

**TOWN OF ENFIELD
MUNICIPAL FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2019

Present: Phil Shipman, Tracy Young, Rob West, Mark Tarantelli, Jean Patten, Shirley Green, Erik Russell, Maynard Southard (7:08pm)

Guests: Ryan Aylesworth (Town Manager); Melissa Hutson, Library; Dominic Albanese (Chair; Board of Library Trustees), Francine Lozeau (Library Trustee); Penny Koburger, Scott Gerlach

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Review and Approve Meeting Minutes – September 9, 2019

The meeting began with the approval of the September 9, 2019 minutes.

Ms. Patten Requested to add to Page 4:

Ms. Patten was concerned with Department Heads looking at properties that were for sale because the task was something that the Facilities Committee should complete.

Mr. Aylesworth assured Ms. Patten that the field review conducted by Mr. Neily and Chief Holland was very preliminary in nature.

Ms. Green motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Motion seconded by Mr. Russell. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (7-0).

Summary of Subcommittee Interviews and Recommendation Regarding Architecture Firms

Mr. Shipman reported on behalf of the subcommittee regarding the chosen architecture firm for the first phase of the project.

Mr. Shipman shared that the subcommittee completed in-person interviews with six of the 12 firms that responded to the Town's RFQ relative to conceptual design and cost estimation services. The subcommittee identified Bread Loaf of Middlebury, Vermont, as the most advantageous firm to work with on the project. The firm has great reviews, emphasized that they are highly collaborative, and have extensive experience completing related municipal building projects. Bread Loaf's work will include analysis of as many different sites as requested by the committee and extensive public engagement.

Mr. Shipman noted that the scope of work will cover conceptual design and cost estimation services only. It was made explicitly clear that the firm selected is eligible to bid on subsequent phases of the project, but that there would be a second RFP process which allowed for other firms to bid should the project move forward.

Mr. Shipman informed the Committee that the pricing for firms interviewed ranged from \$20,000 to approximately \$70,000. He informed the Committee that of the six firms interviewed, Bread Loaf

submitted the third lowest bid. Though Bread Loaf's original proposal was for \$35,000, Mr. Aylesworth requested that they reduce their proposed fee to \$29,000, which was the second highest bid received, and Bread Loaf agreed.

Mr. Aylesworth noted the list of criteria that was utilized to interview and decide on choosing a firm. The subcommittee met with four members of the Bread Loaf team. It was noted that Bread Loaf completed the design and construction of the Hartford Municipal facilities, where the Committee had completed a site visit.

Mr. Aylesworth informed the Committee that he had briefed the Board of Selectmen on the process and decisions made so far. He noted that informing the BOS of the intention to enter a contract was part of the Town's official purchasing policy for contracts over \$10,000 when the selected firm/vendor is not the lowest bidder.

Mr. Aylesworth noted that while it is not required, it is recommended to have a vote by the Committee to show full support of the evaluations completed by the subcommittee.

Ms. Patten made a motion to accept the recommendations of the subcommittee. Mr. Tarantelli seconded the motion. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion (7-0).

Continued Review of Enfield Public Library Space Needs and Deliberation on Possible Redevelopment Options of the Existing Whitney Hall & Police Station Buildings/Property for Municipal Office and Library Use – Library Board of Trustees

Mr. Aylesworth made copies of the memo submitted by Mr. Albanese to distribute to Committee members at the meeting.

Ms. Patten inquired about the square footage requested by the town offices and the library. She queried whether an addition to Whitney Hall would suffice to house the town offices on one floor, and for the library on another floor.

Mr. Albanese expressed he believed it would work.

Mr. Russell inquired as to if the Board of Library Trustees has a preference to share a building with the town offices, or to have their own standalone structure.

Mr. Albanese stated that if money was no object, it would be preferred that the library would be its own building. He stated that the previous plans for a separate structure are what stands in terms of an approved building, and at this point in time it is the plan until further information is proposed to the Board of Library Trustees. He noted that if any changes were proposed that did not support the current plan for the library, it would require another vote by the Library Trustees.

Mr. Aylesworth noted that at this time, it was worth venturing what Bread Loaf may be able to offer when it comes to options, and that prior to evaluating their recommendations, there may not be value in making a set decision.

Mr. Shipman noted that there is a member of Bread Loaf that specializes in historic buildings, which may be of benefit in the process.

Mr. Shipman asked the Library Trustees about details for funds raised that were intended for a library and if the money could be utilized to restore the current building. He also inquired as to if the funds could be used toward a structure that may overlap costs with the town offices.

