

**Town Council Special Meeting and Workshop
Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2010**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm.

Roll Call

Councilors Breen, Armitage, Payne, Varney, and Rodden were present and answering roll call.

Councilors Chase and Pierce were absent.

**Item 1 Presentation by Bob Gerber, PE with Sebago Technics on his
(Workshop) findings regarding the coastal study of the FEMA preliminary
 maps.**

Amanda Stearns, Community Development Director, discussed the national mapping project. The preliminary maps were received by the Town in May of last year. There were dramatic changes to the mapping in towns such as Portland, South Portland and Cape Elizabeth. As a result Bob Gerber was hired by a group of the affected communities to look at the preliminary mapping produced by FEMA and come back to the municipalities with his feedback as to whether the methodologies used by FEMA were correct. Falmouth did not fall into the category that FEMA felt required the new methodology. They have updated the Falmouth maps, including aerial photography, and updated the old contours to a 2 foot contour system. The base mapping is much more accurate, and the methodology used for Falmouth is the same as that used in 1985, the last update of the flood maps. The Town therefore asked Mr. Gerber to estimate the result of applying the new methodology to Falmouth.

Mr. Bob Gerber of Sebago Technics presented his findings. Falmouth was remapped but not recalculated, except in the Presumpscot River estuary. He found that, if the new methodology was used, the flood elevations would be higher for all six wave transects in Falmouth. He discussed in detail the methodology he used. He answered several questions from the Councilors.

Mrs. Stearns said the current flood maps are still in effect, the preliminary maps will probably be issued as the final maps sometime next summer after a lengthy review process. The new maps look very different because the scale is different.

**Item 2 Review of updated financial information and revised draft language
(Workshop) of a proposed November 2010 referendum question that will ask
 voters to approve and fund a project that will convert the Plummer-
 Motz and Lunt School property into a library, town hall and
 community center.**

Note: Formal Council approval of referendum language is required and will be scheduled at a later date.

Councilor Breen, Chair of the Facilities Committee, presented a history of local facility projects in Town, including the police station, the open space project and the Community Facility Committee. She discussed the advantages of creating a Town Center at the Plummer-Motz/Lunt site as well as the needs of the current buildings if they were to be retained. She spoke about the community center and the need for meeting/program space. The residential area grew up around Plummer-Motz-Lunt schools, so keeping this property in public use would be consistent with the area. She didn't want to see these buildings standing empty after June 2011. She spoke about the old high school in Brunswick, which stood vacant for 14 years, with an additional 7 years of partial use. The cost to the taxpayers to maintain that school for 14 years was \$3 million. She said the estimate to keep the Falmouth schools vacant was \$120,000/year. She handed out binders of information to the Council.

Nathan Poore, Town Manager, and Theo Holtwijk, Director of Long-range Planning presented the updated numbers for the Committee's recommended plan. The estimated renovation cost for the Lunt School, Plummer School and Mason Gymnasium/Motz Wing, including "soft costs", is approximately \$10.5 million. The estimate for the sale of town properties, including the Town Hall, Library and the Pleasant Hill Fire Station is \$4.15 million. With other funding anticipated from a Library fundraising campaign, capital reserves and potentially the undesignated fund balance, the anticipated total bond would be just above \$5 million. Including increased operating costs for the larger buildings, the result would be a tax increase of \$27.85 per \$100,000, which number was averaged over the 20 years' life of the bond.

Nathan Poore presented 10 other development options, including selling the Plummer-Motz-Lunt site; splitting the Plummer-Motz-Lunt site for various uses, including a mix of public and private development; and the committee's original recommendation. Each option included several variations, and the anticipated tax rate impact.

Councilor Varney asked about the trail system. Theo Holtwijk spoke about the encumbrance on that property and the possible costs associated with converting that encumbrance to another town-owned property. Councilor Armitage asked if that cost had been factored into the calculations, but Mr. Holtwijk said there may be no costs involved, they don't know yet. Mr. Poore said this is an issue with every development option.

The Council discussed their views on the proposal. Councilor Armitage thought there should be a better way to accomplish the committee's goals without spending so much money. Councilor Varney said everyone she has talked to thought the town should not spend the money right now. Councilor Rodden felt they should look at the big picture; the people she has talked to really support this. Councilor Payne was disappointed that the numbers have changed since May, and that they are big changes. He was concerned with adding long-term operating costs since he believed that state debt would eventually fall to property owners. Councilor Breen said this has been a center for decades, so this

plan would not create a new center, but maintain one. She thought the people who can't afford to join a private club would most benefit from a community center.

Councilor Payne announced that a public hearing on this issue will be held on August 23 with Council action scheduled for September 13. They might also schedule something between those two dates to nail down a number.

Mr. Poore asked which of the many options presented tonight should carry forward to the public hearing. The Council discussed which options they would like to see at the public hearing.

Chantal Walker of the Falmouth Library Board of Trustees said the Board voted unanimously to support a move to Lunt. She spoke about the uses at the Library and the current difficulty accommodating all the people who want to use it. In answer to Councilor Rodden's question, Ms. Walker said that, if they don't move to Lunt, they need more space and they have to find the best way to do that. Councilor Rodden asked staff to meet with Library representatives to determine the best scenario for the Library if they don't move to Lunt.

Councilor Rodden left the meeting.

Item 3 Order to adopt an amendment to parking restrictions along Woodville Road.

Councilor Armitage moved to adopt the amendment; Councilor Breen seconded.

There was no public comment.

Motion carried 4-0.

Item 4 Discussion about future Council agendas.

Mr. Poore spoke about the upcoming Council meetings.

Adjourn

Councilor Armitage moved to adjourn; Councilor Varney seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Meeting adjourned 10:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Melissa Tryon
Recording Secretary