

PSC Building Committee

Meeting Minutes – February 11th, 2019, 6:00 PM

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Present: Steve Holt, Laurie Sanders, Phil Dowling, Steve Gagne, John Zimmerman, Art Pichette, Chris Brooks. David White came by later.

Peter Montague, David Blakesley, Bill Tracy and others in the audience invited to participate.

1. Call to order: 6:02 PM. Minutes review by Steve Holt. Vote to accept minutes: unanimous. (1-28-19)

2. Presentation by Phil of newly revised budget, reflecting more “fine tunes” cost projections, and with some of the components of the construction to be undertaken by the Westhampton Highway Department, such as site work, pavement, etc.

Significant discussion followed about this new budget proposal, and the implications for the project.

3. Discussion followed as to the options at this point for going forward: the options might be to present the whole project to the Voters again, with the changes as discussed above, or to present the option of a complete design and construction document set to be produced – at a cost of something around \$236,000 – and to then go out to bid on that document set as a “step two”. The consensus preference was for this second option.

4. Laurie asked if anyone had seen the Town of Leverette PSC, and some discussion followed about looking into that as another example.

5. Chris B. asked where does the \$236K. Come from? Some discussion on that.

6. Phil explained: a probable option is to take that money out of the Town’s existing funds, specifically out of the Stabilization Fund, and the Free Cash Fund. These funds – the Stabilization Fund, and the Free Cash Fund – have about \$750K. in them, combined.

It was noted that there is also a \$378K. Note (loan) that will be coming due, plus about \$9K. in interest.

7. There followed a discussion on the Preliminary Budget Proposal. Phil made it clear that this was PRELIMINARY at this point.

8. Discussion on the time-line for the project: Phil presented, with input from Art:

[NOTE: The following time-line reflects the CORRECTED information that I received from Phil (thanks, Phil) after I sent out the first copy of the Minutes. Hence this is the “Revision 1” to the Minutes. Sorry for any confusion. – John Z.]

8., continued:

The Timeline would be as follows:

- A.) The request for approval of funds for the Design and Bidding “package” would be presented to the Town at the Annual Town Meeting for a vote (source of funding TBD).
- B.) The Design/Building Plans and Bidding “package” would go out as an RFP after the Annual Town Meeting, and the Committee would then select an OPM and Architect from among the bids received.
- C.) The finalization of design and production of the final design and bid set drawing package – the “complete plans” – would be due in Fall or early Winter of 2019.
- D.) The project would go out to Bid in January or February, 2020.
- E.) The bid results would be presented for a vote at a Special Town Meeting, followed as soon as possible by a Ballot Vote, in the Winter of 2020.
- F.) Construction would begin in the Spring, 2020 and completed by November, 2020.

The Committee was in general agreement on this.

9. Chris and others asked about this, and Phil and Art explained; discussion followed as to “Preliminary Plans” (that John Z. and others kept calling the “sketch” phase), the exploration of options that the first phase covered – already done, at a cost of around \$55K. – and the actual “Construction Documents”, which would be the complete “bid set”, from which the building and construction would be based – and for which the Town would pay around \$236K.

It was explained that the Construction Documents build upon the work covered in the Preliminary Plans research stage, and that the end result – the Construction Documents “bid set” – is the complete package that the Town can then go out to bid on, at that time or – if fate should have it – at a later date. As Art explained: that is, the Construction Documents “bid set” is a complete stand-alone “ready to go” package.

10. Laurie and then others raised questions of will there need to be further changes needed for the future, and if the “bid set” would be adequately “future proofed”. The consensus as Steve H. and Phil explained was that the “bid set” – if properly done as the Committee envisions it – would be reasonably “future proof” at least for about 50 years out into the future.

Steve H. explained that is why it is so important that we not short-change the project at this point, especially on things that will impact performance or functionality in the near-term future. For example, to not cut the building size any more than it has already been aggressively cut and modified in previous revisions.

11. Steve G. asked if we have talked to our State Senator, Representatives, etc. Mention was made of L. Sabadosa and Senator Hines.

David W. (who had joined the meeting at this point) asked about the Lt. Governor.

12. The discussion rotated back to Preliminary Design versus Design and Construction Drawings and there was still some question as to what each included. Phil and Art explained that the Preliminary Investigation and suggested possible Design that came out of the Preliminary Study that was already done actually has little to do with what the final Design and Construction Drawings. The Preliminary Study simply “tested” the options – and the environment and the spaces available on the site – to see if the project was even possible, how “do-able” it is, what are the absolute minimum space and facilities requirements for now and a projected 50 years into the future, and what the cost-comparisons looked like between extensive renovation and adding on to the existing structure versus tearing that old structure down and starting over with all new construction.

Steve H. pointed out that the work of the Preliminary Study was necessary and critical to the next steps, and the investigation would have had to be done no matter in which direction the Town finally goes.

It was also pointed out that the Committee was rather surprised that the all new construction option turned out to be significantly less expensive to build and somewhat less expensive to operate than the option of extensive renovation and adding on to the existing structure. The latter was initially the preference – for emotional and political reasons – of the majority of the Committee members.

13. Phil, Bill T., Chris B., and Art discussed and came to the understanding that the revisions reflected in the final Preliminary Study drawings and report, as well as the current revisions to the construction cost estimates, do *not* change the *needs* as assessed and delineated previously, nor most of the design and construction costs.

It was further explained that the changes in the design and construction cost estimates and projections are the result of both “fine tuning” the design and some of the projected expenses, and primarily are a reflection of the elements in the build-package that have been removed to be done by “others”.

14. Laurie brought up the question and asked if it was explored, the idea of buying up an adjacent or near-by property – another house, for instance – and either building there, or using that house for, for instance, a Police Station.

There was a brief discussion of this, and of the substantial costs involved in such a change, and especially with reference to the cost of developing another property, and achieving the various code compliances and space needs accommodations.

The consensus of the Committee was that the direction that is being pursued and followed up on is the most expeditious as well as the most sound economically, as per the Preliminary Study that was done.

15. Steve G. brought up the point that it would probably not go over so well with a lot of the voters if we simply came back to the Town with the same request – again – at a slightly lower estimated cost. There has to be a good *reason* for that, explained clearly.

Phil explained that, yes, what it appears to be is that we are going back to the Town with a slightly lower cost estimate, which is lower in part because it is a “best estimate” – in other words, using more exact and accurate cost numbers – and that certain components of the construction project have been removed from the scope of the project that is to go out to bid. That does not mean that they are not to be done, but that they are to be done through other ways and other means, like the previously mentioned work that would be done by the Town.

Steve H. and David W. reiterated that there would be no reduction of the actual square footage needed to make the project “work” for all of the Agencies involved.

16. Bill T. brought up the point that we must – it is critical that we do – convince the Town – the voters – of what we want to do, of what we absolutely need, and that it is good for all of the residents of the Town, all of the voters, and for the future, too. Again, we are looking out 50 years. The emphasis needs to be in at least to a large part on the future and the future needs.

The example was given of the Elementary School, where to save \$25K., the Gym was cut in half, and the septic system and water treatment system moved closer to the new construction. So now – if the Town wanted to add that other half of the Gym – it would be cost prohibitive because the other systems would also have to be moved.

Art concurred, but pointed out that “planning ahead” is always a gamble to some degree. There is some “educated guessing” in any formula for assessing future needs.

17. Laurie: voiced the need for education and promotion. She feels that we’ve got to get back to this: we’ve got to educate the Public! Discussion followed about educating the public with the *FACTS*, and the difficulty of *reaching the voters*.

Again, discussion followed on modes for reaching the voters: fliers, open houses, public information events, etc.

18. Art pointed out that items pass in the Town Meetings – by a 2/3 vote of the usual approximately 60 or more voters present – but then fail at Town vote by a simple majority, fail the over-ride, where there are maybe 400 voters. Even although the vote is often fairly close – as it was in the previous vote for the PSC – an important issue may still fail.

18., continued: John Z. pointed out that somehow we must get to and convince what may be as many as another couple hundred voters who are essentially *not involved* in the Town or Town politics, have *little interest* in it, but come out to vote “NO” whenever there is a money issue involved.

19. Phil: Likes the idea of a flier – or fliers – that explain, among other things, the inevitable cost to the Town if we do not do the new PSC Project. Laurie concurred.

John Z.: It is important to “compare and contrast” doing nothing – and then having to do what the laws and Building Codes involved require that we do, including such as ADA, OSHA, NIOSH, and NFPA compliance – with the options before us, to build a new modern PSC that meets all of those laws and codes require.