Mr. Albanese stated they would have to go back to the donors and confirm their support, but he does not believe that there were specific restrictions on the gifts. He noted that when it comes time to transfer funds to the town, it will require a partnership and communication to guide that process. Mr. Albanese stated he did not believe that the current funds raised would be enough to cover the entire cost of the library and what implications that may have going forward.

Committee members then discussed the merits of having the town offices and the library in the same facilities.

Mr. Tarantelli noted that how the information is conveyed to the town, as well as getting the message out to the public, is very important.

Mr. Shipman inquired as to next steps for the Committee to continue to collaborate with the Library Trustees on the process.

Mr. Albanese offered that the Library Trustees will meet with Bread Loaf and the town. He would ask that Bread Loaf presents ideas for multiple scenarios, including the possibility of a library with two floors or one floor.

Mr. Shipman requested that Library Trustees clarify what the funds raised can be applied to.

Mr. Albanese offered to reach out to the attorney general and public affairs to develop the language to communicate with donors. He asked Mr. Aylesworth if a town meeting vote was necessary to approve of utilizing the funds for a project other than what was already approved. Mr. Aylesworth noted he would look into the details.

Mr. Shipman stated that the Committee will notify Bread Loaf of the approval for the firm. Mr. Shipman and Mr. Aylesworth believe that progress will be made quickly with stakeholder meetings and collaborations.

Mr. Albanese and Ms. Lozeau then excused themselves from the meeting.

Other Business

Mr. Young asked if there was consensus of the direction the Committee is headed in terms of an emergency services building. He suggested it was time for the Committee to decide if it was advantageous to conjoin all the public safety services (police, fire and EMS) into one structure, then follow up with specificity as to potential locations. He also inquired as to whether to include the third-floor theatre as a separate piece or as a part of the design.

Ms. Patten noted it would be beneficial to see what Bread Loaf has for ideas and options before having a true valuation. She noted that a safety complex the involved multiple departments made sense, but was unsure if police should remain where they are based off of current structures. She noted she is looking to see what Bread Loaf has to say about that building and suggestions based on their experience.

Evaluate Potential for Regional Fire/EMS

Mr. Shipman noted that the idea of the potential for a Regional Fire and EMS department had been brought up and requested to have the opinions of each Committee member to verify their consensus on whether it was worth pursuing such measures at this time.

The Committee went around the table and discussed the merits and challenges of regionalizing the emergency response structure. The Committee acknowledged that if this were an avenue to pursue that it would be best to pause the entire project prior to proceeding, and that could take years.

The Committee discussed relationships with neighboring mutual aid communities and potential options for partnership regarding public safety services. Committee members noted that major changes would need to take place to regionalize the current structure and would involve a much longer timeline than is available to serve the immediate needs of the town.

There was expressed concern for the sustainability of potentially building a new complex when the infrastructure may not have the volunteer support it needs to continue operations.

Mr. Aylesworth suggested that it is not clear that the logical next step would be regionalization given that volunteerism is affecting municipal departments everywhere. He suggested that it is more likely the town would need to hire full time people if and when its current volunteer model proved unsustainable. Mr. Aylesworth noted that he was an advocate for regionalization given the economies of scale, but also recognized that history with local departments as well as a varying degree of circumstances must be navigated to make that work. He noted that the conversations and the work to make regionalization possible would take time and that it was not realistic to believe it could happen in a short period of time.

Mr. Young acknowledged that while regionalization avoids the duplication of effort, that it would not entirely eliminate the need for local emergency facilities to exist. He gave FEMA as an example; in that they stage in locations for potential disaster. He expressed having favor to a new central location on Route 4 corridor which would be ideal staging for responding to disasters. He acknowledged that the people operating the facility may come from outside the community, but the equipment will be prepared for emergency response. He noted he is not advocating for 3 ambulances and 14 engines but that in order to serve the community the departments need a more efficient facility. He added that the potential for lack of volunteer staffing should not prevent us from preparing properly.

Ms. Patten noted that she understands the reasoning and logic behind the idea of regionalization, but she does not fully support it. She noted that it would be helpful to see some options, including the possibility to move the police department at a later time. She noted she will be looking for Bread Loaf to give guidance based off of their previous experience and recommendations with the current circumstances.

Ms. Green noted that the Committee spent a lot of time talking about different locations for a safety complex and how locations would affect response time. She noted that regional facilities would definitely entail a longer response time which makes the option sound less appealing. She noted that there have been conversations in the past about Lebanon supplying ambulance services to the town, but if Lebanon is contracting with other towns as well and isn't available for immediate response then there is still a delay in Enfield residents receiving the services they need.

Mr. Tarantelli asked Mr. Aylesworth if it was possible and what the legalities might be to present an either/or option on warrant articles.

Mr. Aylesworth noted that warrant articles can be set up with an A or B option, or to amend articles at Town Meeting.

The Committee agreed unanimously that pursuing an emergency services building, with housing a minimum Fire/EMS, but possible Fire/EMS/Police, is in the best interest of the town and that it would not be beneficial to pursue regional emergency services at this time.

Mr. Shipman inquired if the Committee would prefer to make a decision for what departments would be included in the safety complex at this time, or if they would like to wait to hear more perspectives and recommendations from Bread Loaf.

Mr. Aylesworth advocated that Bread Loaf will have considerable past experience and informed opinions that can help guide the Committee's deliberation on the various options being considered.

The Committee agreed that it was eager to hear recommendations from Bread Loaf and should refrain from casting any official votes at this time.

Mr. Gerlach, a member of the public, informed the Committee that as a former EMT and member of fire rescue, that it would be of benefit to have the three departments located together. He noted that it was beneficial to have trainings together and that while there isn't a lot of crossover for police, they are typically involved with all emergency responses – including fire and ambulance calls.

Mr. Shipman noted that in the analysis the Committee completed, it was stated that call response times can be different for police as they are typically out on patrol and responding from a different location.

Mr. Shipman asked the Committee if they would like to name any specific sites of interest for potentially building a safety structure on.

The Committee discussed all aspects of sites and it was agreed that the size of some parcels would help determine their viability. For example, many sites available on Main Street could not support the needed infrastructure, so those could be ruled out. They also discussed the merit of having enough space to build and potentially add on, such as if the structure began as fire and EMS and then police was added at a later time.

The Committee also discussed that they should operate under the assumption that the police may be housed with fire and EMS in a joint public safety facility, or they may stay in the current location. The Committee also agreed that the Route 4 corridor was the ideal location with relation to emergency response, but that all appropriately sized parcels would be taken into consideration.

Ms. Patten noted that they had discussed a list of properties at a previous meeting but the discussion did not include details regarding the prices for the properties.

Mr. Aylesworth suggested that the Committee give Bread Loaf a set of factors, such as current parcels available as well as parcels that could potentially be available, and they will present options which can then be evaluated by the Committee. Mr. Shipman supported Mr. Aylesworth's recommendation.

Mr. Southard noted that Bread Loaf may bring information to the Committee, including what size acreage would be necessary for a building site. This information could be used to narrow down the list of possible locations.

The Committee then discussed how land would be evaluated for purchase. Mr. Aylesworth noted that if the town were to purchase property that the offer for a purchase price would be based off of the towns assessed value.

Mr. West inquired what the process would be to enter a conversation to purchase property that was not listed for sale, but might be ideal for the purpose.

Mr. Aylesworth noted that he would approach the owner with an introduction and explanation for the inquiry and ask if they would be amenable to allowing Bread Loaf onto their property to have it properly evaluated to determine how conducive it is for the objective.

Mr. Aylesworth informed the Committee that he looked into the questions concerning the property borders regarding the Union Street fire department building. He confirmed that back in the 1990s the town bought the land which was part of a setback from the rail trail, and the building stands on land owned outright by the Town.

Mr. Gerlach expressed concern for the use of space in Whitney Hall for a polling station, and that the current space used for elections is tight and that there are regulations for polling stations based on population.

There was discussion on other possible locations for elections, including the Community Building. It was noted that the Community Building space was actually smaller than the Whitney Hall auditorium and that it was beneficial for the Town Clerk to be able to access voter registration records in the same building, as is currently accessible in Whitney Hall. The Committee and Mr. Aylesworth acknowledged that if future designs potentially eliminated the current space used for elections, the town offices would have to understand the legally prescribed protocol for moving voter registration records to a new polling location during elections. The Committee agreed that the details Mr. Gerlach presented were helpful to understand the current and future needs of the town.

Next Meeting: Monday, October 14, 2019 @ 4:00 PM (DPW Facility)

Adjournment

Ms. Patten motion to adjourn. Mr. Tarantelli seconded. Vote unanimous in favor of the motion. (8-0)