

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Municipal Facilities Review Committee
Meeting Minutes – June 22, 2015

Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Municipal Facilities Review Committee was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairman Don Skiba.

Committee Members Present: Chair Skiba, Charlie Sheaff, Wally Smith, Glenn Page, Steve Bittel, Scott Self and Director of Planning and Community Development Sara Carbonneau.

Absent: Keith Thibault

Others Present: Resident Rebecca Hays

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes: Minutes of June 8, 2015 were considered. Bittel **moved** to accept the minutes of June 8, 2015, seconded by Smith and all were in favor except Carbonneau who abstained. ***Motion passed.***

Discussion:

Impact on Swanzey of Auction Sale of Homestead Woolen Mill

A brief discussion occurred regarding the recent sale of the Homestead Woolen Mill. Carbonneau said the new owner has come into Town Hall regarding back taxes. They had not been aware that at one point the mill was being considered for Town Hall and Police Department. She said she provided copies to them of the Plan NH Charrette and the Scully report. They indicated that they were meeting with architect Dan Scully.

Report for Town Hall

Bittel pointed out that analyzing what can be done with the current Town Hall building is the first issue. Page agreed that if you add space from downstairs, the current building is viable. He also pointed out that the structure could be reinforced and be considered safe without the weight of attic storage or a slate roof.

Skiba passed out copies of the report from Thibault regarding Town Hall. Thibault wrote that he thought the current Town Hall is viable with removal of the Fire Station from the facility. Self asked what the State would say about the current Fire Station. Skiba spoke about fumes from the engines being a problem and Sheaff interjected that the area has no fire sprinklers and there is no fire separation between the engines and the occupied second floor. Bittel said he was in favor of salvaging the current building if possible. Self said the building is basically sound, and adding braces that should have been done originally would increase the strength of the building. The joints are bolted together. Discussion continued about bracing and adding bolts. Self said the slate on the roof is about 5 pounds per square foot. Skiba said the slate could be sold if the Selectmen decided to replace it with something lighter, but Self said with bracing, the slate could remain.

Carbonneau noted there would be need for an elevator between upstairs and downstairs to be handicapped accessible. She said you cannot require a disabled person to go outside a building to get downstairs in a building. Skiba said there would be an extra cost for an elevator because of the construction needed to support it would exceed the cost of the elevator.

Bittel asked about getting cost figures from a contractor. Skiba said the committee isn't authorized to get numbers but we could make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen to do so. Self said that it probably is fairly easy to divide up the downstairs space into office spaces. Skiba suggested that the meeting area be moved below leaving the vacated space for offices. Discussion continued about weight-bearing walls. Discussion occurred about closed offices, versus cubical space.

Carbonneau mentioned energy efficiency needs to be addressed, as well as space for the public to wait to be served by the Town Clerk and Tax Collector. Security, ventilation, heating, windows, and waiting area need to be addressed said Carbonneau.

Motion was made by Sheaff that the committee recommend to the Board of Selectmen that they approve asking for cost estimates to renovate the building assuming the Fire Department will be moved out of the building. There was a second by Page. Discussion: All the recommendations made by the committee will be put into one report. There could be two-phase construction, allowing work to be done downstairs without disturbing the current work in Town Hall. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Fire Department Report

Page informed the committee of the research done for moving the Fire Department out of the Town Hall building and he noted that any currently available rented building will require major renovation for use as a fire station. He also noted that it might be unwise to renovate a rental building. Thomas Real Estate owns a hangar at the airport that could be used, but it needs doors on the street to accommodate fire engines. Currently the large doors face the airport tarmac. Page indicated that the modification could cost as much as a quarter of a million dollars.

Page said that another idea would be to scale back the Mitchell Associates fire station and put up a basic fire station with five 20 X 80 bays. He suggested to eliminate the ambulance bays on the end and keep five bays and made them 80 feet deep, create a single wall with a turnout room, eliminate bunkroom, maintain the meeting room and offices, and site it properly so that it could be added to in the future, when the need arises. With that costed out the cost should be less than \$4.5 million for the original design. He suggested that the committee present this idea, along with renovation of the Town Hall to the Board of Selectmen, and subsequently to the voters in March of 2016. Skiba spoke about investigating a steel building built as a fire station. Sheaff said that in addition to doors opening in the wrong direction for us as a fire station, another concern about a hangar at the airport is there is no parking there. Sheaff also noted that Thomas Real Estate wants to sell the airport hangar for \$60,000, but a complication is that the land is leased from the City of Keene.

Carbonneau said that some of the concern of citizens regarding the vote on the original fire station design was the location. Another comment was about the possibility of a two story building for both fire and police. Bittel said that the proposed space (on Safford Drive) does not have enough space for parking for two departments. Also, the land is surrounded by wetlands. He pointed out the Police Department needs extra storage and parking space which could not be accommodated and still have room to accommodate additional space for the Fire Department in the future. Self said he thought the idea should be considered even with the space restrictions.

