

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
MUNICIPAL FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 29, 2019

Present: Phil Shipman, Tracy Young, Mark Tarantelli, Shirley Green, Jean Patten, Ryan Aylesworth

Guests: J. Brannon Godfrey Jr., Hartford Town Manager; Scott Cooney, Fire Chief; Phillip Kasten, Chief of Police

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM.

There were no minutes available to approve. The Committee proceeded to begin the meeting by traveling to Hartford to visit the Town Offices and the Safety Services Building.

The Committee met with Mr. Godfrey, Hartford's Town Manager, for a tour of the town office building located at 171 Bridge Street in White River Junction, Vermont.

Mr. Godfrey noted that the building was a \$4.3 million redesign project. Historically there were two buildings used for town offices, but the redesign project made it possible to relocate to one central location. There are currently 104 municipal employees in the Town of Hartford, with 24 of them working in the town offices.

The building is three floors, three staircases and one central elevator. All of the inner doors are closed to the public and can only be accessed by staff utilizing a key card. There are glass windows for public access to services for finance, town management, planning and zoning, the town clerk, and parks and recreation.

The third floor contains:

- IT offices
- A supply room (copy, mail, recycling)
- A unisex bathroom with a shower
- A storage closet
- A large break room
- A mechanical room
- Two conference rooms.
 - The conference rooms can be rented by outside groups and include flat screens with HDMI ports for presentations.

The second floor holds the

- Finance Office
- Town Managers Office
- Assessor's Office – including Planning & Zoning and an Energy Coordinator
- Restrooms

The First Floor holds:

- Parks and Recreation
- The Town Clerk

- A meeting room
- A Board of Selectmen meeting room
 - Utilized by the Select Board as well as the School Board
 - Built in Cable TV8 for live streaming and video recording
 - 19 seats for public attendance
 - A television
 - It was noted that most committees utilize digital copies of agendas and minutes and that most committees do not print paperwork to distribute at meetings anymore.

The basement is an area where moisture is a consistent issue. Plastic covers half of the lower walls and there is a layer of stone across the floor to help create moisture barriers. Nothing is stored in the basement.

The Committee discussed the details of how the Hartford Parks and Recreation Department functioned. There are six full time staff, three seasonal staff members, and one intern. During the summer months the town will employ 12 seasonal staff to run day camps, and they also accept help from volunteers. The community pool has been closed for two years and they are in the process of developing a design and engineering proposal to make necessary updates to the pool. The department does their own maintenance of the parks and do not operate with the assistance from the Hartford Department of Public Works.

The Committee inquired as to what their participation rates looks like and the Hartford Parks and Recreation Director, Scott Hausler, did not have the data immediately available, but noted it was printed in an annual report distributed to the public. The Committee inquired as to if there was a benefit to having parks and recreation grouped in with the town offices. Mr. Hausler noted it would benefit the department to focus on one facility for utilization and facilitation of programming. However, they currently use spaces in schools as well as the meeting room located across the hallway from their office. He noted that they had tried to host a karate class on the third floor of the town office building, but found that it didn't function well.

In terms of maintenance, the town contracts for cleaning and all repair services. There is no central air conditioning, but there are mini-splits located throughout the building. They have had an issue with a coolant leak in the winter time, and have had some difficulty in balancing the air system and finding a consistent HVAC vendor.

The current five-year plan for improvements includes a new roof and making space for solar panels. The town currently utilizes solar panels at their water plant, their landfill, and their athletic complex. There is a barrier on the state level (net metering) that creates limitations on how much solar power municipalities can produce; however, Mr. Godfrey notes he will be looking into that more specifically in the future.

When speaking with Hartford employees present during the tour, all were satisfied with the work space available to them and noted it was nice to feel they had room to grow, if necessary.

The Committee then met with Fire Chief Cooney to tour the Hartford Fire Department facilities at 812 VA Cutoff Road in White River Junction, Vermont.

The Hartford Fire Department covers 38 square miles which include the villages of: Hartford, Quechee, West Hartford, White River Junction, and Wilder. The firehouse has five bays to house equipment. Three of them are drive through bays, and two are not. The building was built in 1978 and the police section was added in 1989. The fire department runs on a force of 24 full time and 11 on call members, including 10 volunteers. All members of the department are cross trained as firefighters and EMTs. There is a program

available where applicants can get paid training for signing a three-year contract for employment with the town. The department also includes one Administrative Assistant, who also serves as a billing clerk for ambulance services, and a Fire Prevention Division.

