

Meeting Minutes
State College Borough Council
Work Session
Monday, October 10, 2005

The State College Borough Council met in a work session on Monday, October 10, 2005, at 7:30 p.m. in the State College Municipal Building Council Room, 243 South Allen Street, State College, PA. Thomas E. Daubert called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

Present: Thomas E. Daubert, President of Council
Catherine G. Dauler
Elizabeth A. Goreham
Craig R. Humphrey
Richard L. McCarl
James H. Meyer
Jeffrey R. Kern

Also present: Thomas J. Fountaine, Borough Manager; Mark A. Whitfield, Director of Public Works; Sheila Lubold, Recording Secretary; members of the media; and other interested observers.

Public Hour. There was no comment from the public.

CATA Routes. Borough Council was given copies of the 2005-2006 CATA budget and after reviewing the budget, Council expressed some concern regarding the funding formula that was used to determine municipal shares. After reviewing the Borough routes, Council began to consider deleting some routes from the 2006-2007 funding year. Hugh Mose, General Manager for CATA, was present to answer any questions and address the concerns of Council.

Mr. Meyer distributed a hand-out from the CATA budget showing the routes that CATA was running. He highlighted the routes that the Borough could consider cutting if the current formula continues to be used. He also gave a brief explanation of how the percentages and figures are determined.

Mr. Kern asked how it is decided that a route has a regional component and how the percentage contributed by each municipality is then determined. Mr. Mose said it is a subjective process and the formula used is updated each year and is complicated. He also added that there are three factors to the "regional" component. First they determine if there are nonresidential areas served. For example, people might be using the bus route to go to the hospital. Another factor was whether or not the route travels many miles through areas where no service is offered, and the third factor was whether a route is used to support other routes.

Council discussed a few routes and the area that they cover outside of the Borough. However, Mr. Mose advised Council that all the bus routes do come into downtown State College at some point.

Mr. Meyer suggested that a threat by Council not to fund certain routes might prompt the surrounding municipalities to realize that this is a regional program and should be financed regionally. State College is a unique municipality because all of the routes do come into the Borough and that is not true for the other municipalities. Mr. McCarl expressed his concern that if all the municipalities take this approach there would be routes that are eliminated and there would be complete havoc. Mr. Meyer stated the Borough could still finance the regional portions of the routes and not hurt the Borough but if other municipalities reduce funding and eliminate routes they will only hurt themselves.

Mr. Kern stated the Borough could contribute a flat percentage fee and the monies could be distributed as CATA sees fit. However, Mr. Daubert felt that pulling support for individual routes would send a stronger message. Mr. Kern stated Council could "play poker" and hope that the other municipalities would then agree to regional funding. Mr. McCarl supported Mr. Kern's idea of letting CATA decide how the money gets distributed.

Mr. Daubert suggested that Council say they will not be supporting certain routes and a new formula needs to be developed and implemented. He was hesitant to just give CATA a flat percentage because of the possibility of CATA doing away with certain routes. He felt that it is Council's job to protect the interest of the Borough's citizens. Mr. Meyer did not feel that CATA would do that but added that Council could ask CATA for a proposal on how the money would be distributed and Council would have the opportunity to approve the proposal.

Mr. Kern stated that Council should go by the COG formula and give funding according to the COG formula and see if the other municipalities follow the same formula. Mr. Meyer agreed and stated the Borough could use the COG formula and other municipalities could stay with the Miller formula if they did not want to change. He liked the idea of trying to keep the process positive and avoid elimination of any routes. Ms. Goreham also agreed with using the COG formula.

Mr. Mose commented that he understands Council's concerns about having routes eliminated. He explained that CATA's first objective is to make sure there is proper service where needed and after the service needs are decided the allocation of funding begins. Mr. Mose did not think there would be a big change in service by using the COG formula because routes are decided by need.

A short discussion was also held on the possibility of CATA extending their service across the County. Ms. Goreham stated that the Transportation Commission indicated that CATA needs to expand service county-wide. Mr. Mose stated that Philipsburg and Centre Hall were the most likely areas to get service but CATA had other issues to address first.

Mr. Daubert stated during the first meeting in November there would be a motion for Council to vote on using the COG formula as opposed to the Miller formula.