Motion was made by Page to recommend to the Board of Selectmen a plan for the Fire Station, using the Mitchell Associates plan but eliminate the bunk room, the day room, and four ambulance bays, and associated lavatories, eliminate the mezzanine, move the decontamination room, the janitor closet, and SCBA fill room and put the building footprint in the same space, so that if the need arises in the future,

there will still be room for an addition, and to investigate different architectural structures including a metal frame building. There was a second by Sheaff. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Report for Police Department

Sheaff and Smith met with Police Chief Tom DeAngelis who said that squaring off the building in the back as an addition to the existing building would serve his needs into the future. Sheaff said he and Smith examined the back of the building lot, and the land is not as steep as had been indicated. He said pushing the parking lot back would be feasible in order to make room for expansion of the building at back. Smith said that DeAngelis said that the building isn't partitioned as it should be.

There was discussion about Emergency Management and whether or not that office would remain in the Police Department building or at a new fire station. Sheaff said that Emergency Management could be maintained at the Police Station. Sheaff spoke about a possible combined Fire and Police Station and said that DeAngelis said he would be in favor of a combined facility. Skiba noted that the Fire Chief would not be happy about a combined station. Sheaff noted that combined Fire and Police Stations are built for economies of scale but it has been his experience that the two departments keep locked doors between them when they share a building. Smith mentioned that the Police Department has a new roof and Sheaff said that renovations are occurring over time to correct some of the problems they have had.

Self made a **motion** to recommend to the Board of Selectmen to investigate the possibility of building an addition to the Police Department to meet the needs for the next 5 or 10 years. Page seconded the motion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Report for Recycling Center

Bittel passed out a cost analysis model for these facilities. Bittel spoke about discussion with Manager of the Recycling Center Bob Osterhout about reducing some of the labor costs, addressing a leaky roof and some electrical problems. Page noted that for less than \$100,000 the needed repairs could be made. Bittel noted that the Recycling Center has a revolving fund which gets money each year. They have a capital reserve as well. The idea is to extend the service life for 5 to 10 years to anticipate a new structure in the future. Discussion continued and Osterhout said that a new center could reduce labor costs, which is money that could go for capital costs. Bittel also mentioned that the revolving fund may be adequate in a few years to cover the cost of a new Recycling center. Bittel said given money in the Recycling Center for repairs, a new Recycling Center could be delayed. Bittel did suggest that acquisition of land might be in order.

Carbonneau asked about separate men and women's bathrooms and the small office space for Osterhout. She suggested that a small addition might be considered now. Bittel said that the Recycling Center has \$63,000 in capital reserve. A trailer was discussed or a pre-fabrication building. Skiba said Osterhout mentioned a clear-span building as a possibility which would be low cost and benefit towns-people. With this kind of building more folks might recycle since their vehicles would enter the building and be covered during inclement weather.

Sheaff made a **motion** to recommend to the Board of Selectmen to hire a design/build contractor to address the electrical and structural and lavatory needs of the Recycling Center and to use the capital reserve fund to repair the existing facility to meet the needs for the next 5 years, and revisit at that time. There was a second by Smith. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Report for Public Works

Skiba spoke about discussion with Public Works Director Lee Dunham, who says his first priority is salt coverage for 1500 tons of salt for use during the winter. Discussion was held about a clear-span building for additional storage. Discussion was held about the possibility of leasing space from Keene Tree for some of the equipment. It was noted that Dunham will lose storage area at Whitcomb Hall. Storage need for 65 X 75 foot building. He has \$121,000 in his capital reserve. It was stressed again that Dunham's priority is a salt shed. Bittel also said that if there is a separate office area, then Dunham doesn't have to heat the truck barn, which could save several thousands of dollars. A pre-fab building would work to solve the office problem and restroom need. It would be used as breakroom, restroom, and office. And the existing office space would be used for storage. Bittel also mentioned that Dunham said he has a leaky roof, which can be repaired using maintenance funds.

Motion was made by Bittel that the Board of Selectmen should consider funding of a salt storage building as a priority using capital reserve funds and additionally consider a new storage building, office area, and roof repairs, etc, to be funded by additions to the capital reserve funds in future years, and/or participating in bond proceeds from a future issue. There was a second to the motion by Sheaff. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Skiba said he will come up with a report and email to the committee to consider. At the next meeting comments and/or changes will be reviewed to finalize a document to present to the Board of Selectmen.

Setting Priorities

Brief discussion on priorities occurred – Town Hall and Fire Department are first priority and the other departments can be considered at a later date.

West Swanzey Fire Station

Page said that he has confirmed that the fire station is tied into the sewer system. This allows for decontamination washing of trucks and clothing.

Citizen Comments

Rebecca Hays said that she wanted it to go on the record that she has seen a tremendous amount of work being done by this committee and that she has heard a lot of good ideas.

Next scheduled meeting: July 13, 2015 – Self will not be able to attend that meeting.

Adjournment:

A **motion** to adjourn was made by Bittel with a second from Sheaff and all were in favor. Adjournment occurred at 5:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary