

**Ballston Spa
Comprehensive Master Plan Steering Committee
April 21, 2022**

Present in Person: Bob Bush, Jr., John Cromie, Peter Martin, Jackie Pelliccia, and Marilyn Stephen

Present by Zoom: Mat Ercoline, Amy Fitzgerald, and Jared Iacolucci.

Excused: Scott Burlingame, Carrie Chapman, Monique Cohen, Nafeesa Koslik and Ellen Mottola,

Observers in Person: Donna Martin, Frank Rossi, Walter and Becky Smith, Bernadette VanDeinse-Perez

Observers by Zoom: Paul Farnum, Jeff Gawrys, and Liz Kormos

In the absence of Chair Karen Martell, the meeting was opened by John Cromie, who explained the short attendance is due to spring break. Minutes of the last meeting were reviewed; Marilyn Stephenson moved they be approved; Peter Martin seconded; passed.

Marilyn and Mat prepared a list of recommendations to begin the committee's discussion. Marilyn presented them. They included

A. Obtain grants to carry out recommendations of two studies of the water system, when they are completed, and reassess water loss.

B. Periodically update and carry out the DPW Capital Project plan.

C. Seek grants for remote-read meters.

D. Identify land uses harmful to ground water-fed water supply and restrict uses through zoning.

E. Require new construction design to follow certified energy efficiency standards.

F. Coordinate sewer permit process with county.

G. Expand underground electric lines and period lighting with LED throughout CBD.

- H. Seek funding for Level 3 EV charging stations.
- I. Create and periodically review IT capital plan.
- J. Regular system and security audits and training.
- K. Improve electronic communication with village residents concerning infrastructure concerns, accomplishments, payment of bills, and emergencies.
- L. Investigate feasibility of free Wi-Fi in CBD and eliminate cell dead zones.

An excused member offered the following thoughts, which inadvertently were not expressed during the meeting:

The Existing Conditions Report produced last year did not address utility infrastructure, but noted the village is mostly built out and population will not increase significantly.

If the village uses more than 30% of well capacity, now being used, through sales outside of village and the 26.1% loss is decreased, the return on investment (2M\$) for remote-read meters may make a switch feasible.

Water/sewer breaks and repairs are an opportunity to add to mapping.

If financially feasible, move electric utilities underground during street and sidewalk replacement.

The village's information technology design is twenty years behind current trends.

Because the two water studies have not been done, the committee does not have the knowledge to recommend their findings. It will be up to the village board to evaluate and implement.

Metering village properties will better illustrate the amount of water not being billed, whether through leakage or otherwise.

While there may be a grant to install charging stations, National Grid charges around \$275/ month. If that isn't paid by users, it may be too expensive for the village to maintain.

Electrical infrastructure may includes private wind turbines and solar panels. If used by residents, their impacts on neighbors pose their own zoning considerations.

Water/sewer billing for over-charged accounts should be more resident friendly.

The Village needs to create digital maps of its water and sewer infrastructure.

An energy audit of village properties and the overall community will create a base line for future decision making.

An information protection plan is an essential to handle threats and emergencies to online data.

Residents want to receive and pay their bills online, and the village web site's payment process is not user friendly.

The home page should have rolling snippets linking people to specific pages and information for new residents.

Email and Facebook is not messaging most choose. Text sign-up should be offered to be used exclusively for targeted alerts of DPW activity in a neighborhood and emergencies. If not overused the sign-up's existence will spread by word of mouth.

Remote-read water meters are worth while to make a concerted effort to obtain grant funding.

Whether water conservation devices are required by the state in commercial or residential buildings, the village code should reinforce the requirements and not depend on state regulations.

Renewable energy systems for commercial and residential buildings should be encouraged through incentives, some of which may be grant funded in the future.

The village's website should take cues from commercial sites and flash teasers to important information while residents are paying their bills.

The village's outside IT consultants are paid to provide guidance when asked, not deal with implementing procedures and operations.

Care should be taken to accommodate preferences rather than dictate electric uses for all construction.

Improvement to village's IT infrastructure is dependent on rapidly changing technology, making it impractical to suggest specific actions. Rather, village government should continuously evaluate the feasibility and priorities of adding IT services.

Not all the village is on the National Grid circuit that feeds Global Foundries. It would benefit the village's livability if the circuit was extended to include all the village.

Until there are accurate maps of water and sewer lines that show their capacities, developers of large projects should be required to prove to the planning board that existing systems will not be overburdened by the development.

Water source protection studies for village water would have to be done in cooperation with municipalities of Milton and Saratoga Springs as they draw water from the same area and have jurisdiction over the aquifer.

DPW's capital project plan, which identifies projects and sets priorities, should be formalized, adopted by the board, and reevaluated every couple of years

Ballston Spa should work with County Sewer to come up with a universal application for new connections and repairs, which will benefit other municipalities.

When planning consumer amenities, the village should avoid competing with businesses and support downtown. For instance, install slow EV charging stations geared to visitors coming to the village to shop or walk around.

General themes from discussions of the last two meetings:

Village information technology needs to be more sophisticated to facilitate accessible, easy-to-find information, and trusted communication between residents and government (in both directions), and delivery of services. It should be used as a tool to keep track of infrastructure, how it is utilized, and can be improved. Rapid technological change requires the village to have an operating IT plan that is updated periodically.

The overall management of infrastructure of the village, not just water and sewer, will benefit by expanding and formalizing

the ad hoc DPW capital plan, and updating it and resetting priorities periodically.

Design requirements for buildings should prepare property owners for the shift in state and federal government energy policies, by encouraging green practices and promote mindfulness of restrictions in village infrastructure to minimize future tax burdens. Until those latter requirements are in place, potential weaknesses should be addressed on an interim basis.

The committee decided a tour around the village for members and representatives of Behan Associates will be valuable. It will last about two and a half hours, and for Behan, it will have to be during the business day. To permit more members to take part, it was decided to have it over two days, beginning at 3:30 pm. The first afternoon will be May 10 and we will meet at Victory Circle. The second day will be May 17.

Meeting adjourned.