MILFORD PLANNING BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES ~ DRAFT
September 1, 2026 - Board of Selectmen Meeting Room, 6:30 PM

Members Present:
Tim Finan, Chair
Janet Langdell, Vice Chair
Justin Demontigny, Member
Andrew Ciardelli, Member
Susan Robinson, Member (arrived at
Paul Amato, Alternate
Tina Phibrick, Selectboard Representative
Chris Labonte, Selectboard Representative
Mike Thornton, Alternate Member

Staff:
Terrey Dolan, Town Planner
Blake Desmarais, Videographer

VIA Zoom:
Excused:
Pete Basiliere, Member

1. <u>Call to order</u>: Chair Tim Finan called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He introduced Planning Board members that were present and staff. There will likely not be any votes taken this evening, but in case of that, Paul Amato will be voting for the absent Pete Basiliere and that if S. Robinson does not show up, voting for the absent S. Robinson, but there should not be any votes this evening.

2. <u>Public Hearing:</u> The first order of business this evening is an update on the Capital Improvement Program which will be presented by Kyle Finnell the Director of Community Development.

A. <u>Capital Improvement Program – CIP (2027-2032) Draft Report Update</u>. The CIP Committee reviewed 21 total requests from seven departments this year, going through the process of ranking and scoring those projects based on the 12 criteria for eligibility and also an urgency ranking. The Committee has finalized its scorecard which is provided for you today and have identified 15 projects that they have recommended accepting for the 2027-2032 plan. To orient all with the scorecard, all 21 projects are listed which also includes the total cost and all are color coded for the cost and impact; the 15 projects are listed in descending order, the 15 are to be funded in FY2027, 4 in FY2028 and 2 to begin funding in FY2032.

To Mr. Amato's comment, there are four items highlighted in blue, Mr. Finnell explained 3 of those are for water utilities, and are expected to be paid from rate user fees, the Ambulance is set up through their Capital Reserve Fund for which monies come from the revenues generated from using the Ambulance Services and the billing for those services. Those ambulances are paid for out of the Capital Revolving Fund where currently there is $140,000. P. Amato asked how much is taken into those accounts a year? K. Finnell was told by the Finance Director that the threshold is usually met in Quarter one. C. Labonte commented that the Ambulance Department brings in between $900K and $1 million per year. C. Labonte indicated that over the past couple of years, the ambulance billing laws have changed, the town raised our rates in order to collect the maximum amount and that should bring in more as a net positive. P. Amato asked what happens if someone does not have insurance? C. Labonte said there is a process to to go through to get the cost lowered. There are a lot of options and then there are some that are un-collectable. J. Langdell said the $900 - $1 million is billing? C. Labonte said that is actually collected. Actual revenue or anticipated revenue and it mostly goes into General Revenue. C. Labonte did have one question on the CIP projects; the DPW Truck was originally put in as DPW4, the town got a grant which was a match and I believe we are getting another truck for DPW and the truck will be able to be bought out of budget money. Mr. Labonte asked if Kyle Finnell could follow up on that to see if that DPW truck comes off the CIP list because DES awarded a grant that is funding 80% of the truck, so that will be two trucks from DES in the last two years so that will eliminate a Warrant Article for the vehicle. Kyle Finnell noted to check on that project in the CIP. This year we are trying a new software called ClearGov to prepare the CIP, as you can see on the screen (he is not able to print it out) and it includes three budgeting modules and the first one we brought on line was Capital Budgeting so this is how we have had the Department Heads submit their requests, fill out their financials and articulate how they anticipate funding it, what years are anticipated funding it for the six years of the CIP or if it is further out and this is also the platform which will be used to build out the CIP. Currently on the screen, is the Dashboard that the CIP Committee has committed to using and if all of the presented projects were to be approved as presented it would total $15 million over the full length of the CIP, that is not what the taxpayers will be on the hook for and keep in mind this is based on initial estimates. This software will, Mr. Finnell believes, give the Town a more robust CIP process that will follow year to year as a planning document.

T. Finan asked if all requests are in this software? K. Finnell responded all 21 requests are in the program right now, based on the recommendations of the CIP Committee; K. Finnell has included the 15 projects to the CIP, the other projects were put into a category identified as “deferred.” This way, those deferred projects stay in the system and the Department Head that created it can go in and edit it or tweak the numbers or the years and come back to it in another year to resubmit to the CIP. T. Finan asked if the report will be generated from this software? And will all 21 projects be included? K. Finnell responded that when the report is generated, we can include all 21 projects. J. Langdell indicated the dashboard can probably be adjusted to show all 21 projects too? K. Finnell responded that he knows that we can, but we are all just learning the software so he cannot make that change quickly at this point. C. Labonte stated that he hopes that ClearGov will be a good tool for the town, and in the past he has not felt that the CIP was a good tool for him since it only did one year at a time, so now with the new software, it shows that nothing has been but in the years after the six year timeframe. C. Labonte feels that having the longer list if projects shows what the town actually needs and the CIP done over the past ten years has really not been a strategic planning tool. J. Langdell responded by stating that in the past there was a BOS member that wanted to prioritize a list for the BOS looking at one year. C. Labonte feels that is a disservice to the Town. J. Langdell agrees and wants to go back to the intention of the CIP over a multi-year period.

T. Finan said this is the conversation that has been happening for many years and it is a shame for volunteers to put in so much time on the committee. All agreed this software may in the end be a more proactive tool. P. Amato asked where is the schools input? K. Finnell said he will do his best to answer that stating the Superintendent and School Business Administrator have been invited to use this platform, they were included at the very beginning of this process with all Department Heads, when Kyle reached out to the School Board Chair and asked who would be representing the School District on the CIP Committee, he was told they are already over extended and did not want to further stress the Board. They have developed their own CIP process, the last Kyle has seen they met in late June and have not met since then and he has not gotten any updates. K. Finnell has one informal meeting with the Superintendent in mid-August and at that time she indicated they only have one project for the short term moving forward and he has not received any information or numbers related to that project so he cannot really speak to it but he is hopeful that numbers will be provided so that it can be included. T. Finan so there is one project that they would have on the CIP? K. Finnell clarified that there is one project that they would bring to the voters in 2027. T. Thornton indicated the Town is doing its best to identify the needs and until the School meets with the Town to identify all the needs in town, we will not get to a clear outcome. T. Finan sees this as a disservice to the Town and he would love to see their report so that we can look at both CIPs (School and Town). In the conversation with the Superintendent, K. Finnell stressed that he would like to get the town and school synchronized so that we can be supportive and a spreadsheet would be helpful. K. Finnell had been told that there would be a line of communication but he has not heard from anyone during the summer. Because of that, we will circle back now that we have a Finance Director that has been getting oriented and attending the CIP meetings and she will be assisting in the cleanup of some of the financials; remembering this is a new tool and the Department Heads submitted information on projects without the assistance of a Finance Director in the beginning so Kyle has been learning but is not a Finance person but he is doing his best. Based on the urgency scores from the CIP Committee we are trying to go back into the requests and anything that scored less than a 5, which ends up being six projects that will be looked at and will try to push those out to future years to try to address that concern of a really heavy hit in tax year 2027 and 2028.

J. Langdell asked if there will be a report produced in the end that goes out several years similar to what the Planning Board used to get? K. Finnell responded that the historical CIP report had 3 tables attached to it, Anticipated Impact to Taxpayers, in talking with ClearGov they will give the town access to new functionality to test it out and allow us to go in and build out that table that we are accustomed to seeing, add those categories and then run a single report for all of those projects to see the anticipated tax impact year to year since the cost is not necessarily the impact year to year. The software is still very new and something that Kyle and Jennifer the Finance Director will work through and because of that we may not have a draft CIP to present to the Planning Board until October since it will take a couple weeks to get through that. Additionally, with ClearGov the CIP report can be generated but there will still be a need to provide some of the tables that ClearGov is not set up to generate. P. Amato asked if the progress and status is available throughout the year with the budgeting module? K. Finnell responded that there is “Budget Tracking” so that once it is approved through the CIP, those financials are transferred into the Budget Tracking piece. We are not yet trained on that portion, but in year two there will be training done in order to utilize that module. J. Langdell asked if that can also be used to track any Government Projects? K. Finnell answered that would be very helpful and he will explore that. P. Amato asked if ClearGov will be used for the Town Budget this year? C. Labonte said that was the intent however, with the disruption of the computers in July 2026, K. Finnell is unsure if that will happen in 2026 or 2027. Additionally, K. Finnell mentioned that another new software the Town is launching this year BS&A is the Accounting software goes live in December 2026.

J. Langdell asked if the two software products (ClearGov and BS&A) talk to each other? K. Finnell responded that they do, when we upload the data from ClearGov to BS&A they have to essentially code where the numbers are (ESR). The current system (MUNIS) does not line up with what the DRA wants us to have so we are considering pausing the budgeting rollout until next year. P. Amato confirmed that ClearGov is a budgeting tool? And BS&A is an Operational Tool to do the Accounting? K. Finnell agreed and until we get BS&A cleaned up and recoded to match DRA, he does not see ClearGov being used for Operational or Personnel for this year but we were already underway with Capital so we are pushing through with CIP and getting Department Heads used to the platform since the platform will be very similar. P. Amato asked about this year’s CIP and this list shows projects for this year, were the other projects for future years? The guidance that K. Finnell gave Department Heads was to provide him with all past projects and projects not adopted or put to future years, knowing that ClearGov can put projects into future years he felt it would be easier. C. Labonte said thank you to Kyle Finnell to taking on the CIP project and understands that it is a lot to take on in one year. K. Finnell explained that he and the Finance Director Jennifer need to sit down to review and projects and determine what can be pushed off to another year or years. He did not have that information at the CIP Committee meetings so the scorings were based on what was presented and have left the scorings and arrangement to the Finance Director and Community Development Director. T. Finan indicated that after this year, going forward that should not be on those two people. K. Finnell agreed and stated that going forward that information will be built into the CIP.

C. Labonte asked about Project DPW3 that has a price of $5.6 million? K. Finnell said that is the total over the number of years. The Director is presenting the $5.6 million over a number of years for paving. K. Finnell indicated he will show how the projects can be filtered out by year to get a better grasp on the yearly cost; new users put in the total for one year, but that does not show the tax impact for taxpayers it just shows the total cost; that is where Kyle and Jennifer need to go through to clean up the data that was submitted to the CIP this is currently a living document that needs cleanup work. J. Langdell also would like to have the Capital Reserve Funds identified for any projects that have them. A list of the projects that have a Capital Reserve Fund and a list of the Capital Reserve Funds and balances; this will be needed for Town Meeting as well, said J. Langdell. K. Finnell just saw that list last night and will try to include it in the final report. K. Finnell said the Finance Director is hoping budget numbers will be complete next week. K. Finnell is hoping to have a draft CIP by the third week of September to have a look before the first public hearing. T. Finan asked if there are two public hearings needed? K. Finnell answered he believes historically there have been two public hearings. T. Finan commented it sounds like there is a lot on Kyle's plate, would it be better to have the first public hearing later in October? K. Finnell said if the Board is okay with having only one public hearing, that would be okay for him. K. Finnell said he is anticipating having the draft CIP for the Planning Board Work Session October 6. P. Amato said if there is only one meeting to review the draft CIP it needs to be ready to go. T. Finan noted that there could always be a public hearing at a joint meeting with the BOS.

Paul Amato asked C. Labonte how comfortable are the BOS with the to-day spent numbers versus the budget? It is hard to create a budget if you don't know the spent to date numbers. C. Labonte said that is hard to answer; starting with having a lot of changes whether software changes, some different things so burn rates might not have been available or distributed timely so we would look forward to seeing those burn rates. One year ago, there was a burn rate each month and then that faded off, there is a burn rate for every department by line item; so we have been working through new staff, new processes, new software to get a more detailed, accurate report to know where we are. P. Amato that is so you can start on next year's budget. C. Labonte state that happens behind the scenes at the Town Administrator level. P. Amato added that they need to know that the numbers are good enough. The tax rate will be set fairly soon in October and the State needs accurate numbers (burn rates) to decide what the tax rate it. Not necessarily the expenses but the revenue, we can't exceed the numbers. But P. Amato asked how do you know you are not exceeding the budgeted number if you don't have your burn rates? C. Labonte said as a municipality, you cannot exceed what is budgeted. J. Langdell said but it has happened, not in Milford, but it has happened. C. Labonte said he has to trust the Finance Department for those numbers. P. Amato noted that as Selectmen, that Board is fiscally responsible. The last burn rate seen by C. Labonte showed that the burn rate was not out of whack.

K. Finnell wanted to show members what the CIP document from the new software generates. It would give a one-year report and then it can also give the full 6-year breakdown with funding sources (which needs clean up). Once all the data is cleaned up, T. Finan commented it looks like it will be great. Once the data is alright, the document can be public facing so members can go into it to get comfortable with the new layout. K. Finnell asked the Board if it would be okay with getting read-only access? The CIP Committee was granted more interactive access. His one request would be that members not use the Comment Feature as was recommended by NHMA. J. Langdell asked if the comment feature can be turned off? K. Finnell said it cannot, but he will look into that to see if there is another way to keep it read only. C. Labonte said in the past the town used capital reserve funds for bigger projects and now we have changed to inconsistent use of them, is there a function in ClearGov that can utilize those Capital Reserve Funds with the budget? K. Finnell answered that he and Jennifer are looking to find that function in the system. J. Langdell said it seems like the previous Finance Director used that ability to select ClearGov. M. Thornton asked if one of the functions of ClearGov was that the public could go in to look at the numbers in the "Budget Book"? K. Finnell said yes that is one of the features that attracted the Town to this software.

