

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Board of Selectmen
Meeting – November 24, 2014
Swanzey Police Station, 34 Eaton Road

CALL TO ORDER

Present were Selectmen W. William Hutwelker III, Debra J. Davis, and Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. The meeting was called to order by Chair Kenneth P. Colby, Jr. at 10:04 a.m. at the Swanzey Police Station. Also present was Town Administrator Shane O’Keefe and Fire Chief Norm Skantze.

OTHERS PRESENT

Architect Robert Mitchell of Robert Mitchell Associates, and Keene Sentinel Reporter Meghan Foley.

OLD BUSINESS

Proposed Safford Drive Fire Station

Colby opened the meeting by stating the Board’s goal at this time is to prepare for a bond hearing in January for a proposed new fire station on Safford Drive. He thanked architect Bob Mitchell for his efforts so far and for meeting with the Board.

Mitchell gave a brief presentation on his firm, the programming process for the Department and the proposed design of the Safford Drive facility. He noted his firm only designs emergency services facilities, and has designed over 150 fire stations. He noted that his firm, as subconsultant to Daniel V. Scully Architects, did the programming analysis which resulted in the definition and planning of spaces in the proposed Safford Drive facility. He noted that the Chief had suggested some reduction in space, and therefore cost, after reviewing an initial design. Reviewing design plans produced for the project, Mitchell reviewed with the Board the various spaces and zones within the proposed building.

He also discussed an activity schedule for the Town for educating the public about the proposal, and mentioned that he had done this for communities between 40 and 50 times.

Davis questioned housing emergency management functions within this facility. Skantze noted that the layout could easily accommodate an Emergency Operation Center, though there was no office for this in the present design.

There was further discussion about preparing for a bond hearing and eventual Town Meeting vote. Skantze stated that there seems to be good department support for the new facility.

O’Keefe noted that the bond hearing could be held as early as January 9, 2015, or as late as January 20, 2015, and at present the annual budget hearing is scheduled for January 13, 2015. He asked the Board whether there was a preference to hold the bond hearing at the same time as the budget hearing, or to have separate hearings

Colby noted that there is nothing etched in stone insofar as the Municipal Facilities Report prepared for the Capital Improvements Program Committee by Scully Architects is concerned. He said it was his feeling that that step one would be to move the fire station out of the basement of Town Hall. He noted that the Town has the property and a plan, and they need to freely and openly get information to the public.

Mitchell showed station designs from other locations. He noted that he builds in a 3% contingency when costing out projects, but noted that this amount is rarely used up. He said that he does not recommend a design-build process, but instead suggested that Town use a design-bid-build process. He said his firm would provide administrative project oversight but recommends that the Town hire a construction manager to oversee the project and take on the manners and means responsibilities. The role of the construction manager was further discussed.

Next there was discussion about the extent of the services needed by the Town, including purchase of furnishings, fixtures and equipment (FF&E), and it was noted that the Town can purchase some items under the State contract while contractors cannot. Mitchell said that some of the furniture is built-in in the designs he produces.

Hutwelker noted that the project has several challenges to overcome, such as leaving the Town Hall site, establishing a new location away from Swanze Center, and the fact that the proposed new station is two to three times larger than the existing facility and must be justified to the public.

Skantze noted that there are NFPA requirements, contaminant control and service growth realities that are driving the larger station size. He also noted that volunteer training requirements are standing in the way of sustained department growth, so a more accommodating facility can help with this concern. The proposed new facility would offer the opportunity to centralize equipment, training and departmental activities. He also noted that there is space in the building to accommodate public use and assembly.

Davis mentioned that the space for ambulances would likely be an issue for some. Mitchell noted that this space can easily be used for other purposes. Skantze stated that it would be irresponsible to build without planning for the future.

Colby mentioned the advantages for a new facility to be on municipal water and sewer. Hutwelker noted aspects of the proposed building exterior and pointed out the potential for solar panels on the roof. Mitchell described in detail the endurance qualities of the suggested exterior, and went on to discuss opportunities for energy efficiency and the possibility of a "net zero" energy building.

There was continued discussion about the process of preparing for a bond hearing, and the fact that there is very little time. Skantze stated that the Board should expect support for the project and not opposition, and that there should be an aggressive public information campaign.

Mitchell said that he would like to speak with representatives from Ingram Construction to get a better handle on how they generated the estimate of cost for the proposed facility. He also asked how he could be more helpful to the Board. Colby expressed his thanks for the assistance so far. He also raised whether the Board should use for this process the December 9 and December 23 public hearings already scheduled for acquisition of the Safford Drive property under RSA 41:14-a.

There was a brief discussion about the procurement process for Mitchell's services; whether to go through a solicitation process or a sole-source selection. O'Keefe noted that given Mitchell's expertise, the firm is likely to be considered most qualified under a Qualifications-Based Selection (QBS) process. Mitchell presented a draft contract to the Board for consideration, which is a standard American

Institute of Architecture contract, with refinements for the proposed project. It was decided to have the Town Attorney review the contract and comment in time for the Board's meeting the following day. Hutwelker stated that he would hand-deliver the proposed contract to the Town Attorney that day.

Colby stated that he was thankful that a member of the Press was in attendance to get the word out to the public on the project and the Board's process. Foley asked who would be the Press spokesperson for the project, and Colby stated that this would be discussed at the next meeting.

There was brief discussion about contractual matters with the architect. Mitchell said he would put together an addendum for contractual work taking place prior to a Town Meeting vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Hutwelker, second by Davis. No further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.** Adjournment occurred at 11:09 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shane O'Keefe, Town Administrator

Approved on December 2, 2014.