. Grimm** explained that not all the trucks are in use at this time. One is so old that it is only used for show at parades. It is not kept at the station. Another is in need of a lot of repair, to the point that it cost more to keep it running than to buy a new one. You only get a small amount of money when they are sold. Most of the pumper trucks that are sold are turned into dump trucks.

**Mr. Grimm** said that some grants, will not allow you to sell or trade the equipment that you get with grant money. They require that it goes out of service at its appointed time.

**Mr. Grimm** said that they are trying to not need all new trucks in one year, but stretch them out to only one per year.

### **The Bath Highland (Bolar) Volunteer Fire Department –Represented by Matt Ratcliff**

**Chairman Cowden:** Now the next request is from Bolar. Where are they on the list Sherry?  
Sherry: They aren't on the list. They are not Bath County. Their request is separate.

**Mr. Ratcliff:** We serve 40 square miles in Highland and 35 square miles in Bath County. We are not considered a part of the Bath County Fire and Rescue Association. In the past you guys have helped us out a lot. Highland County does not help us. We have to work at fund raising to have money. Bath County gave us money for a truck and air packs in the pass. Our building is too small to house our equipment comfortably and we are in the need of expanding. One day we would like to start a first responder unit. We are requesting money for a new building.

**Chairman Cowden:** So you cover a part of Bath County and Highland?

**Mr. King:** When Kevin Fry and Andy Seabolt brought together the folks to form The Fire & Rescue Association, there were other companies who cover parts of the County. Bolar, Clifton, Allegany, Sharon and others who we have a mutual agreement with. We asked, who should be a part of the Bath County Fire & Rescue Association? Basically they said, departments that are

called out through Bath County Code and have funding and a Bath County ID. At this time our requests are made only for departments in Bath County.

**Mr. Ratcliff:** When Meadow Lane Lodge caught fire we were second on the scene. We were ready to help at the Blankenship fire if called.

**Chairman Cowden** thanked Mr. Ratcliff for his input.

**Trudy Woodzell:** Matt, does your Department own the land your building is on?

**Mr. Ratcliff:** Yes, as long as there is a Bolar Fire Department. We have raised \$25,000 and if we get the requested money, we plan on building soon. We hope to get a Rescue Squad going one day and the new building will house that squad.

**Chairman Cowden? Loeffler:** Has Highland County given you any money for this project?

**Mr. Ratcliff:** Highland hasn't given us any.

**Chairman Cowden:** Thanks, we have a clear understanding of your needs and we'll do what we can.

**Mr. Ratcliff:** We would appreciate that.

**Fire & Rescue Association - Kitchen door alcove; Up-grade two bathrooms and make handicap accessible; Replace three bay doors.**

**Mr. Spurgeon:** They need a kitchen door alcove to help stop the wind from slamming the door shut and hurting someone.

**Sherry Ryder:** It's a heavy door. The building is used by other groups in the community and sometime kids come in and out of that door. They shouldn't, but they do. Kids could get hurt if the wind pushes it closed hard.

**Chairman Cowden:** What's needed in the bathrooms? Are the bay doors not working?

**Sherry Ryder:** The bathrooms are not handicap accessible and were a problem during the derecho storm. The bays doors at the fire house are getting old and buckling. They get stuck and are hard to open and close.

**Bath - Highland County Volunteer Fire Department (Williamsville)- Renovation of Campbell House.**

**Mr. King** explained that right now the group uses a building owned by MGW. They could be asked to leave the building anytime. They would like to have a place for community events, fund

raising events and as an emergency shelter in the event of a natural disaster. They would like to have a walk-in freezer and generator for long periods of power outage use.

### **Hot Springs Rescue Squad– Replace Rescue; #6 Response & #7 Ambulance**

The vehicles are both getting old and are part of the Fire & Rescue Association Consolidated Plan. They will be used for travel to training, meetings and transport personnel. Ambulance is thirteen years old and not worth much.

**Chairman Cowden:** In the future, will we still have enough volunteers to continue to have volunteer based fire & rescue departments?

**Mr. King** gave an over view of how hard it is to attract new young volunteers due to the time and cost commitments involved. Having a paid Fire & Rescue Department would cost Bath County way too much and so volunteering members are important. We need to help encourage them to volunteer.

**Mr. Spurgeon** talked about how the State is making it harder and harder for volunteers to qualify by requiring more training time and test requirements each year. Now it takes 150 hours to become an EMT. The biggest talkers on Fire & Rescue are the paid systems and they can afford to pay their members to go to school and get their money's worth out of them. Most of the young people around here are not wanting to volunteer. They want to get something out of it for their time and efforts. Still, a few will volunteer.

**Mr. Grimm:** I think in time, our greater days for volunteering are to come. Virginia was the first state to start a volunteer Fire & Rescue system. Due to the cost of paid staff. More and more locations are running out of money.

**Mr. King:** Fire training requirements are now 177 hours and that doesn't include the time for driving to and from classes. That's why we need a training facility in the county. It would help with getting volunteers.

**Chairman Cowden** and the other Planning Commissioners thanked everyone for their time.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** None

**STAFF REPORT:** In packet

**Sherry Ryder:** You have a copy of the Staff Report that was given to the Board of Supervisor, dated December 3<sup>rd</sup> – January 6<sup>th</sup> and January 7<sup>th</sup> – February 4<sup>th</sup>.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Sherry Ryder:** The Board of Supervisor and The Planning Commission are still looking for replacement members.

**Gas Drilling & Hydrofracturing Ordinance –Draft**

**Chairman Cowden:** Discussion will be tabled until March meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**HB2 – Transportation Bill – New Regulation in effect.**

**Chairman Cowden:** The way he read it they want to prioritize it and they want everyone's comments on safety and congestion. For rural areas it was on economic development and I have no argument about that.

**Sherry Ryder:** The Board of Supervisors has put the Planning Commission to task to keep up with "House Bill 2". There will be a workshop meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup> in Harrisonburg for our district. Let me know if you can go.

**PSA Planning Committee**

**Sherry Ryder:** The Service Authority's future planning of the Cedar Creek connection is coming up. The Board of Supervisors wants to meet with the PSA and Planning Commission and form a Committee. I will need two volunteers to be a part of those meetings. We will meet with the Board of Supervisors and PSA approximately two times a year.

Jason Miller and John Loeffler volunteered to be a part of the PSA Planning Committee.

**Architectural Standards for Business zoned properties - Discuss**

**Chairman Cowden:** We will table this discussion until the March meeting.

**MINUTES**

**Chairman Cowden** asked for a motion to approve the minutes of October 27, 2014

**Trudy Woodzell** made a motion to approve the minutes of October 27, 2014

**John Loeffler** seconded the motion.

**Vote: 4-0**

**Trudy Woodzell** made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Chairman Cowden** adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

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Chairman John Cowden

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Date