

**TOWN OF CHESTER**  
**BUILDING COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES**

*October 29, 2018*

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

**Citizens Present:** Rick Cloud, Craig Jennings, Kevin Racek.

**Others Present:** Cathy Hasbrouck, Recording Secretary.

**Call to Order**

Lee Gustafson called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM in the Town Hall Auditorium.

**Agenda Item 1 Review Minutes from October 16, 2018**

Dan Cook moved to accept the minutes from October 16<sup>th</sup>. Graham Kennedy 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 citizen comments.

**Agenda Item 3 Site Discussion for EMS building**

Although the Committee expected to discuss the siting of the building on the lot, Kevin Racek of Centerline Architects explained that the site design task needed to be done by a civil engineer. Kevin had spoken to the engineers who had worked on the 2008 plans, DeWolfe Associates. He had brought a proposal from them for the work to the meeting.

The discussion focused on the steps needed to produce a cost estimate and supporting documentation which can be used in the public discussion leading up to the bond vote planned for March, 2019. The following is a summary of that discussion, not necessarily in the order it took place.

Kevin Racek recapped the progress made so far. The Committee had agreed on a floor plan for the Emergency Services building on Pleasant Street. It had also agreed on the floor plan for the Town Garage renovation and the other work that was needed to bring the building up to code.

Kevin said the 2018 Emergency Services building was about the same size as the 2008 building, but it was a single-story structure. The single-story building will require an unusual amount of site work (fill), more than the 2008 building would have. The single-story building would not require stairs or an elevator, which would probably more than offset the cost of the extra site work.

Kevin Racek pointed out that the proposed design for the Emergency Services buildings had a number of small rooms, less than the 100 – 150 square feet usually allocated to an office. He said it is possible the projected staffing levels will work well in the smaller spaces, but he felt he should point out that the spaces will feel small.

Craig Jennings of Russell Construction and Kevin Racek posed these questions:

1. Does the EMS building as sized and configured now make sense?
2. Do the changes to the Town Garage as proposed make sense?
3. What schedule will be needed to get to the bond vote in March and what sort of meetings and presentation materials will be needed to facilitate a discussion of the project with Chester's citizens?

They said a very rough estimate of the proposed work for the two buildings was \$5 million. They wondered if that size project would be acceptable to the town's citizens, given the failure of the town to accept the proposal made in 2008. Craig Jennings said some engineering savings were possible. Lee Gustafson asked if the small spaces as designed would be more expensive to build. Kevin said it would raise the cost of construction somewhat. Each space will have to be lit, heated, and cooled separately.

Kevin and Craig discussed the steps of the design-build process their companies were proposing for the actual construction work. Kevin distributed a timeline showing how the phases of the process were planned to deliver a completed building in June 2020. They outlined the design-build process as follows.

The first step is discovery and preliminary design. This step is complete. The second step is schematic development. In this step, many details such as the type of HVAC system, wall systems, roofing, and MEP (mechanical, electrical and plumbing) systems are made. One of the deliverables from this step is a cost estimate that is firm enough to merit a contingency fund of 10 – 12 %, as opposed to the contingency 25%, which would be required by the current rough estimate. The second deliverable would be documentation and renderings of the buildings to support discussion of the project with the Selectboard and citizens.

The next stage is design development, which gets down to details such as the type of lockers wanted and the placement of electrical outlets. The final design stage is called construction documents which gives technical details about things such as how the wall panels come together. The documentation needed for the actual construction is produced in two packages. Construction can begin when the first drawing package is delivered. The timeline Kevin Racek handed out gave June 2019 as the delivery date for the first package and the beginning of construction. The second package would be delivered in August 2019.

Kevin said that, in the design-build process they have proposed for this project, there are savings in how details are handled. The construction company supplies many of those details and less work is required from the architect. This differs from the past when a complete package of design and plans were produced by the architect and put out for bids to construction companies.

The Committee confirmed its acceptance of the design-build process. They asked how much money had been spent on the discovery and preliminary design. Craig Jennings said \$8,400 - \$8,600 had been spent on the Town Garage plans. That cost included a current, accurate plan of the 50-year-old building entered into a computer system. \$2,900 dollars had been spent on revised plans for the Emergency Services building.

Kevin and Craig said the schematic design phase was next. Kevin Racek said the more detailed plans, including a site plan design from a civil engineer would give a much more reliable cost estimate for the project. Lee Gustafson and David Pisha both agreed that it would be better to go

to the voters with a more accurate estimate of the cost, rather than a shaky estimate and a large contingency fund. The Committee asked for a proposal for that work. Craig and Kevin said they will start bringing in consultants for civil, structural, mechanical, plumbing, electrical and fire protection as part of the schematic design phase.

Kevin and Craig said, in order to proceed with the schematic design phase, a number of decisions needed to be made, such as the type of exhaust system in the equipment bays for venting engine fumes. This discussion could require Kevin and Craig's attendance at more Committee meetings. Kevin suggested that some of that work could be done via e-mail. Lee suggested that Kevin and Craig prepare a list of the choices that need to be made and e-mail it to the Committee. The Committee could prepare their responses before the meeting. Kevin and Craig agreed to send the list.

Kevin asked the Committee if they had any equipment needs that were not normally associated with their department's functions. The schematic design phase is the time to make those requirements known. Cathy Hasbrouck said the Town of Chester is in the process of getting their energy plan accepted by the state so that the town will have a voice in the siting of renewable energy projects in the future. She said an important element of the plan is the Town of Chester acting as a role model for new construction by planning for renewable energy to be incorporated into any new structures it builds. Craig Jennings said the flat roof trusses could be engineered to support the weight of solar panels which could be added in the future. Lee said he also assumed that energy conservation would be a priority in the building, including items such as a Heat Recovery Boiler. Craig Jennings assured the Committee that the most energy efficient products, such as LED lighting would be used.

Kevin said two crews would work on the two sites simultaneously during the construction phase. Having two crews going at once gives the general contractor more flexibility with resources and makes the jobs more attractive to subcontractors because they would be larger jobs. Craig said most of the work in the Public Works building was in gutting the center of the building. He said he would work out a way to keep the Fire and Ambulance equipment at the Public Works building while this work is underway.

The Committee discussed the cost at some length. Graham Kennedy asked what the dollar amount of the last failed bond vote was. Several people agreed that it was about \$2.8 million. Kevin Racek said that in 2008, when the last building was proposed, the construction industry was starved for work and was cutting its margin very thin. This is no longer the case and the labor figures are 15 – 20% higher than they were then.

Graham Kennedy said he has recently looked at equipment prices and a single piece of equipment is about \$50,000 more expensive than it was 11 years ago. Lee Gustafson said construction costs have been going up 3% per year, which would mean a 30% percent increase over a decade. He did not see the change in the cost from the 2008 project as a huge issue but he felt there was still "residual angst" about the cost of the building for some citizens.

It was noted that the Town Garage will have the lifespan of a new building (50 years) once it is renovated. Matt Wilson asked what a new Town Garage building would cost. Craig Jennings said he just finished a Town Garage for Hinesburg VT for \$2.3 million. It was about the same square footage as the Chester Town Garage. Graham Kennedy said the state garage on Elm Street cost \$1.3 million 2 years ago. They concluded that the renovation is one-third to one-half the cost of a new building.

They discussed whether the Town Garage work should be voted on by the citizens separately from the Emergency Services building work. It was agreed that the two projects are interdependent. Building the Emergency Services building will not correct the code violations and other problems at the Town Garage. The changes proposed for the Town Garage assumed that the Fire and Ambulance departments were no longer present. Therefore, it was agreed that projects would be presented as on package to be voted on.

The Committee also discussed the hearings that need to be held with the Selectboard and the citizens to present the proposal and answer questions. The Committee came to an agreement on several issues:

- Lee Gustafson should be the voice of the Committee at the presentations
- Kevin Racek or Craig Jennings or both should be at the presentations to answer technical questions promptly and accurately
- the presentations should be made after the schematic design work has produced the firmer cost estimate with a 10 – 12% contingency figure
- the Selectboard presentation will be made first, with two presentations for citizens to follow
- the drawings of the building to be shown at the presentations will be done in a format that was not expensive, and communicated the look of the building in a way that most people could understand and appreciate
- a pamphlet with basic facts that could be distributed at the public meetings and available at the Town Hall will be prepared by Kevin Racek
- the presentation will include a discussion of the present conditions at the Town Garage and the letters from the Division of Fire and Safety that discuss the code violations it found earlier this year
- the presentation will be limited to 12 to 15 slides, so as not to overwhelm the audience
- the presentation will directly address the proposed flat roof and indicate why this is a reasonable choice despite Vermont's climate conditions
- in the drawings of the Emergency Services building, the areas for each department, fire, ambulance and police will be labeled as such
- information about the project will be displayed on the town's website, which would make it easier to see and save printing costs.

Lee Gustafson asked the department heads to come up with a list of furnishings that will be needed when they move into the building. He didn't want to be surprised by a large sum of money needed for furniture at the last minute. Matt Wilson asked if money from the bond could be used to buy furniture. David Pisha said anything bought with the bond money had to have the same lifespan as the building. A desk would not be expected to last as long as the building, but a built-in counter would be. The Committee requested a scale drawing from the architect so the department heads could start planning where equipment and furniture would fit. Kevin Racek said he would send copies of scale drawings to the Committee.

The committee decided to meet again once the proposal was received, but not during the week of November 5<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>. Graham Kennedy moved to adjourn the meeting. Matt Wilson seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the meeting was adjourned.