

**Town Hall Barrier Removal Committee
Minutes of December 21, 2009
Brookfield Elementary School Library**

Meeting convened at 6:08. Members present: Donald Faugno, Barbara Clancy, Clarence Snyder, John Wild, and Peter O'Connell. **Absent:** Donna Neylon, David Holdcraft, and George Dellomo.

Also present: Steven McAlister, Clark & Green

Minutes: Barbara Clancy moved and Clarence Snyder seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the November 24th and December 7th meetings. So voted.

Financing the Town Hall Renovation: Peter O'Connell reported on a meeting with Mary Carney, who advises Treasurer Jim Dunbar on financing options. She noted that the Treasurer has legal authority to borrow money for ten years. Otherwise, the Town needs to go through the Farmer's Home Administration, go through the process and cost of obtaining a bond rating and obtaining bond funding, or seek approval for longer term funding under the State Qualified Bond Act. On her advice, Peter O'Connell and Donald Faugno contacted Farmers Home Administration and learned that the Town Hall renovation would be eligible for funding. A meeting was set up for January 5th to explore details about interest rates, alternative ways of structuring a debt and alternative numbers of years.

Mary Carney agreed to review the Town's current debts to see if any refinancing of the current debts could save the town money. Once the town has information from FmHA, Mary will provide the Board of Selectmen/Town Hall Committee comparisons of the cost of financing under the various finance options. She noted that if the Town does finance the project through a bond, it would be important in the next year to keep the Town's Stabilization and Undesignated (Free Cash) Fund balances high and to reduce Tax Title and back tax issues.

Two-Phase Renovation Option: Steve McAlister presented cost estimates for a two-phase project proposal totaling approximately \$3,665,000. As presented, the first phase would accomplish:

- All barrier removal
- The cost of temporary office relocation during construction
- Architectural and engineering fees to prepare bid-ready documents
- Abatement of hazardous materials, if any are discovered
- Site work including seismic testing, parking, and a new septic system
- Police station in the basement of the Town Hall
- Insulation of the Town Hall Roof

Phase II work would be done by the Town in smaller projects that would include reorganization of main floor offices, auditorium window replacement, a new kitchen

adjacent to the auditorium, a new vault in the basement, top floor renovations including additional restrooms. The balcony level would be left as is.

Steve McAlister noted that the Town would save about \$240,000 by shifting from a three-phase to a two-phase project.

The Committee discussed whether the Town should proceed to install the septic system, which could then generate actual information about the costs of mitigating hazardous materials in the parking area and/or whether to have the Town install the new water line required for a whole-building sprinkler system. However, we realized that neither of these could be done before we have to take the estimated cost to a Special Town Meeting. The Committee decided therefore, that any additions or changes to the Phase I proposal (such as building a new vault or doing window replacement) would be made (1) as a result of public comment during public hearings and/or (2) as a result of the actual design phase and/or as results of testing and/or hazardous waste inspections – which could then free up money in the estimated budget (or alternately take money from the contingency budget).

Questions to be answered before the next meeting that could affect cost estimates:

1. Will the town waive any usual fees for inspections, septic, etc.
2. Will the town budget separately for the installation of the water line, septic system, removal of the handicapped access ramp, etc.
3. What the options and costs are for temporary office facilities
4. Whether the Selectmen agree that the project include the Police in the Town Hall basement
5. Costs of Insurance for the project (Less than \$8,100)
6. Costs of financing the debt and whether this cost will be included in the project estimates
7. Firm timeline that works backward from a debt exclusion vote in May, 2010 and includes a Special Town meeting, and at least one public hearing, as well as the CDBG grant proposal time requirements and notification dates.

Preparation for Public Hearings: The Committee discussed the key questions to be answered as part of one or more public hearing presentations. These included:

1. Statement of need
2. Statements of opportunity (low interest, lower cost of construction, etc.
3. Estimates of the costs of waiting including escalation costs, the costs of phasing, and a possible comparison of what the estimated project a decade ago would have cost and provided with what we are proposing today.
4. Discussion of affordability – declining debt service, commitment to raise funds, impact on tax rate, cost to average taxpayer, etc.
5. Discussion of one-phase vs. two-phase: cost of each and what each will buy, leading to the possible decision to seek \$4.7 million to do the whole project;
6. Answers to anticipated questions
 - a. Should we just build a new office building?
 - b. Why have the police in the basement instead of leaving them where they are?

c. Shouldn't we have the elevator only go to the second floor?

There was consensus that Donald Faugno would cover the majority of questions leaving Steve McAlister to briefly review the key decisions made by the Committee, using floor plans to illustrate them.

The Committee discussed briefly the question of ensuring a good turnout to the hearings, but deferred this question to the next meeting. The Committee agreed that it would be useful to have a dress rehearsal prior to the public hearing.

Next Meeting: January 21, 2010 at 4:00 in the Brookfield Elementary School Library. The agenda will include:

- Presentation of a timeline, BOS decisions relating to waiver of fees, police department in the basement, commitment by the Town to install septic system and water lines, CDBG grant timeline and requirements; Peter O'Connell
- Report on Financing Options: Donald Faugno
- Discussion of Public Hearing presentation strategy
- Discussion of Fundraising strategy/commitments

Adjournment: Clarence Snyder moved and John Wild seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. So voted at 6:42 P.M..

Respectfully submitted,

Peter O'Connell, Clerk