

TOWN OF CHESTER
BUILDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES

June 4, 2018

Committee Members in Attendance: Daniel Cook, David Pisha, Rick Cloud, Graham Kennedy, Lee Gustafson, Matt Wilson

Guests: Claudio Veliz, Arne Jonynas, John DeBenedetti, Craig Jennings, Kevin Racek

Agenda Item 1 Approve Minutes

Graham Kennedy moved to approve the minutes from the May 14, 2018 meeting. Dan Cook seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A vote was taken and the minutes were accepted as written.

Agenda Item 2 Citizen Comments

There were no comments from citizens.

Agenda Item 3 Discussion with Russell Construction

Craig Jennings of Russell Construction and Kevin Racek of Centerline Architects had met a couple of weeks earlier with David Pisha and Graham Kennedy primarily to discuss the work needed at the Public Works garage. After the meeting, Kevin took the original drawings for the Public Works garage back to their office and studied them. Craig discussed the Public Works garage with Bruce Martin of the Vermont Division of Fire and Safety. Craig confirmed that Bruce is concerned about the problems and needs for upgrades at the garage. Craig and Kevin created a proposal for an architectural services study which would include a code review and a rough cost estimate for the Public Works garage. The next steps for the study would be to input the garage's original drawings into CAD software. Measurements would need to be taken at the garage because the middle bays have changed since the building was built. A decision about what departments will be located in the garage needs to be made before final plans for the garage can be drawn. There would then be a meeting with the people who use the space to go over the Kevin's proposed design. When the design is settled, Kevin would give the drawings to Craig for pricing. This would provide the cost estimate for the Public Works garage needed to prepare for a bond vote. This would not cover a cost estimate for the EMS building construction.

The second document handed out at the meeting shows six phases for the project: Discovery, Design Development including Engineering, Bond Preparation, Design Development, and Construction. The Discovery phase produced the documents presented at the meeting. Kevin explained some of the assumptions he made in his planning process. The major assumption is that the EMS building will house all three emergency services. He said he knew Police Department could remain where it is currently in the Town Hall, but it will be very difficult to get variances from the state to allow the Fire Department and Ambulance Service to remain for any length of time in the Public Works Garage, which is in such poor condition.

The next phase, Design Development including Engineering, will produce a cost estimate which can be voted on in the November elections. If the bond is approved, the next phase is Design

Development which would be much more detailed. Lee Gustafson confirmed that Kevin and Craig would need to know clearly what the town wants for each department in order to prepare the design and cost estimates for the bonding. The departments to be housed in the Public Works Garage would determine the levels of fire protection needed, which would in turn have a large impact on cost. Lee asked whether not allowing the public to use the building would reduce or eliminate the ADA requirements for bathrooms and egress. Kevin said keeping the public out would not eliminate ADA requirements. Craig said that if there was only storage on the second floor of the building, no elevator would be needed, a savings of \$70,000. The other two ADA requirements would be an accessible bathroom and egress doors. Lee Gustafson asked Graham whether moving all storage to the second floor would be a problem for him and he said it would not. Kevin went over the details of his proposal, reiterating that it is merely a proposal, he had not discussed the plan with anyone who would be using the space.

Lee summarized by saying that one path being considered was having Public Works and Ambulance use the garage, another possibility was keeping the Fire Department there as well. Craig Jennings said keeping the Fire Department in the garage would be more complicated and more expensive. Kevin agreed that keeping the Fire Department in the garage would be more complicated. He said that a second assumption he made was that the town would only vote to authorize a bond once for the project. The full plan to address the needs of all four departments must be developed and costed to get the bond figure. David Pisha said the bond itself could be divided into chunks to be used when needed. The single bond vote is why both the Public Works Garage and the EMS building are included in the plan presented. Building the EMS building first and moving the Fire Department into it would make working on the Public Works Garage much easier. Craig and Kevin estimated that the construction phase for the EMS building would be about 10 months and the construction phase for the Public Works Garage would be about 6 months.