2006-2010 Capital Improvement Program. Council received the 2006-2010 Capital Improvement Program at an earlier meeting and had been discussing the document at various meetings since receiving it. This meeting would be the final discussion on projects before approving the plan at the October 17 meeting.

The first projects discussed were Parks.

Holmes-Foster Bocce Ct. Roof Project - Council agreed to delete this project from the Capital Improvement Program.

Tussey View Park Trail Project and Park Land Improvements Project – Council agreed to move the Tussey View Park Trail from 2008 to 2006 and reduce the Park Land Improvements Project funding for 2006 from \$25,000 to \$15,000 then increase the Park Land Improvements in 2008 from \$25,000 to \$35,000 to offset this change.

Next Council talked about the Parking Fund Projects.

Parking Study Project – Mr. Kern stated that he does not think the Borough can afford not to do the study and does not think the Borough has the expertise and time to complete the study. The Borough needs to know how to fill up the parking garages.

Mr. Daubert was hesitant to do the study because in the past consultants have done poorly in answering the questions the studies were to answer. He also felt that \$40,000 was too much money for the study. He added that it was more important for Council to consider the concerns of the citizens rather than just making more money from parking.

Mr. Fontaine stated the Borough will get more proposals before selecting a consultant and felt the Borough needed to get an expert opinion on how to sell parking in the Borough. Mr. Kern stated he understood Mr. Daubert's concerns and added that Council could review the proposals and select a consultant they are comfortable with. Mr. Whitfield noted the proposal that he provided to Council was just a summary of the project and the description of the actual study, to be included in an agreement with a consultant, would be more detailed.

The next part of the meeting Council spoke about Street Projects.

O'Bryan Lane Reconstruction Project – During earlier discussions Council discussed delaying this project and spreading it over a few years but still earmarking money in 2006 to eventually fund this project. Mr. McCarl started the discussion by stating the road was in terrible condition and was used more than people realize. He asked Mr. Whitfield if he had information on the number of cars that use this street. Mr. Whitfield believes it is 3000 to 5000 cars a day.

After reviewing past CIP projects, Mr. Meyer noted that this project keeps getting deferred and added he thought this could wait. Mr. Kern agreed and added that this was a project that could be cut to save money. Mr. Daubert suggested that this project should wait until the State College School District decides on their plans for the high school building.

Mr. Fontaine stated the project can be deferred for the 2006 CIP but money should be reserved now. If it is not funded this year there could be problems in the future with funding this project. Mr. Whitfield added that each year this project gets deferred, the condition of the road continues to get worse. Deferring the project would only make it worse for future taxpayers. Mr. Whitfield agreed the project could wait until the design for the high school is complete but money needs to be earmarked now. Ms. Dauler agreed with Mr. Fontaine and Mr. Whitfield and added the need to plan for the completion of this project based on the plans for the high school.

Council decided the project should be delayed and money for this project should be kept in the prior authority for completion in the future.

Residential Streetlighting Project – Council agreed that staff should study the option of the Borough assuming responsibility for residential street lights to reduce long-range operating costs.

CBD Improvements Project – In prior discussions Council had questioned the cost of and need for a kiosk and plant brackets. Staff had recommended that this project be deferred until at least 2007 based upon Council's prior decision regarding the completion of State Theatre funding in 2006. It was also suggested that the need for the kiosk be studied.

There was a short discussion about the need for another kiosk and Ms. Dauler agreed there was a need but a smaller kiosk would most likely suffice. Mr. Kern suggested that consideration be given to the type and size of kiosk that is used on campus. Mr. Daubert felt there was a need for a kiosk on College Avenue.

Council agreed that this project could wait until after the Borough fulfilled the commitment to the State Theatre; that would move the project to 2007.

Bike Facility Improvements Project – Council had discussed in earlier meetings the need to have more bike racks in the downtown area along with the importance of having traffic signals at Foster Avenue and Atherton Street and also at McKee Street and Park Avenue.

Mr. Kern expressed his support of additional bike racks stating more people are using bikes and it should be convenient for these users to properly secure their bikes without having to use street signs and trees. Mr. Daubert stated his concern was where to locate the bike racks, adding they should be kept out of the way of pedestrian traffic.