The department currently has two ambulances but Chief Cooney noted that they would be adding a third. They run ambulances for 12 years before replacing them and keep them on a rotating schedule. The fire engines are on a cycle for replacement every 20 years. Chief Cooney noted that the ladder truck was in an accident which cracked the frame and they are currently awaiting the purchase and arrival of a new ladder truck. The department also had a pumper tanker for mutual aid, a forestry vehicle, one heavy rescue unit which was funded by Homeland Security, that is part of state search and rescue. They also had two boats on a trailer in a bay, and a Red Cross response trailer parked outside the building.

The department used to have a full-time mechanic for fleet trucks and police vehicles; however, the person filling the position retired. In his place, the town hired a full-time mechanic who works at the Department of Public Works facility. There is an exhaust ventilation system that was installed with assistance from a federal grant. The project cost the town \$5,000 to complete and the remainder (approximately \$95,000) was covered with grant funding.

The far end of the bay holds supplies, a washing area, a mower, and an upper storage area for wetsuits and dry suits. The department is currently building a specialized drying unit for their equipment. The area also holds the Assistant Chiefs office, which was formerly a storage room.

There is a currently an unstaffed substation located in Quechee. On call firefighters and full-time staff that reside near the Quechee station are the main ones utilizing the equipment. There have been ideas to put a substation in Wilder due to a consistent amount of calls that come from the area.

Chief Cooney noted that the current location was not the preferred option for locale when it was built. The ideal location was to be centered in the middle of the town in the vicinity of where the Bugbee Senior Center currently is. The property on VA Cutoff Road was purchased and then the station was built on the site. Chief Cooney noted that its location can be challenging, but the location also offers access to multiple areas such as downtown, Route 4, and the interstate.

Although the apparatus bays allow sufficient space for vehicles and large equipment, currently, the department is busting at the seams for “people space” and storage. The living quarters are small and were originally planned to support a three-man shift, however, the crew currently runs on a five-man shift. In addition, while the NFPA has no stipulations about gender separation for living quarters, the department recognizes it is ideal to have separate facilities for males and females.

The second floor holds three showers, seven beds, a small recreation area, and an exercise room. There is a training room located on the second floor that can be utilized by the police or fire departments and serves as the EOC. There is no air conditioning in the building. They have been able to add window units to some areas, but have notable difficulty regulating the temperatures in all areas of the firehouse, including the training room and living quarters. The building also does not have an elevator, so there is no handicap access for the training room or the living quarters in the building. Dining and kitchen facilities located on the first floor, which can be accessed from the apparatus floor. Two small offices are located in the kitchen area for fire staff to coordinate training and facilitation.

Future plans for the site include building a seven-bay storage unit into the hill behind the department. The town already owns the property, so it will be an improvement project relating to the equipment and needs of the department.

After finalizing the tour with Chief Cooney, the Committee toured the Hartford Police Department facilities with Chief Kasten.

The police department consists of 23 full time positions, four of which are currently open, with authorization to operate up to 25 full time staff members, (this number does not include the chief's assistant and the police department social worker positions). Chief Kasten noted that there is no full-time school resource officer, however, each patrol officer 'adopts' a school and has scheduled daily patrols and weekly walk throughs to check in.

The typical day shift includes one supervisor, one sergeant, and two officers. The staff goes down to two during night shifts. Their dispatch center answers all fire, ambulance, and police related phone calls for Central Vermont, with some crossover from the border of New Hampshire being close by. An average of 20,000 calls per year come through the dispatch center. Some of the station consoles for dispatch are scheduled to be upgraded. Two staff are active with 911 response 24 hours a day 365 days a year. They also assist with social media, Vermont alerts, and giving road crew notifications to town staff. They also monitor warrants and national crime information.

The original dispatch center was turned into work stations for four sergeants. The front area of the building has been updated to increase the safety and security of the staff. Kevlar panels were installed in the interior glass doors, the public window size was changed to make it smaller, and bullet proof glass was installed on the external windows. The safety improvements cost \$14,000.

The department is currently utilizing window air conditioning units; however, they currently have an RFP out for more energy efficient units. Chief Kasten also noted that finding a consistent contract for the HVAC system has been a problem.

The first floor holds the chief's office, his assistant's office, the sergeant's offices, the break room, the evidence room, the munitions room, the booking room, an interview room, investigations offices, holding cells, and a sally port.

The sally port has a nonskid surface and allows officers to bring perpetrators straight into the booking and processing room. The holding cells also have nonskid floors and have access to bathrooms and water.

There is one interview room that includes audio and visual recording and is the only interview room on the premises. There are four central computer stations to be utilized by on duty staff. There are also four work stations in the Criminal Investigations Office. There is also an office for the Deputy Chief, who is the evidence custodian. They are finding the handling of evidence is the equivalent of another full-time job due to chain of custody issues.

