

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Capital Improvements Program Committee
Meeting – July 2, 2013
Swanzey Town Hall, 620 Old Homestead Highway, Swanzey, NH

Present were Jeff Goller, Bruce Bohannon, Francis Faulkner, Steve Bittel, Charlie Sheaff, and Dave Osgood. Larry Crowder was unable to attend. Also present was Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

Introduction

Being the first meeting of the newly reformed Committee, members and O’Keefe introduced themselves to one another.

New Business

O’Keefe mentioned the charge for the Committee by the Board of Selectmen, which is to analyze and make recommendations on space requirements and building conditions of various Town departments. He suggested that the Committee discuss how best to 1) review existing facility conditions, 2) determine programmatic needs, 3) determine adequacy of facilities & pinpoint deficiencies, 4) develop & prioritize alternatives, and 4) develop costs and schedules. He also suggested that Committee members may have other suggestions.

Faulkner mentioned that he was aware that another Town up north recently went through such an exercise. It was suggested that Departments could generate a list of needs. It was also suggested that the Committee consider only critical facilities and O’Keefe was asked for a list of Town facilities. He provided the Committee with a list of insured properties and the Committee determined that the facilities needing consideration were as follows:

- Town Hall
- DPW Garage
- Police Station
- Fire stations (3)
- Recycling Center

It was determined that the Committee should get a list from departments of facility needs, and identify items that have special characteristics that should be prioritized.

It was suggested that the Town try to create savings in any new construction.

Bittel suggested that the Committee scope out a project so that it is actually doable.

Recent opportunities for alternative sites for some of the Town facilities were discussed as follows:

- Keene Tree Service building on Railroad/Prospect Street. The Town was contacted by the owner of this building of its availability in the fall. O'Keefe and DPW Director Lee Dunham have toured the building. It could prove to be a good replacement facility for the DPW or possibly another department.
- US Postal Service building on Old Homestead Highway. There is approximately 1,300 square feet available in this building, potentially for some Town Hall functions. There is several thousand dollars of fit-up to do this
- Homestead Woolen Mill. The office building and the old gas station are available and could be reused for various Town department uses. The mill portion of the facility is enormous.
- Hackler Site (30 acres) on Old Homestead Avenue. This property in on the market and could be used for any number of municipal facilities

The Committee members agreed that a spreadsheet should be developed that allows departments to list required, needed and desired features of facilities, and to list shortcomings of existing facilities. The Committee wants to determine if departments are operationally impaired by their existing facilities. Departments should also list potential funding sources for capital projects. The draft spreadsheet should be distributed to the Committee first for review.

Meeting Dates

It was decided that meetings should be held on Mondays at 5:00 p.m. on an as-needed basis

Site Visits

The Committee members decided to visit the above-listed facilities as soon as possible. It was decided to meet as follows:

- Wednesday, July 10 – Department of Public Works, Recycling Center and Police Department
- Thursday, July 11 – West Fire Station East Fire Station, Center Station, Town Hall

At 5:20 p.m., Sheaff **moved** to continue the meeting to July 10, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. at the Department of Public Works Garage at 98 Pine Street. Faulkner seconded the motion. The **motion passed** with all in favor.

RECONVENE ON July 10, 2013

The Committee reconvened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. on July 10, 2013 at the Department of Public Works Garage at 98 Pine Street. Present were Committee members Goller, Bohannon, Faulkner, Bittel, and Sheaff. Larry Crowder was unable to attend. Also present was Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe and Public Works Director Lee Dunham.

Dunham gave the Committee a tour of the facility. He explained that the Department

has 8 full-time employees with 3 people offering summer help and 1 person for winter help.

He explained that the facility is cramped for space, and they can't mount plows indoors. While trucks with plows can be stored indoors, it requires other vehicles to be moved outside. The grader is kept outdoors all of the time.

For vehicles, the Department has:

- (2) F350 pickups (one stays with Dunham)
- (3) F550 1+-ton trucks (4WD), 2 for the DPW and 1 for Cemeteries
- (4) International 5-ton 6-wheel trucks (8 CY capacity)
- F150 pickup for cemeteries
- Sidewalk tractor, with mower & broom
- Grader
- Loader
- Backhoe

He explained that it would be better to have better separation between office, maintenance and vehicle bay areas. He mentioned that staff does basic vehicle maintenance, but during warranty periods vehicles are maintained at authorized repair facilities.

Osgood arrived at 1:25 p.m.

The Cemetery Shed at the site is relatively new, is unheated, and contains an open trailer, a pickup truck, a vacuum trailer, and a one-ton dump truck.

The Salt Shed is 28' X 40', and was built sometime in the 1970's. It holds 340 tons of salt and the Town uses approximately 38 tons of salt per storm and 1,000 tons per winter. Dunham desires a replacement shed with 1,000 ton capacity and will get back to the Committee how large a building must be to accommodate this capacity. He said that a dual sand/salt storage facility is desirable.

He also said that a separate sign storage facility would be desirable.

It was mentioned that the garage behind Whitcomb Hall contains barricades, cement mixer, a shoulder machine, and a roller on a trailer.

Faulkner brought up the idea of a separate recreation office area.

At 2:10 p.m. the Committee members and O'Keefe left Dunham and the Public Works facility and travelled across the street to the Recycling Center at 97 Pine Street, and were met by Solid Waste Manager Bob Osterhout.

Osterhout gave the Committee a tour of the facility. He explained that the main building is tight for storage. There is a very small office and small bathroom, and no break area for employees. The roof has developed a leak and grommets and screws need work, but the structure and insulation are in acceptable condition.

There was a request to receive a copy of the Recycling Center expansion plans from 2008.

Osterhout stated that priorities for the facility are the roof and aesthetics, and a new bobcat is needed as soon as possible. He said that he can't operate as efficiently as desired given the existing conditions.

At 2:45 p.m. the Committee members and O'Keefe left the recycling Facility and travelled to the Police Department at 34 Eaton Road, and were met by Police Chief Tom DeAngelis.

DeAngelis gave the Committee a tour of the Police Department facilities. He handed out a prepared list of facility needs, wants, safety issues and pros/cons, which is included as an attachment to these minutes. He stated that the facility lacks sufficient space as the Department had 7 officers when the facility was first built and presently has 12 officers, one administrative staff member, and the Emergency Management Director's office. The facility is in desperate need of insulation and soundproofing, and there is a mold problem in the garage/sally port. The parking area to the rear has an ice buildup problem in the winter. There also are access compliance issues at the front entrance.

Faulkner mentioned that he had a set of plans for the facility.

At 3:40 p.m., Sheaff **moved** to continue the meeting to July 11, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. at the West Swanzey Fire House at 34 Main Street. Faulkner seconded the motion. The **motion passed** with all in favor.

RECONVENE ON July 11, 2013

The Committee reconvened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. on July 11, 2013 at the West Swanzey Fire Station at 34 Main Street. Present were Committee members Goller, Bohannon, Faulkner, Bittel, Sheaff, and Osgood. Larry Crowder was unable to attend. Also present was Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe, Fire Chief Norm Skantze and Fire Inspector Eric Mattson.

Skantze gave the Committee an overview of the three fire stations. He said that, at a minimum, each station has one medical vehicle, one engine and one specialty vehicle, and each has a locker area for firefighters. All facilities are old and overcrowded, he said, and all bays are full at each station. New vehicles have to be ordered to fit the constraints of the buildings. He stated that the Department is at a tipping point, as each station needs to be upgraded, but posed the question of whether it wise to upgrade older buildings, or consider new facilities possibly at other locations, and even consolidations?

He gave a tour of the West Swanzey Station, mentioning that it was the largest of the three stations. He mentioned that the building and two bays were built in the 1940's and a third bay constructed in the 1980's to accommodate a larger truck. It has the two tallest bays. It was noted that the building has a new alarm system and that a new boiler is needed.

Bohannon asked about his biggest departmental priority and Skantze replied that he needs a consultant to look at all Town fire facilities and their locations. Regarding the West Swanzey Station, he noted that it is effectively on a dead-end road due to the Thompson Covered Bridge, and that ideally it should be on the west side of the river due to the frequency of calls from that area of town. Call volumes are highest in north and west Swanzey, and any new station must be accessible to call firefighters to be effective. He said that he feels that Department should be getting out of all the existing facilities, and that the Town should be open to all alternatives for existing or future facilities.

At 1:35 p.m. the Committee members, O'Keefe and Skantze travelled to the East Swanzey Fire Station at 204 South Road.

Skantze gave a tour of the East Swanzey Station, mentioning that it just recently had a new roof installed. There was further discussion of the needs of this station and the Department as a whole.

At 1:55 p.m. the Committee members, O'Keefe and Skantze travelled to the Swanzey Center Fire Station at 640 Old Homestead Highway.

Skantze gave a tour of the Swanzey Center Station. It was mentioned that the fire separation between the station and the Town Hall offices upstairs was inadequate, that there is no second means of egress and that a sprinkler system is required for the building.

At 2:45 p.m. the Committee members and O'Keefe walked upstairs to the Town Hall at 620 Old Homestead Highway.

O'Keefe gave a tour of Town Hall to the Committee. He stated that the Board of Selectman has decided that dealing with space and conditions at Town Hall is a priority.

He mentioned that a recent engineering study done for the facility estimated upwards of \$500,000 to bring the building up to code, as there are numerous structural and infrastructural deficiencies. Regarding space needs, he stated that there is not enough office space for intended or future staff levels, there is no private meeting space, that the Board meeting room is adequate for larger meetings, and there is no break room for staff. In addition, there is no dedicated climate-controlled room for information technology equipment, and inadequate storage area. O'Keefe described some of the statutory requirements for long-term document storage and mentioned that storage in the Town Hall attic must be eliminated soon due to structural concerns.

Election of Officers

Faulkner ***moved*** to elect David Osgood as Chair of the Committee, and Bittel seconded the motion. All were in favor and the ***motion passed***.

Other Business

The Committee again discussed some of the alternative sites for Town facilities that had been discussed earlier. It was agreed all around that it is important to bring the right recommendations forward to the Selectmen. It was decided to visit the Keene Tree Service facility and O'Keefe was asked to make arrangements.

At 3:30 p.m., Sheaff ***moved*** to continue the meeting to July 15, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. at Keene Tree Service at 33 Prospect Street. Goller seconded the motion. The ***motion passed*** with all in favor.

RECONVENE ON July 15, 2013

Chair Osgood reconvened the meeting at 5:00 p.m. on July 15, 2013 at Keene Tree Service at 33 Prospect Street. Present were Committee members Goller, Bohannon, Faulkner, Bittel, Sheaff, and Osgood. Larry Crowder was unable to attend. Also present was Selectman Deborah Davis, Town Administrator Shane O'Keefe, Public Works Director Lee Dunham, and property Owner Winn Johnson.

Johnson gave those present a tour of the facilities, explaining details for the buildings and mentioning he was hoping that the Town would be interested in acquiring the site from him. The office building, built around 1984, includes two heated bays with 12' x 12' doors, and the garage building, built around 1990, includes 10 bays, 2 heated, 50' deep with 14' x 14' doors. While garage unheated, the bays have southerly exposure and translucent doors allowing for solar heating.

Dunham was asked about whether the Public Works Department would realize any savings were it to move into this facility. He mentioned that while it would be easier to hook and unhook plows, maintain vehicles and would add some longevity to equipment such as the grader due to their being under cover, there might not be significant savings

to be found. He stated that it would allow for better all-around operations for the Department.

O'Keefe was asked to arrange for the property card and tax map be delivered to Bittel. There also was interest in getting copies of any site plans approved by the Planning Board.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion at 5:50 p.m. by Bohannon to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Sheaff. All were in favor. ***Motion passed.***

The next meeting is scheduled for July 19, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. at Swanzey Town Hall.

Submitted by,

Shane O'Keefe
Town Administrator

Approved on July 19, 2013.