Project Neighborhood Traffic Mitigation – Council discussed the need to have more money in 2006 for this project and the need for additional speed sensing devices.

Council agreed that speed sensing devices were better than speed bumps because the devices are mobile and accomplish the objective of slowing down drivers. Council expressed interest in purchasing more than just the one device.

Mr. Fontaine added that Chief King was unable to attend tonight's meeting because of a prior commitment but stated he and Chief King had talked about purchasing one device each year through the operating budget rather than the CIP. The plan was to continue to purchase one device each year until they have the inventory they want. Mr. Kern questioned if the operating budget could be changed to include six more speeding devices. Mr. Fontaine stated the Police Department had already completed its operating budget and six devices would be too many to implement at one time.

Mr. Fontaine also warned Council there could be a need to consider funding for studies when a study is requested by neighborhood groups. Council questioned what the cost of a study would be. Mr. Fontaine explained it would depend on the scope of the study but could cost \$27,000. Mr. Whitfield added that the majority of the cost of a study is used to gather data and the Borough does not currently have enough staff to collect the appropriate data.

Traffic Signal Improvements Project – Mr. McCarl stated he felt there was a need to have a signal at Blue Course Drive and Whitehall Road. Mr. Fontaine acknowledged this need but added there is the possibility this project would be completed by Penn DOT so Mr. Fontaine suggested this project be delayed until it is determined what is planned by Penn DOT.

Council did agree that an upgrade was needed at the intersection of South Atherton and Allen Streets and also endorsed the need for a signal study at Foster Avenue. Both should be completed in 2006.

Mr. Kern felt the Borough should have a reserve and be prepared to complete the project on Foster Avenue if the study warrants the need. He also added that Hamilton Avenue will become a concern when the development of the high school is complete.

Urban Village Improvements Project – Mr. Daubert felt strongly that something needed to be done for this neighborhood, like adding street signs, lighting and refuse containers. This area needed to be made an urban village and not a mess. Mr. Fontaine added that the Borough needs to get feedback from the citizens. Citizens have been asked for suggestions on where they feel lighting is needed and no one has come forward with suggestions. He also stated refuse containers are an ongoing operating cost and one which is not offered in any other area. Ms. Dauler agreed that the refuse containers are not feasible.

Mr. Daubert argued that street lighting was a safety concern and the lighting situation could be improved without input from citizens. Mr. McCarl suggested that maybe Council could do a walk through the neighborhood to decide where the lighting should be improved.

Next Council reviewed the Municipal Facilities Projects.

Municipal Building Maintenance Reserve – Council agreed that the keyless entry project did not fall under this funding and should be included in the operating budget for next year or be listed as a separate item for the CIP next year.

Generator Replacement Project – Council had a short discussion on why this project was so costly and if replacement was warranted.

The last project listed on the CIP that Council discussed was the New Aquatics Facility. Council determined that they would not be able to determine a figure due to the complexity of the project.

Mr. Daubert wanted to talk about the zoning ordinance rewrite since it was not listed in the CIP. Mr. Daubert did not feel comfortable handing over this project to someone who has no idea of the history or environment of State College. The Borough needed to have a say in the study and needed to have Borough employees working on the rewrite. Mr. Fontaine stated the consultant would not be doing this work independently. If the project were approved the Borough would start to develop a scope and try to secure grants within the next year. However land use goals would need to be decided. Once that is done the Borough would be asking the consultants to bring in the latest and greatest zoning concepts and incorporate them into the goals for State College.

Ms. Goreham also reminded Council to again start thinking about the Eastern Inter Loop Project as COG was planning to discuss the project at an upcoming meeting. Ms. Goreham expressed the importance of making a decision on this project and moving forward. Mr. Daubert suggested adding this as an item to the agenda for the next work session.

Any Other Matter

Ms. Dauler commented on a letter that was in the Centre Daily Times which talked about the library. Ms. Dauler said it was a nice letter to read and it is nice to have the new library open.

Mr. Daubert also complimented the police department for their good efforts this past weekend during the Ohio State football game, saying the police did a great job.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:12 p.m. to an executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia S. Hanscom
Assistant Borough Secretary