Phil, Steve H., and Art explained that the costs could be – will be – substantial, no matter which option is pursued, but in one case, the new building option, we end up with a new facility good for the needs for the next 50 years, and in the other, we spend a substantial amount of money and end up with nothing more than what we currently have, with no more space or functionality.

20. Laurie brought up the need for implementing different modes for publicity, as in the mentioned flier (or fliers), open houses, public information events, posters, canvassing at various places like the Town Dump (Transfer Station), etc. And maybe even a door-to-door campaign is a good idea.

Bill T. noted that the more one-on-one education that can take place, the better the chances are of success, because the better and more personal the education is.

It was mentioned that it is important to take advantage of available “communication channels”, like the Bell Tower, and other organizations in the Town.

John Z. said that more than one mailing may be needed or helpful. But there are also expenses in that.

Phil and Laurie both feel that there should be a “core event” and/or a “core project” to raise awareness of the situation and of the needs, to raise consciousness of the problems Town-wide.

21. Steve H. pointed out that there are ongoing issues of “truth” and “perception”. He observed that the original preliminary design for a new building as proposed by C. & B. was for something over 12,000 square feet – which had been cut down from the original approximately 14,000 square feet that their “survey of needs” predicted – and that the Engineers and Architects felt that at that number we were at about the minimum that would meet the needs of the Departments – and the community – for the 50 year expected lifespan of the facility.

21., continued: Steve H. went on to explain – and David W. concurred – that the “space requirements” were then “shaved” – mostly by Steve H. and David W. working together with the Architects and Engineers – to something a little over 10,000 square feet, but that this number (10,000-plus square feet) is really the absolute minimum that allows for a functional building. Anything less than that is dangerously inadequate and dysfunctional.

22. Steve H. asked if we have enough information to vote one way or another, to vote for a.) An Architectural and Engineering Design-Build Drawing and Spec. set that would be a “building bid package”, at a cost of something around \$236K., to be followed with another vote on a proposal on a complete project as bid later, or b.) the whole package going out to bid all at once – the Architectural and Engineering Design-Build Drawing and Spec. set AND the final contractor(s) for the building of the PSC Project. The consensus was that we did, and were ready to vote on a direction.

23. Steve G. asked what time frames are we looking at; the answers were (from Phil, and Art) that there would probably be a need for three to four months for the Design Phase to produce Construction Documents. Time frames were again discussed, going back to the information previously presented. [See “Timeline” under item #8, page 2 above.]

24. MOTION: For the Town of Westhampton to go out with an R.F.P. for a Contract at \$236,000 for a complete Design and Construction Document set for a new PSC for the Town of Westhampton, to be located on the same parcel of land currently occupied by the existing PSC, said new PSC to be based on the research and concepts embodied in the previous Preliminary Study in terms of environmental issues and space and other needs defined. Funding for this Contract to be determined.

Steve H. Moved; Art Seconded; vote 6 to 2; passed.

25. Steve G. brought up the importance of “presentation”: how this new proposal is pitched to the Town, to the voters. This new complete Design and Construction Document set for a new PSC must *not* be presented as simply coming back to the Town with the same package as last time, with what the voters rejected previously.

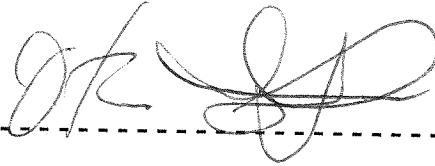
It was pointed out that we need to focus on the positives, focus on the additional data gathering, and on the improvements in design and the (previously mentioned) “special” construction considerations, such as the components of the job that can be assumed by the Town and the Town Highway Department.

John Z. said that it is important to get across to the voters that this is a different project in some significant ways, and it is less expensive. That along with other changes will make it less costly to the voters as reflected in their taxes.

26. Next meeting was set for two weeks from this date, on February 25th, 2019, to start at 6:00 PM.

27. MOTION to Adjourn – Steve H. Seconded – John Z. Passed, unanimous.

Adjourned at 7:53 PM.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John Zimmerman", is written over a horizontal dashed line.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
John Zimmerman.

Please send any changes or corrections to:
John Z. at: zed.group@comcast.net