



**Board of Selectmen
Minutes
Tuesday, October 6, 2015 at 6:00pm
Hapgood Meeting Room**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00PM by Chair, Ron Ricci in the Hapgood Meeting Room. Selectmen Lucy Wallace, Leo Blair and Ken Swanton were in attendance as well as Town Administrator Tim Bragan. Executive Assistant Julie Doucet entered the meeting at 7:00pm.

Appointments

On a Wallace/Blair motion, the board voted unanimously to appoint Jared Aponte as Assistant Assessor, Peter Dumont as COA Program Coordinator and Seth Saulnier to the Ambulance squad.

Minutes

On a Wallace/Swanton motion, the board voted unanimously to approve the 9/22, as presented.

Sklar entered the meeting at 7:10.

Capital Budget reviews

Police Department - Police Cruiser

Bragan reviewed this request as Chief Denmark was unable to attend. Bragan explained the purchase of a new cruiser for \$34,213 was expected. They continue to upgrade the fleet in phases. Denmark's proactive plan replaces aging vehicles one at a time, before their useful lifespan expires. Bragan explained that the Capital Planning & Investment Committee and Finance Committee agreed the replacement cycle makes funding for the cruisers a recurring expense as well as a capital request and that it should be a budget line item on the Town Meeting warrant.

Fire Department

Chief Rick Sicard was present to review his requests.

Refurbish/Expand Central Fire Station

Sicard indicated the fire station refurbish/expand is the same request as in years past. The ultimate goal is to get all our equipment into one building. Currently, the antique truck is kept at the Still River station so they would need to decide if it would stay there or be moved. If a fire engine is kept in Still River, the building would have to remain heated. Ricci asked for the cost associated with heating that station. Leo Blair assumes the study associated with this request will help to determine the fleet size necessary which will be the driver for what type of facility we need.

Replace fire alarm system with radio controlled master boxes

Sicard explained the boxes are how fire alarms are transmitted to the regional dispatch center. The system in place now is sixty years old and has worked well however it is a hardwired system within the town which cannot be monitored 24/7 by regional dispatch. Calls have to be

converted to a wireless system to be sent to regional dispatch. This request would convert the system to radio boxes which would be wireless and enable 24/7 monitoring by regional dispatch. He said there are thirteen boxes of which he is requesting six be replaced this year and seven next year. He has applied for a grant to fund the purchase. Sicard said once the system is in place it can be opened up to business owners and eventually to residences which would create a revenue stream.

Feasibility Study on refurbishment/expansion of Central Fire Station

Sicard explained this is necessary step in the process and will also give us an accurate cost estimation of the proposed project.

Replace 2009 Ford Explorer Command Car

Sicard said the vehicle has 75,000 miles and is 10 years old.

He expects the Fire Station repairs to begin by the third week in October.

Town Administrator report

Bragan reported all capital budgets have been submitted. The committee is awaiting feedback from the Selectmen.

The finance budget material has been distributed and are due back by November 1st. The Selectmen will review at their second meeting in November.

Bragan told the board the Mass Municipal Association is holding their regional update meetings. The closest one to us is on October 16th in Concord. If anyone wants to attend they should let him know.

Bragan reported the recent lighting storm hit the Wastewater Treatment Plant. A leg was tripped on the main pole. National Grid was able to come out and make the repair. He said there was also a problem with the generator but that has been fixed.

Ayer Road traffic engineering study

Sklar and Ricci met with Mass DOT. They learned we can make changes on Ayer Road without DOT approval but they did suggest plans be run by their traffic engineer. Ricci supports the study because we need for more information to proceed. He noted if the state does the study we will be waiting four to five years, the project will be more extensive and we will still have to fund part of the cost. They will seek public input once they receive the feedback from the consultant. Sklar made a motion seconded by Wallace to authorize \$15,500 for a traffic study. Wallace is interested in what other Chapter 90 projects will be affected. After further discussion the board voted to fund the study with Chapter 90 funds. On a Sklar/Wallace motion, the board voted to use \$15,500 of Chapter 90 funds for a traffic study. (4-1 vote, Blair – opposed)

Board of Selectmen policy change

Leo Blair asked the board to consider revising the section within their policies related to advisory committees allowing board members to serve on the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Bragan drafted suggested language. Blair and Wallace will finalize the change for the board to discuss and vote on at their next meeting.

Right of First Refusal - Bolton Road Chapter Land

Bragan confirmed the Conservation Commission and Conservation Trust do not have any interest in the 11.3 acres located on Bolton Road. The Planning Board had no comment on the property. On a Swanton/Wallace motion, the board voted unanimously to waiving their right of first refusal.

Selectmen reports

Ken Swanton reported the Capital Planning & Investment Committee is preparing for its review- and looks forward to input provide by the Board of Selectmen.

Review of goals

Ron Ricci took a few moments to review goals coming up over the next couple of months.

Bragan was able to speak to a few of them noting the IT needs are being addressed which will likely include replacement of the server.

Bragan has been working on the review of reserved funds available and will have a full report at the first meeting in November.

Bragan said he has a few ideas on how to address maintenance of town buildings including possibly redefining a position held in the public works department. He will present options in November.

Bragan is working with the Moderator to finalize a working group to investigate a possible change to a Town Manager style of government.

**** On a Blair motion, the Board voted unanimously by a roll call vote:

(Ricci –Aye, Sklar – Aye, Swanton – Aye, Wallace - Aye) to enter into executive session at 7:15pm, as authorized by Chapter 30A, Section 21.6 of the Massachusetts General Laws, at a meeting for which 48-hours' notice has been given, to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property if the chair declares that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body. Following the executive session, the Board will reconvene into open session. ****

Use of Upper Town Hall Public Input Session

Ron Ricci asked Town Administrator Tim Bragan to begin the discussion by giving a brief overview of how we got here and what is currently happening with the renovation.

Bragan said after the approval of option 1B at the fall town meeting last year the construction was able to begin this spring. He noted much of the work began with interior demolition but now everyone is really beginning to see the changes with all the exterior work going on. He reported some small structural items are being addressed but overall the project is going well and is on schedule. He noted the only change has been to the office space on the first floor. To accommodate fitting all the offices on the first floor the land use area and the Town Administrator, Asst. Town Administrator and Executive Assistant offices were swapped.

On the second floor, Bragan stated the stage was demolished and a new wall was put up. Doors are ready to be installed, rough plumbing has been completed for the bathrooms and the wall for the small conference room has been framed. He expects the lift to be installed within the next couple of weeks.

They have investigated many options to make the space as functional as possible and moveable partitions have always been part of the plan. At this point in the project, he said it is time for the board to seek input from the public on what they may envision for use of this space.

Ron Ricci then invited members of the public to offer their opinions and/or suggestions.

Noyan Kinayman, 92 Slough Road, said he is not against the idea of moving the school administration offices to the second floor. He wondered why they would want to move there. Would it be a better use for the space? Should they consider organizing the old library for public meeting space?

Ricci explained the School Committee voted at their last meeting to not use the second floor of Town Hall for office space. Lucy Wallace reported Town Hall Construction Committee Chair Rick Maiore was able to use a sketch of the space they required and there was a space limitation issue.

Sharon McCarthy, 90 East Bare Hill Road, said a lot of work has been done to meet the budget but not much work has been done on what was left on the cutting room floor. What needs will not be met by the current renovation plans? She urged the board to leave the second floor as a blank slate until a full needs assessment can be done so an informed decision can be made on what the best use is. She does not believe buying partitions is a good idea. Why spend the money without thinking about the ultimate use of the space. Her advice is to leave the space open, evaluate the needs and find creative ways to use the space.

Paul Green, 288 Old Littleton Road, agrees with McCarthy. Let's wait and see. It is short money to purchase chairs, tables and partitions, there is no rush. First we need to get a feel for what is built before making any more decisions.

Peter Warren, 52 Lancaster County Road, is very pleased where the project is headed. He drew comparison with the very similar renovation being done in the town of Wolfeboro, NH. He said it is quite amazing how alike the questions and debates are in each community. He talked about past uses of the Wolfeboro Town Hall which even included a movie theatre. He said they are moving back into their Town Hall now and have a grand opening scheduled for November 7th. In fact, the work done has really drawn quite a bit of interest to the space and they have already received many requests for use of the second floor. Even their farmers market would like to use the space one a week through the winter months. He came to put the Selectmen on notice that they really need to start thinking about establishing rules and regulations for use of the second floor space. He suggested they do it sooner rather than later. He thought the recent article in the Harvard Press was interesting and had some good suggestions. He hopes an open house will be held once the renovation is complete.

Pat White, 162 East Bare Hill Road, favors keeping the space open allowing for different uses. She wants to have the staff move in and give it some time before any final decisions are made.

Laura Vilain, 3 Oak Hill Road, wishes to keep the space open. She said there is a literary series that has no home and wondered if this space could work. Is a one-day liquor license allowable in the space? Bragan answered yes. Vilain also mentioned a storytelling festival that could use the space as well. She believes having a location for large groups of people to access will bring revenue to the town along with showcasing the town and the people.

Billy Salter, 3 Elm Street, has been in town for a long time and remembers many of the events held on the second floor in years past. He thought throughout the process having town government in Town Hall was the central theme. He said when the proposed addition was removed from the project now in fact there is much less space in Town Hall. He said with the law of physics it does not make sense with less space and the same stuff there will be enough room. He is skeptical this plan will enable town government to function effectively.

Leo Blair said there are physical measurements to indicate there is not less space. He offered to send the data to Salter.

Paul Richards, 63 Westcott Road, began by stating great things can happen at Town Hall. The idea for town government at town hall is unclear to him. He sees a big meeting room but not appropriate meeting space. He heard the Finance Director say recently at a Finance Committee meeting the offices will be smaller once the renovation is complete. He said it remains to be seen what will happen with the space, how it will function, if there will be sound issues and what challenges there will be to make the space comfortable for smaller groups. Richards expects it will cost a lot of money to divide the space up into usable spaces. He said movable partitions are basically sight dividers that will not help with sound. He does not want the board to forget what the town has said and the data driven studies indicated the public wants to keep their buildings, stay in the town center and in the Town Hall building. He suggested a new MBC type committee

be established to evaluate the connection of all the buildings. This will keep the dialogue going and could be done with smaller working groups. He also urged the board to focus on attaining a facility manager to maintain our buildings. Richards wants to wait on the audio visual and focus more on the sound quality of the room.

Noyan Kinayman, 92 Slough Road, asked if there was enough separation for two public meetings to be held at the same time and if there is an ability to secure the first floor while meetings occur upstairs. Bragan answered yes.

Paul Richards, 63 Westcott Road, asked what decisions need to be made now. Ken Swanton clarified any decisions needed are related to overcoming acoustic and audio visual challenges of a big space. He does not want to look back and wish we had made a few of these decisions sooner. He and building committee member Al Combs have discussed this and came up with another idea of maybe using fabric on the walls such as hanging quilts to help with sound deadening.

Leo Blair heard the public's interest in leaving the large space open and continue on the path of creating meeting space there. He said the right use is yet to be determined. He added the budget is not as tight as Richards thinks. He anticipates there will be funds available if needed. Richards said it is hard to future proof the room and he does not want any money wasted on items which will not be of good use.

Carlene Philips, Oak Hill Road, said on any given night at least two town government meetings are being held in town so maybe it would be helpful to plot out who meets when and where.

Libby Levison, 15 Old Shirley Road, is not sure Town Hall is the answer to accommodate all meetings. She has been told there are other meeting spaces in town but admits she is not entirely sure where they are. She knows Hildreth House is used for meeting space. She said maybe it would be a good idea to take an inventory of the meeting spaces we do have along with a list of meetings held.

Blair pointed out before there was only one single meeting room at Town Hall and now there will be one large room and one smaller room.

Meg Bagdonas, South Shaker Road, asked if the town had received feedback from other communities who had been through a similar renovation project to find out what lessons they learned.

Ken Swanton (speaking as a resident), 14 Fairbank Street, said he is concerned about the acoustics in a room of this size. He distributed copies of a possible plan for the second floor. His goal for the room is to support both big community events and be workable for meetings with minimal change to the current plan or cost impact. His drawing included movable partitions on wheels, area rugs along with projector and camera locations. His suggestions will help with sound and give some direction on where to run conduits.

Rick Maiore, Town Hall & Hildreth House Construction Committee Chair, said with respect to the budget, luckily we are in good shape with the contingencies. He is encouraged there will be funds available for us to achieve our primary goal. He agrees this is a good time to come to a consensus on where we may be going until a permanent use is decided. He also mentioned there will be two new meeting rooms in the Hildreth House once that renovation project is completed. He said Swanton's proposal will help us to get where we need to go.

Paul Richards, 63 Westcott Road, asked if Swanton consulted with professionals. Swanton as a professional in this industry himself did consult with others.

Ron Ricci assured the public their input is imperative as the board tries to decide the best use of the space that will satisfy most people. He thanked those who offered their opinions adding it is obvious the consensus is to leave the space open so it can be as flexible as possible. He is hopeful the board has enough information to make the right decision for the town. The board will digest what they heard tonight and have a follow up discussion at their next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm.

Documents referenced:

Appointments - Aponte & Dumont resumes

Capital budget review – Police dated 9.22.2015 & Fire dated 9.24.2015

Ayer Road Traffic Study – scope & estimate dated 9.21.2015

BOS policy changed – draft dated 10.01.2015

Case Chapter Land – Notice of intent dated 9.14.2015