When Chief Kasten arrived to the department he found a storage area stacked to the ceiling with records. Over the course of 18-20 months he and his assistant were able to go through them and then developed a retention and disposal schedule to assist with the management of documentation. They also added rolling racks for record storage of physical files and developed digital filing and storage as well.

There is a social worker who works with detectives and officers. Her position is funded by HCRS. She goes on calls with officers and assists with community needs that can be addressed while on scene.

The current armory and ammunitions room was formerly the evidence room. There were major space constraints and no ventilation in the room. The new evidence room has ventilation, a refrigerator for blood kits and DNA, as well as roughly 700-800 pieces of evidence stored there. Chief Kasten noted that there are times that due to the nature of a call, police will have to seize firearms on the premises. At times,

police may have to seize up to 20 guns from one location, and hold them for an undetermined period of time.

There are 17 evidence lockers, all varying in size and shape, and there are an additional three units that are refrigerated for evidence collection regarding blood, DNA, or sexual assault.

Radios and bodycams are located in the break room area. The department formerly had in car cameras and body cams, but they did not run on the same system or technology. They are currently operating on the 3rd generation of body cam technology since they adopted the usage of them four years ago. There is intention to add the dash cams back into utilization once improved technology is available. The department has a \$16,000 contract for four years for the body cams, which includes free upgrades when they come out, and they pay an additional \$10,000 for data storage on the cloud.

The second floor holds two renovated locker rooms. The lockers include ventilation as well as an outlet port in each one. The locker rooms were also adapted to be able to fit a mini-split for air conditioning. The next step for the room is updating the lighting to be more energy efficient. Chief Kasten expressed that he wished he had a place for his staff to rest and stay over, like a duty or bunk room. He noted that the facilities would also be available for use when necessary for EOC functions as well. There is no residency requirement for staff to work for the Hartford police, and there are multiple staff members that live at least 45 minutes away.

Solar panels have caused leaks in the facilities which have cost upwards of \$30,000 in damage so far. The warranty for the units has expired. He discussed adding a plan for roof updates to the budget in the near future. Future plans for the department also include adding a locked and gated parking area, an area for cold storage, and improving the air conditioning efficiency in the building.

Chief Kasten noted that because the facilities are utilized 24 hours a day every day of the year, they are going to wear three times faster than a typical work space that is occupied 8-10 hours a day. He also noted that having a comfortable work space and facilities was important to the employee morale, productivity and overall professionalism/quality of service.

Chief Kasten also noted that parking was an issue when outside meetings were held in the training room.

The department has access to the exercise room in the building and is currently working on a wellness program which would include a volunteer Chaplain and a stress management team. It was also noted that town employees currently get a discount for membership at the Upper Valley Aquatic Center.

After the completion of the tour, the Committee discussed when the next meeting would take place and topics of discussion.

The Committee discussed the possibility of visiting more town municipalities such as Bow or Moultonborough. Some Committee members noted that the quota set forth of 'three site visits', as voted in a previous meeting, had already been met and that more information may not be necessary to move forward. With the exception of looking at libraries, the Committee has fulfilled what it set forth and there was discussion on if more visits would be of benefit with relationship to the stringent timeline and decision-making process for formulating recommendations.

The Committee discussed the importance of having a grid from fire and ambulance to understand where the emergency calls are coming from to help identify 'hot spots', or areas where calls are made more frequently. Police call data would be helpful as well. This data will help in assessing an ideal location for public safety as it relates to the response time and the needs of the community.

The Committee discussed how to identify what decisions needed to be made and the relationship between them. One example is the assessing level of existing contamination at the Shedd Street property and understanding if the property can be utilized “as is,” or if it would need to be decontaminated in some way depending on whether the Town opted to sell the property for residential development or repurpose it for another municipal use. The cost for the testing of the site and the timeline of the results would also impact the Committee’s discussions and the decision-making timeline. Mr. Aylesworth noted that there is a grant available from the EPA, administered by the regional planning commission, that can assist with costs related to testing, but the grant is not available until October. The Committee unanimously agreed that it would be in the best interest to initiate the contaminants evaluation process as soon as possible. At this time testing is an unknown out of pocket expense, but Mr. Aylesworth said he would further investigate the cost and timeline of testing to bring to the next committee meeting.

The next regularly scheduled meeting was for August 12th, however, Committee members felt that evaluation of site visits and conversations for next steps should take place sooner. It was proposed to have a meeting on Tuesday, August 6th. Mr. Aylesworth noted that he would email the entire Committee to verify consensus for an additional meeting. Committee members present expressed that due to the level of detail and the timeline to work in, it may be necessary to begin having more frequent, and/or longer meetings moving forward.

Mr. Tarantelli motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Young seconded. All committee members were in favor (6-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 pm.