

**TOWN OF BROOKFIELD**  
**SELECTMEN'S MEETING**  
**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, OUTREACH ROOM**

**MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 9, 2010**

**REGULAR SESSION**

Chairman Rudy Heller called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Other members present: James Allen and Peter O'Connell.

**Camera Operator:** John David Holdcraft

**Press:** Karen Trainor, Ruth Lyon

**Public:** Acting Police Chief Christopher Welsh; Cemetery Commissioners: Wayne Yaskoski, Peter Masuzzo, Arthur Jay; Town Hall Barrier Removal Committee members: Donald Faugno; John Wild, Barbara Clancy, Clarence Snyder, Peter O'Connell, John David Holdcraft, Donna Neylon; Advisory Committee Chair, Gerald Johnson; Steven McAlister of Clark & Green, Architects.

**APPROVAL OF WARRANTS:**

This was passed over to the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

This was passed over to the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MONTHLY REPORTS & MINUTES**

This was passed over to the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

This was passed over to the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Public Access Period:**

No Public Access Period was held at the beginning of this meeting.

Immediately after the Pledge of Allegiance, Chairman Heller entertained a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for three different subjects: (reason 3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation; (reason 4) to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices; and (reason 3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation; Mr. Allen so moved; Mr. O'Connell seconded; so voted with Mr. Allen voting aye; Mr. O'Connell voting aye; Mr. Heller voting aye.

At 8:15 pm the Board reconvened in Open Session.

*New Business:*

1. **PRESENTATION BY TOWN HALL BARRIER REMOVAL COMMITTEE (THBR)**

Mr. Donald Faugno began his presentation by introducing all THBR committee members present and explained the Charge given to this committee by the Selectmen i.e. to present recommendations to make the Town Hall handicapped accessible and to make the best use of the available space.

He stated that the building (brick, three stories with a clock tower) had been built in 1904 at a cost of \$30,000 and that since then, little has been done to upgrade the building other than an investment in some electrical upgrades and a new roof. The majority of the building is not used because of handicap accessibility issues; only the main floor is used for offices and meetings.

The Committee began their work with the following in mind: “community”, “service” and “involvement” – CSI - and ended their work with another “CSI”: “commitment”, “solution” and “investment”.

Mr. Steve McAlister of Clark & Green, the Great Barrington, Massachusetts architectural and engineering firm hired to conduct the Feasibility Study, presented slides portraying each “scheme” that the Committee considered, showing alternative ways of using the space. The presentation culminated in “Scheme F” that the Committee is presenting to the Board of Selectmen and to the Town. Mr. McAlister said that the Committee had explored the use of space to house the library, senior center, and/or police station. After consideration, the Committee:

- Ruled out the Library because of the additional costs to “shore up” the building to handle the considerable weight of the books, etc.;
- Retained second floor theatre/auditorium as a community space, which they felt would be supported by voters;
- Recommended that the basement be refinished into a dry space partly as records storage and with 3,000 square feet of space in the basement for use as a police station for the foreseeable future, until such time as the Town approached a population of 5,000 people and would need a larger space. Should the police one day move from the Town Hall, then that area could be quickly and easily converted at minimal expense to office space or an additional community or senior center.
- Recommended the construction of the elevator at the rear of the building rather than inside the clock tower as was recommended a decade ago. The rear elevator location retained many of the historic features of the building (staircases) and created additional usable space for rest rooms. Upon completion of the elevator, the handicap ramp, currently on the west end of the building, would be removed and make more room for the fire trucks to exit to the street. The committee agreed that the elevator needed to stop at all five levels of the building (basement, main floor, second floor, balcony,

top floor) in order to make the entire building accessible. It made no financial sense to build only a 2 or 3 floor elevator, because it would prevent the public use of the upper floors and be cost-ineffective to add additional levels at a later date would mean taking down the elevator and installing a new one at additional expense.

- Recommended that the addition (elevator shaft) using a different design so that it would be obvious that it was an “add on”.
- Designated the top floor (currently unused “Masonic Hall”) for offices. The third floor would be primarily a large open area for offices that are not used on a daily basis such as the Zoning and Building Departments, the Planning Board, Conservation Commission. This floor would have toilets, a meeting room and a small room for making coffee, etc.
- Designated the balcony for additional toilet areas and a meeting room while retaining access to the balcony for lighting of events (that part of the balcony would not be handicap accessible).
- Recommended that the stage have a chair lift to make it accessible.

Following Mr. McAlister’s presentation, Mr. Faugno explained that state law mandated that other work be done. For example, if the Town were to only do the barrier removal part of the project (elevator, parking, modification to doors, male and female toilets on the first floor, platform lift to the stage and some work to the back stairs on the east side of the building, the costs would exceed 30% of the total and require that a sprinkler system be installed throughout the building. In turn, that would require two new water lines. The new restrooms would trigger the need for a new septic system. The new elevators would require geotechnical borings, which, in turn would reveal whether hazardous waste issues exist. \$250,000 of funding to address this issue has been added to the estimated cost of the project. If no hazardous materials are found, the money set aside could be used elsewhere in the building or not used at all.

Mr. Faugno noted that some site work will have to be done including grading, paving and a septic system. The current salt shed will need to be removed. Currently about 15,000 square feet of the building is not in use.

There was the question of whether or not, when and if the work is to be done, could the employees stay in the building. Since it seems safer to have the employees elsewhere money was included in the project total for a year’s rent at some other location.

Insulation of the building was discussed. The Committee does not recommend insulating the brick walls because wall insulation could eventually lead to structural problems and the payback time would be very long. Insulating the roof of the building appears to be a better idea. It would not be cost effective to replace windows; the work being done on the windows currently, along with plastic on the inside during the winter has a better payback when compared with the cost.

The heating system currently in the building would need to be addressed as it is old and probably would not be effective for use when the building is renovated. Mr. Allen spoke of the need for an “emergency area” in the Town should there be a crisis and residents need emergency housing. This will be taken into consideration in the final plans for this building.

The cost of the project (“scheme f”) was estimated at about \$4.7 million dollars. Mr. Faugno said that, if the Town could acquire a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and get a Farmer’s Home Administration (FHA) loan at 4% for 30 years, then the average cost per thousand dollars of valuation would be \$.58 for the life of the project. The first year would be \$.78 per thousand and year 30 would be \$.37 per thousand.

He explained that the loan for the addition to the elementary school will be paid off in 2015; that 2016 is probably the last year that the Town will have to pay toward the regional high school and that the highway garage will be paid off in 2017. All of these expenses are exempt from the levy limit, per town meeting vote. As these payment amounts are less every year, Mr. Faugno and the committee believe this would be a good year to ask the voters to proceed with this project. If all votes were in the majority for the project, the Town could have a fully-functional Town Hall in the fall of 2012.

Mr. Faugno requested that the Selectmen vote to hold a Special Town Meeting in March, 2010 to see if the Town will approve the project, contingent on a ballot vote at the Annual Election to exclude the debt from Proposition 2 ½ limits. It is expected that the CDBG application for fiscal year 2011 will be due in December of 2010 and a favorable vote of the townspeople will be needed, along with preliminary plans, for inclusion in this application.

The Selectmen asked what they could be doing that would assist with the project and they were told:

- 1) continue with the window repair work on the second floor;
- 2) Do some site preparation, i.e. remove the salt shed.

Mr. Faugno explained that there were alternatives to this project. These alternatives included “do nothing” and build a new 7,500 square foot building to be used for the Town Hall. A separately constructed building for the Police Department is estimated to cost about \$2.5 million. The current Town Hall could not be used because the problems of handicap accessibility would still not be resolved.

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, Mr. Heller expressed appreciation for the hard work of this committee and their accomplishments in such a short period of time.

Mr. Faugno asked the following of the Selectmen:

- 1) That they meet with the financial team (Advisory Committee, Treasurer, etc.) to discuss the project;
- 2) That they let the THBR committee know the Board's position;
- 3) Schedule a Special Town Meeting (STM) in March and get the appropriate wording for the STM Article and ballot question from Town Counsel;
- 4) Schedule a Public Hearing before the STM in March;
- 5) Keep in mind the timeliness of these issues (it will take about eight months to put the bid documents ready for the anticipated December 2010 CDBG application);
- 6) Make the Selectmen's position public.

After some discussion a tentative date for a Special Town Meeting was set for Monday, March 15<sup>th</sup>. This will be finalized at the February 17<sup>th</sup> Selectmen's meeting after checking posting dates, deadlines, etc. with the Town Clerk. A date for the public hearing was tentatively set for Wednesday, March 3, 2010 with tours of the building to be on 3/3/10 and 3/6/10. The voters would be asked to vote the entire amount and if the CDBG grant was not approved, the Town would include that amount in the borrowing; however, if the grant was received then the total amount borrowed would be lessened by the amount of the grant.

*Old Business:*

2. **TAPES**

Mr. Heller announced that the Board had received a DVD copy of one taped Advisory Committee meeting from Mr. Ronald Dackson Chairman of the Cable Access Committee and that the other meetings that had been taped had been done by Mr. Holdcraft on his own personal equipment. Mr. Holdcraft had agreed to provide a copy of his personal tapes although not all Advisory Committee meetings held since July 2009 were taped.

3. **CLASS II LICENSES**

This was passed over to the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

*New Business:*

4. **RESIGNATION – HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

This was passed over to the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

5. **HAMPSHIRE POWER CONTRACT RENEWAL**

Mr. O'Connell moved to renew the current contract with Hampshire power for one year; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

6. **GREATER WORCESTER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION- GRANTEE AGENCY SCHOLARSHIP**

This will be again discussed at the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting but, in the meantime, the Administrative Assistant will find out if this grant is only for new students or if it also includes students already in college.

*Correspondence:*

16. **MASS. ARBORISTS ASSOCIATION – ARBOR DAY OF SERVICE**

This was passed over to the February 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT:**

Chairman Heller announced the results of the first Executive Session of this evening wherein the Selectmen unanimously voted not to appeal the recent judge's decision against the Town in the "cemetery lot" case. A press release will be ready within the next 48 hours.

**Public Access Period:**

John David Holdcraft spoke about the Advisory Committee's meetings that he had taped and said that they were not official.

Mr. Johnson, Chair of that committee, indicated that they were going to be used for transcribing purposes; that the law indicates that video and audio may be used for transcribing; that it is not mandatory that minutes be actually taken during any given meeting but it is advisable.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

At 10:15 p.m., Mr. O'Connell moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Allen seconded; so voted.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna L. Neylon, Administrative Assistant

Date approved by Board: \_\_\_\_\_