

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
MUNICIPAL FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 29, 2019

Present: Ryan Aylesworth (Town Manager), Phil Shipman, Tracy Young, Rob West, Mark Tarantelli, Erik Russell, Jean Patten, Shirley Green, Maynard Southard

Guests: Jay Barrett (Barrett Architecture), David Beaufait (Public), Bob Cusick

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

The meeting began with everyone present introducing themselves.

The next order of business was a brief review of the committee's objectives and responsibilities. Mr. Aylesworth referenced a handout that was provided to all members and explained that the committee is an ad hoc group that is responsible for reviewing, evaluating, and making recommendations relative to town-owned buildings for the purpose of informing proposed future capital improvements and investments in advance of the March 2020 Town Meeting. Mr. Aylesworth acknowledged that this is an aggressive timeline, and it may ultimately be challenging to complete this charge within the prescribed time period. It is important to set a goal, however, and expectations can be revisited down the road if – despite the committee's best efforts – it proves infeasible to arrive at a relative consensus in advance of Town Meeting. Unless there is additional business that the committee needs to tend to as the process plays out, it is anticipated that the group will disband following the next Town Meeting. Mr. Shipman asked if Department Heads were invited to this meeting and Mr. Aylesworth explained that, while Department Heads will be a recurring presence at future meetings depending on the topics being discussed, it was not necessary for them to be in attendance at an initial "kick off meeting." Mr. Shipman asked that hard copies of the strategic plans recently prepared by each of the departments be provide to committee members. Mr. Aylesworth will provide these hard copies at the next meeting, as well as circulate a link to the section of the Town website where these plans are currently published.

The next order of business was selection of a Chair. Mr. Shipman motioned that he would like to serve as Chair. Motion was seconded by Ms. Patten. With no other nominations a vote was called. Seven (7) votes "Yes," one (1) vote "No", one (1) abstention. Mr. West explained that he voted against Mr. Shipman as Chair out of concern that his comments at previous public meetings suggest that he is not objective and open-minded about the process. Mr. Shipman said that he will push for facts and ask hard questions, and that decisions shouldn't be based on people's opinions of the buildings. Some committee members cautioned Mr. Shipman that the Chair's role is primarily one of meeting facilitation, and that he will need to be objective. Mr. Aylesworth noted that, in reality, there is a gray area with most things. An architect or an engineer may strive to provide an analysis that is truly objective and fact-based, but there will always be considerable human interpretation of data. Informed opinions are essential.

The committee then discussed minute-taking responsibilities. In the absence of anyone else interested in performing this function, Mr. Aylesworth will take the minutes but may inquire about the availability of one of the Town's part-time minute takers.

The next order of business was a discussion with Jay Barrett (Principal of Barrett Architecture) about the findings and recommendations contained in the Municipal Facilities Optimization Study final report. Ms. Patten expressed concern that the demolition cost estimates contained in the report will likely be an underestimate, and asked Mr. Barrett to explain how he derived his estimates. Mr. Barrett explained that he relied on many years of professional experience and the informal opinions of some trusted colleagues with experience deriving such cost estimates. The committee asked Mr. Barrett to speak to how he went

about estimating an appropriate square footage for the proposed new emergency services building. Mr. Barrett explained that he had considered the Town's existing staffing equipment inventory, as well as an examination of other emergency service buildings in the towns of Hanover, Hartford, Moultonborough and others. Mr. Barrett believes it important to err on the side of more space than may be ultimately needed at this conceptual planning stage. Both the square footage and cost estimates Mr. Barrette believes are "worst case scenario" estimates. Mr. Barrett was asked if his cost estimated includes design and engineering fees, and he stated that these fees could be expected to add roughly 6-7% to the project cost over and above the estimates he had already furnished. Mr. Shipman expressed reservations about the ability of many residents, particularly older residents on fixed incomes, to provide the tax dollars needed to fund a large loan/bond needed to finance major building construction/renovation projects.

Mr. Young asked that Mr. Barrett respond to a few specific questions he had. First, what is the primary deficiency of Whitney Hall? Mr. Barrett expressed the opinion that the building's thermal condition was a concern. At present, the building's siding, insulation, and windows are in serious need of replacement/upgrading. Mr. Barrett is not sure that the building needs to be "gutted back to the studs" in order to make the existing structure more conducive to a 21st century library, but there is no question that significant investments in interior renovations will be needed. Mr. Barrett feels that having thermal imaging done on the building during winter months would likely yield much valuable information.

Mr. Young then asked what is the primary deficiency of the existing police station? Mr. Barrett expressed the belief that the existing layout/plan for the building does not work at all. It simply cannot meet current police station requirements as set forth by various national organizations. Believes strongly that the station would be a great space for the Recreation Department at such time as the Police Department moves into a new Emergency Services building.

Mr. Young asked what is the primary deficiency with the DPW Facility? Mr. Barrett expressed the belief that the absence of roof extensions on the rear of the building was the biggest problem as the resulting water damage to the masonry is substantial. Secondly, Mr. Barrett believes that the site is simply not appropriate for housing the Town's primary public meeting space. Although the large conference room in the DPW facility is of a sufficient size to accommodate this use, Mr. Barrett believes that it is ill-advised to have local officials and members of the public regularly assembling/parking in an area that is used by large trucks and heavy equipment. This poses a public safety risk in addition to being an inconvenient location for meetings when you consider that most people live in the village area and staff regularly have to transport documents back and forth for meetings.

Conversation then ensued about the safety issues and structural deficiencies associated with the Shedd Street garages and Enfield Center Town House. It was suggested that Twin Pines Housing should be approached about possibly pursuing a housing development on Shedd Street if the Town ultimately decided that it was not an optimal site for an Emergency Services building.

Mr. Barrett said he wants to stress the importance of the Town investing in building design that will stand up well over time. He used the steel frame construction of the Hanover Fire Station as a prime example. Although the building was constructed in the 1960s and is now 50 years old, it is as sturdy today as it was when it was first built. Hanover can expect that building to last another 50 years. In contrast, Hanover's wood frame police station that was constructed as an addition to the Fire Station some decades later has been plagued by problems since the beginning and has been a money pit for the Town of Hanover.

Mr. Russell asked Mr. Barrett if he could offer examples of municipalities that have made good investments, and those that have made bad investments. Mr. Barrett said that, off-hand, he would cite the Hanover Fire Station, Enfield DPW Building, and Hartford Emergency Services Building as examples of well-designed and well-built facilities. In contrast, he would cite the Fairlee, VT, fire station –which has

experienced much rot from water damage due to a poorly designed roof – and the Hanover Police Station as examples of poorly-designed and constructed facilities. Mr. Young recommended that the committee, or at least a subset of the committee, arrange for a site visit to the Hanover Fire Station to learn more about the building's design, layout, and construction methods.

The final order of business was finalizing the committee's meeting schedule. Mr. Aylesworth proposed that regular meetings take place on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month. He further suggested that meetings alternate between a 3:00 PM (2nd Monday) and 6:00 PM (4th Monday) start time. The group expressed general support for this format, but it was suggested that the late-afternoon meeting on the 2nd Monday begin at 4:00 PM and the evening meeting on the 4th Monday begin at 6:30 PM. Consensus emerged that this would be an effective schedule and the committee could always consider adjustments down the road as needed.

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 PM without objection.