T. Finan asked if consensus of the Board is to only hold one CIP public hearing? J. Langdell said yes it seems that as long as that one public hearing is a complete hearing. There were no other comments on the CIP.

B. Amended New Hampshire RSA 79-E Discussion

S. Robinson asked if there was someone planned to come in to talk to the Board on 79E? T. Finan responded that there was a plan, but Kyle had an intern do some work for him on this. K. Finnell provided the background on the 79-E which was adopted in Milford in 2017 and also some new processes that are now in effect thanks to House Bill 1103 which the town may be interested in adopting. Currently the 79E program allows tax relief for meeting the criteria. With the passage of HB 1103, the town is able to allow additional criteria. K. Finnell read the current language in HB1103. There is an upcoming Webinar 9/17 at noon; speaking to this new language so we will be getting guidance on how we can implement the changes. The current 79E in Milford is limited to only the downtown area. With HB1103 there is more flexibility in what the town can adopt. C. Labonte said now if there is new housing built, the town needs to decide how that bill can be implemented in Milford. Also if new housing is built, who ends up getting the tax benefit? Is it the developer, the builder, the owner? K. Finnell offered that 79E is there and there are projects that would not happen if it were not for 79E; the town needs to make sure that the program is good for the town. The webinar is on September 17. K. Finnell noted that we will send out that link for anyone to join. J. Langdell would like to see the ability for this bill to open up more housing availability. K. Finnell pointed out that Keene has opened up a lot of the provisions of this bill to include mixed use, and going to the maximum of tax relief, over time the district has built out according to the 79E regulations. They area not re-zoning, they are only expanding it. J. Langdell asked how Keene defines Affordable Housing? K. Finnell said he will find that out.

P. Amato asked how this will be incorporated into the schedule? T. Finan maybe we take a look at what is available and take small portions? J. Langdell asked if the Board wants to take a look at the Zoning first. K. Finnell suggested this is just an introduction, maybe start with looking at the maps, that includes water/sewer, then a map with zones and look at housing opportunities. By using the maps to start, we can identify what aligns the most to allow provisions. He understands that this is just the beginning of the conversations. J. Langdell indicated there is a lot of information out there and would it be beneficial to invited Conservation, EDAC, BOS, and have it upstairs. A. Ciardelli thanked Kyle for the information and feels it is a great start to create our thoughts and bring that back to the next meeting to discuss. There are a lot of layers to this, so everyone needs to read it over again and then schedule a Charrette to further reach out. Kyle commended the Intern Ryan that supported Community Development and provided a lot of this information for tonight's meeting.

C. Downtown Improvement Program Update. K. Finnell summarized a memo to the Chair of the status of this project. The Preliminary Engineering Phase is just being concluded. The Cost estimates are being compiled and in an update provided this morning. DOT is still waiting on traffic data. The BOS needs those details to make decisions. There are two sections of the Downtown, Middle Street to Putnam and Nashua Street to School St. Expanding the Wadleigh Library parking is another element. And the parking lot on South Street/Clinton Street is another element. The Final Prelim plans downtown oval cost construction is estimated is $2.3 million, the Library Parking Lot will be $846,000 and the South/Clinton Street parking lot will be $343,000.

D. Other Business. The applicant, Milford DV Property, LLC, is requesting Minor Site Plan Approval to construct a new 598 sq. ft. leasing office and five (5) dedicated parking spaces, that include two (2) handicap spaces on a vacant .212-acre lot within the existing Longley Place II (rental townhouse apartments) 5.528-acre complex.

3. <u>Other Business:</u> Discussion of the 08/05/2026 Select Board Meeting.

T. Finan wanted to update the board on the Selectboard meeting from last week. J. Langdell thanked him

4. <u>Meeting Minutes Approval:</u> 08/18/2026 Minutes.

T. Finan asked for any corrections.

T. Finan asked for a motion to approve the minutes from 8/04/2026 as amended. P. Amato made the motion and A. Ciardelli seconded. All were in favor with none opposed. Motion passed.

5. <u>Future Planning Board Meeting Dates:</u> 09/15/2026 & 10/06/2026 Work Session.

6. <u>Adjournment:</u>

T. Finan asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. T. Philbrick made the motion to adjourn; J. Demontigny seconded. All were in favor with none opposed and no abstentions. Meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Darlene Bouffard

____ Date: _________

Signature of the Chairperson/Vice-Chairperson: