

EXETER FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Town Offices, 10 Front Street, Exeter NH 03833

September 9, 2020

Exeter Planning Board
Town Offices
10 Front Street
Exeter, NH 03833

Dear Chairman Plumer and Members of the Exeter Planning Board:

Pursuant to its Charge* from the Select Board to assist Town leadership in setting facilities priorities and budgets, the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) respectfully submits its recommendations regarding two proposed projects for the Fiscal Years (FY) 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The FAC asks that these recommendations be considered at the final Planning Board session on the new CIP, and that this letter and attachments be placed in the record for that meeting.

These projects, as described in the Draft CIP, are the Public Safety Alternative Analysis and Design and Engineering (\$400,000 in FY 21, Total amount To Be Determined), and the Department of Public Works (DPW) Facility Garage (\$150,000 in FY 21, \$4,962,000 in FY 22, Total: \$5,112,000).

The FAC's recommendations are based on consultations with the Department Heads and Staff sponsoring these requests and on detailed site visits to the existing Town facilities these projects are intended to replace.

By 4-0 votes, the FAC makes the following recommendations.

- (1) The Public Safety project should be approved and revised as follows: (1) the first phase to be funded in FY 21 should consist of an Analysis of Alternatives and Feasibility Study to identify a preferred facilities option, (2) a second project phase for Design, Engineering and Construction should occur in the following fiscal years; (3) the FY 21 budget request for the first phase should not exceed \$200,000; and (4) the FAC and Town Staff working together should define a specific set of first phase deliverables that will help identify a firmer cost estimate for FY 21.
- (2) The Public Works Facility Garage should be approved under the condition that a detailed breakdown of the tasks and deliverables from the \$150,000 in FY 21 be provided by Town Staff and with the understanding that the total project cost estimate remains to be determined and should be updated now to at least reflect later inflation factors.

Public Safety Project: The FAC believes that the Town's recent Public Safety Study demonstrates that Exeter needs a new Public Safety facility. However, the FAC concludes that the CIP project should focus first on an Analysis of Alternatives and a Feasibility Study of these alternatives in FY 21.

In the FAC's opinion, such an effort is critical to define the several project options, to develop a firm cost estimate for the most affordable, feasible, and cost-effective option, and to solicit public input on that option. We believe that such an effort is needed before any Design and Engineering work is begun on construction designs, blueprints, and plans, as currently described in the CIP Project Request Form.

The FAC believes that sequencing the overall project in this way would give the taxpayers much more confidence that the project's value merits their support at an annual Town election and thus would reduce the risk that the project would be delayed if the more costly, combined approach in the current CIP request is rejected. The Town's experience this year with the Parks & Recreation Department Renovation/Expansion warrant article is instructive in this regard.

Public Works Garage Project:

The FAC's recommendation for the Garage project is based on its conclusion that a more detailed breakdown is needed of the tasks and deliverables to be accomplished with the \$150,000 requested for FY 21. It also believes that the likely delay in beginning construction until FY 23 requires the spending plan for the new garage and fuel island in the draft CIP to be updated to include additional inflation reflecting this delay.

The FAC recommends that this updated information be made available to the Planning Board, BRC, and FAC before the BRC considers the CIP later this year.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these views. A FAC representative will attend the Planning Board's final CIP meeting to answer any questions you might have about this letter. Also attached for your information are the Minutes of the FAC's meetings/site walks on these projects.

Cordially,

Rob Corson, Chair
Kris Weeks, Vice Chair
Mark Leighton
Peter Lennon, Clerk

Attachments: FAC Minutes, July 30, 2020 (DPW); FAC Minutes, August 13, 2020 (Public Safety)

* As approved by the Select Board (SB) on May 20, 2019, part of the FAC's Charge is to: (1) assess and analyze municipally-owned facilities in order to prioritize physical plant needs and budgets, and (2) advise it, the Town Manager, Planning Board, Budget Recommendations Committee, and DPW on facilities priorities, including construction, replacement, renovation, and maintenance.