Agenda Item 4 Continued review of options and discussion relative to the EMS building and Town Garage

The Committee then took up a document prepared by Lee Gustafson, listing 6 possible configurations for the Pleasant Street EMS building. He listed the approximate square footage of each option and costs based on four different costs per square foot, ranging from \$175 to \$250.

The first option, PS-1, was the two-level design with a stairway/elevator. The ground level for Fire and Ambulance was 10,478 square feet and the lower level for the Police was 3,600 square feet. The cost for this option ranged from about \$2.5 million to \$3.5 million depending on the price per square foot. David Pisha asked if the cost per square foot estimates were reasonable, if the \$175 per square foot should be dropped and a \$ 275 per square foot added. Craig Jennings said that in the design-build process, architectural fees were rolled into the construction costs but he felt the estimates as written were realistic.

Graham Kennedy asked if the Pleasant Street site was buildable. Lee Gustafson showed a map from the state Natural Resources Atlas which shows DFIRM Floodways for the area. He had sketched in the boundaries of the lot and the approximate placement of the building. He

discussed the possibility of bringing the Police Department onto the main level of the building, turning it 90 degrees and increasing the length to 115 feet from 90 feet.

David Pisha said Option 3, not listed on Lee's spreadsheet, could be the Gold River property across the street which is for sale. The approximate cost of the Police Department space in the Pleasant Street building is \$800,000. The Gold River property is about the same cost. Putting the Police Department in the existing office space at Gold River would relieve the problem of a two-level building near the flood hazard area on Pleasant Street, where the Police Department occupied the lower level. It would also provide the Public Works Department with some useable space. Additional space would need to be built at the Gold River property to meet the Police Department requirements. Craig Jennings said he had talked about this with Kevin Racek. Putting the Police Department at Gold River could reduce the size and complexity of the Pleasant Street building. The lower level, stairs/elevator and retaining wall wouldn't be needed. The equipment bays and office space could be reconfigured. These would reduce the cost of the Pleasant Street building. The savings could make moving the Police Department to Gold River a reasonable option.

Lee Gustafson continued enumerating the options for Pleasant Street. Option PS-2a, which is a 2-level building with no stairs or elevator connecting the levels, no facilities for the Ambulance and no bump-out for the Watch Room shows a minor savings of space and cost over Option PS-1. Option PS-2b puts the Fire and Police Departments on the ground level, has no second level and results in a building of 12,110 square feet, with slightly more cost savings than Option PS-2b. Option PS-2c, puts the Fire and Police Departments on ground level, and rotates the resulting 90' x 155' building 90 degrees. The square footage is the same as Option PS-2b, 13,950. Option PS-2d is a build of the Fire Department space only, on one level. The building would be 90' x 115' for 10,350 square feet. The last option listed, PS-2e, is also a build for the Fire Department only and cuts 16 feet from the shorter side of the building creating a space 74' x 115'. The total square footage is 8,510.

John DeBenedetti asked if the flood plain map in use now is the same as the flood plain map used ten years ago when the building was first proposed. Craig Jennings said it was not. Tropical Storm Irene had caused the maps to be updated. The AO (yellow) zone on the map has changed. David Pisha pointed out that the red and yellow zones on the map are still many feet from the building. Lee said he was concerned about having enough parking spaces for volunteers who would show up at the station, park and leave in the fire engines. John DeBenedetti said in the original plan, parking was parallel to the curb on the north side of the building and the outside door opened directly into the Turnout Room, avoiding issues with crossing traffic. The group concluded that a minimum of 20 parking spaces would be needed for the Fire Department.

David Pisha asked what putting the Ambulance in the new building with the Fire Department would look like. Lee Gustafson said he hadn't considered that when he prepared the spreadsheet. It would be option PS-2f. The Ambulance currently takes up half a bay in the Public Works Garage. Lee Gustafson said he asked someone on the Fire Department how much space it needed. That person said they currently have 6 trucks, 2 boats, 2 trailers. The allocated

space in the new building would be used up. Fitting the Ambulance into the space would take some thought and planning.

Lee Gustafson said the committee could choose an option that met all that the departments wanted, and likely to be expensive or it could choose an option that was workable and priced more reasonably. It all depended on what the taxpayers would approve. Graham Kennedy said he was opposed to building a facility large enough for a rubber boat. Claudio said the request in the feasibility study was for eight bays, not eight double bays. The main concern was for the length of the bay, as the standard trucks are now longer than the old standard bays, and it is expensive to order a shorter truck. Dan Cook said a pickup style ambulance comes with factory four-wheel drive, but that style is 3 feet longer and wouldn't fit in the existing bay. He had to order a van style ambulance and spend an extra \$18,000 to get a four-wheel drive unit on the front end. Lee asked whether the space for eight vehicles laid out in the proposed EMS building would be sufficient for the trucks, trailers and boats the Fire Department currently has. That question could not be answered until a representative of the Fire Department arrived at the meeting.

Dan Cook said the ambulance had agreed to stay at the Public Works Garage in order save money. He wanted to know whether there would be room at the re-configured Public Works Garage for a 20- to 25-person training room on the ground floor. Lee asked Dan if he could hold training in another building such as a new Fire Department building. Dan said he could and he has had trouble in the past scheduling time in the existing training room. Lee said this is all Town property and a training room would be shared among town departments. Rick Cloud said the original EMS building plan had a training room that was to be used by all 3 departments.

Recapping the discussion thus far, Lee Gustafson said, at the \$225 per square foot price, the original plan (PS-1) comes in at \$3.17 million, and the other options range in cost down to \$1.9 million. Kevin Racek said he thinks a more appropriate square foot rate would be \$250, particularly for the Fire Department which requires a good deal of specialized equipment in the building to support them.

John DeBenedetti asked if Kevin Racek had had a chance to analyze the change to the cost that reductions such as eliminating the stairs and elevator, abandoning the emergency shelter function and moving the building closer to the road would make. Kevin said he had not had time to look at that yet. He agreed that changes to the programs the building would support would have an impact on cost. The group discussed the building size and the need for or use of the original mezzanine. Craig Jennings said he felt this type of discussion shouldn't go on without a representative of the Fire Department present.

A general discussion about the size and orientation of a building on the Pleasant Street site took place, with the Fire Department greatly missed. Claudio Veliz said he heard, during the feasibility study he did last fall, that the state was not in favor of using large amounts of fill or retaining walls near a flood hazard area. Fill and possibly a retaining wall would be needed on the Pleasant Street site. Rick Cloud pointed out that nothing was proposed in the flood hazard zone, no fill was being placed there, no retaining walls, and no buildings. Lee Gustafson said he will contact the people at the state and get a clear answer on the flood hazard issue.

Lee re-focused on the options available, including the possibility of buying space for the Police Department in the form of the Gold River property instead of building it. Someone asked if the code requirements for the Public Works Garage would be any different if the Ambulance was not housed in the building. Craig Jennings said fire detectors and alarms would be required in any case. It was possible to get a variance for not installing a sprinkler system. He said the cost of a sprinkler system for the building would not be enormous, given that the building already has good water pressure. He estimated the cost for sprinklers to be \$20-40,000. Dan Cook said he was willing to keep the ambulance at the Public Works Garage in order to save money, but it appeared that moving the ambulance office and training room to the ground level would take up space needed by the Highway Department. David Pisha asked if there was a building or space on the Gold River property that could be used by the ambulance. Craig Jennings said you would then have to retrofit the building to code which could be costly. Arne Jonynas said he thought buying the Gold River property would be hard to sell to voters. John DeBenedetti said the town would forfeit \$50,000 if the Police Department wasn't included in the new building. In addition, if the Gold River property was purchased, it would be taken off the tax rolls. That loss of tax dollars would need to be taken into account.

Lee said he didn't want to take the option off the table until it could be evaluated. Craig Jennings said he thought having all the emergency services under one roof is an advantage. Sharing facilities such as training rooms, locker rooms and showers will save money and help to pass the bond to build the building. Lee asked Dan Cook what the ambulance service would need at the Public Works Garage. Dan said he would need a lockable office which could hold 2 desks, a small room for computers that attendants could use when they return from a call, and storage space. It would be nice to have a separate shower available for men and women. Training could be done at the new building or at some other location such as upstairs at the town hall. Craig Jennings and Kevin Racek thought those rooms could be fit into the ground level middle section of the garage.

Matt Wilson arrived at the meeting. Lee referred Matt to the list of options being considered at the meeting. He asked Matt if the Police Department and Ambulance Service were removed from the proposed EMS building, would it be possible to remove one of the bays in the plan. Matt said he did not think it would be possible because the department has more equipment than it did when the first proposal was made in 2008. Lee asked Matt how many vehicles the Fire Department currently had. Matt said the department has five trucks, two trailers and a boat. Lee asked if the hose drying and storage capacity was still adequate. Matt said they had given up the tower in light of the expense and would continue to use the hose drying methods they use now. Lee asked if the training space could be used by other departments such as Police, Ambulance and Highway or by the public. Matt said he didn't want the public involved because someone from the Fire Department would need to be there when the public used it. Matt said the only problem he had with sharing training space was scheduling conflicts. It made spontaneous training more difficult to organize. Lee acknowledged that sharing was a problem but felt it could be worked out. Lee asked Matt about parking spaces. They concluded that 20 spaces would be sufficient.

Lee asked what should happen next. David Pisha said he felt the committee ought to focus in on a few options and develop more information about them. Lee said the flood plain issue at Pleasant Street was the first that needed to be resolved. Lee asked whether there was anything specific to know about building on fill. Graham said you needed to use structural fill for the foundation. He pointed out where fill would be needed. Other options discussed were using the lower level intended for the Police Department as storage and a sally port only, building the Police Department in the same place as planned, but not building a second floor over it, and turning the building 90 degrees. Craig Jennings said the original design which required a retaining wall would be very expensive to build. Moving the building on the site could reduce the amount of fill needed. It was thought that the committee would need calculations done to sort out the best way to use the site and minimize fill. Russell Construction's proposal discussed earlier in the meeting did not include any calculations for the Pleasant Street site.

Lee Gustafson said he would discuss the flood plain issue with the state. He felt the code review process for the Public Works garage should continue. He also felt that someone should be hired to work out numbers for a couple of options on Pleasant Street. Graham Kennedy and Craig Jennings agreed that building slab-on-grade with some fill would be cheaper than building a multi-story building. The discussion then turned to any possible problems associated with a 155-foot slab-on-grade building that could house the Police and Fire Departments. Parking and the new flood plain lines are a concern. The lot is flat along Vermont Route 11 and then slopes down to the south. Parking will still need to be in back of the building on the lower part of the lot. A road around the building will have to be built. It was resolved to pursue this option of building a slab-on-grade building big enough for the Police and Fire Departments and leaving the Ambulance at the Public Works garage. Further discussion re-examined issue of including the Ambulance in the new EMS building. Many people felt that the Ambulance should be included in the building. It was thought that Option PS2-c could accommodate all three emergency services departments.

It was resolved that research into the flood hazard area, road and parking configuration and fill will be done. Design attention will be focused on Options PS-2b and PS-2c. Lee Gustafson asked Craig Jennings for a proposal for Pleasant Street. Craig said he would be willing to do that once the flood hazard issues are resolved. Matt Wilson said he and Dan Cook would get together to discuss their needs and how they might fit into the Pleasant Street building.

David Pisha said he wanted one bond vote for the work on the new building and the Public Works Garage together. He discussed various ways to take the funding over a period of time while the new building is constructed, and later once the Fire and Ambulance move out of the Public Works garage and work can proceed on that building. There was some concern that the state will want quicker action on the Public Works garage. Craig and Kevin said that if a plan to eventually correct all the Public Works garage problems is in place and is being worked on, the state will not take action against the town.

Graham Kennedy moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and the meeting adjourned.

