

**MINUTES**  
**Sanbornton Building Construction Committee (BCC)**

**Meeting Date and Time:** Saturday, November 17, 2020 at 7:00 PM

**Meeting Place:** Online in accordance with Emergency Executive Order #12 (via Zoom)

Nina Gardner called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Chair Gardner read the following statement:

Good Evening, as Chairman of the Building Construction Committee, I am declaring that an emergency exists and I am invoking the provisions of RSA 91-A:2, III (b). Federal, state, and local officials have determined that gatherings of 10 or more people pose a substantial risk to our community in its continuing efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19. In concurring with their determination, I also find that this meeting is imperative to the continued operation of Town government and services, which are vital to public safety and confidence during this emergency. As such, this meeting will be conducted without a quorum of this body physically present in the same location.

At this time, I also welcome members of the public accessing this meeting remotely. Even though this meeting is being conducted in a unique manner under unusual circumstances, the usual rules of conduct and decorum apply. If you wish to speak, please wait for the Chair to recognize you, then state your name and make your statement.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by Roll Call Vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a Roll Call attendance. When each member states their name, also please state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

**Roll Call of Members Present on the Phone**

Regular Members present: Nina Gardner (Citizen Rep - Chairman), Chuck Flanders (Citizen Rep), Steve Cobb (Citizen Rep - Vice Chair), Brendan Morrison (Citizen Rep), Ken Carleton (Employee Rep) (Training), Chuck Flanders (Citizen Rep), Jim Dick (Selectmen's Rep). None of the members had anyone else present with them.

Regular Members absent: None

Others Present: Chief Steve Hankard, Sanbornton PD, various members of the public.

**Design Concept Presentation**

Nina Gardner welcomed the members of the public who were present to hear the Committee's presentation on their two design recommendations for the Police Department and Town Office. There was a total of nine residents present.

- a. Nina began the presentation by providing an overview of the Committee's history and charter, and she introduced the members of the Committee. Brendan Morrison covered the safety and security issues with the Police Department. Nina Gardner noted that the observed deficiencies were not just by the Committee – both the Town's insurance company, Primex,

and the national accreditation organization CALEA had visited the facility and noted the same problems.

- b. Steve Cobb presented the summary of issues with the current Town Office space. Nina provided the key factors that led to the Committee's recommendations for the current design options. She emphasized that the recommendations were not final and the Committee was open to feedback and suggestions from the public.
- c. Nina began the presentation of the two design options, beginning with Option 1 – the expansion/renovation of the current Town Office building and then Option 3b, the standalone PD building. Ginny Blackmer asked where the addition for Option 1 would go. Jim Dick explained the location of the addition and how it sat in relation to the fire pond. Jim Dick discussed the financing of the project and the estimates for total cost and tax rate impact, based on information received from the New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank. He explained that the current rates are much lower but that NHMBB uses the higher rates in estimates as a hedge against future changes. If a bond was approved in March, the Town could get rates as low as 0.87% on a 10-yr bond or 1.67% on a 20-yr bond (versus the 2.25%/3.0% NHMBB used in their estimates). That could reduce the tax impact to as low as \$0.05 per \$1,000 of assessed value on a 20-yr bond for Option 1.
- d. Nina asked if the attendees had any questions or comments. Ginny said she appreciated the efforts of the Committee, and that personally she preferred the 10-yr bond to keep the total cost down. Jackie Brouillard said that the Town really needs to consider the 10-yr bond. The Town can't support large, overlapping bonds – and in the event that something else major comes up, it's critical that the bond be kept to 10 years. Steve Cobb asked if any of the members of the public had a preference on design. Ginny Blackmer said she is leaning toward Option 1 from what she has heard. Jackie Brouillard said she prefers Option 3b and that it is very important to deal with the privacy issues for people who have to visit the police station for personal matters. Chief Steve Hankard addressed some of the pros and cons of both options, including proximity to the Fire Department, the school, and the impact on parking.
- e. Rachel Sargent asked what the impacts were of both options on the preservation of Old Town Hall. Jim Dick said that neither option addresses preservation directly, but that Option 3b is likely to increase usage of the building. He said the Committee purposely didn't include Old Town Hall in their plans because the work there drives the cost up significantly. He pointed out that there is a capital reserve fund for Old Town Hall preservation, and that should be addressed with a separate project in the future. Isaac Sargent said the privacy concerns were a good point and that he liked the "small bite" approach rather than the very ambitious project in 2019. He raised a concern that Option 3b would drive a requirement for additional renovation to Old Town Hall that wasn't part of the initial price tag. Nina and Jim explained that the PD building wouldn't be "connected" in the traditional sense – it would be more of a false covering that would give a continuous appearance but would leave Old Town Hall free for future lifting/repairs as needed. Isaac and Rachel Sargent said they prefer Option 3b.
- f. Jim ?? asked if the Committee would be voting on the final option or if it would be put to a public vote. Nina Gardner explained that it would have to be driven by the bond article. She explained that the bond has to be fairly specific about the purpose and it wasn't clear yet if that could leave room for an option in the design. She said the Committee will be talking to bond counsel to get that kind of guidance – and if it is possible, then the selection of the final design could be left up to voters. Jim ?? said that last time a lot of people were surprised because they were only given one choice, and he would prefer to see the options voted on.

- g. Nina Gardner thanked the participants for attending and noted there will be a final Zoom presentation on Thursday, 11/19.

### **Review of Minutes**

A **motion** was made by Brendan Morrison and seconded by Steve Cobb to approve the minutes from November 14 with any changes. There was no discussion. Roll call vote: Roll call vote: Gardner – Aye, Cobb – Aye, Morrison – Aye, Flanders – Aye, Carleton – Aye, Dick-Aye. The motion **passed** unanimously.

A **motion** was made by Brendan Morrison and seconded by Steve Cobb to approve the minutes from November 12 with any changes. There was no discussion. Roll call vote: Roll call vote: Gardner – Aye, Cobb – Aye, Morrison – Aye, Flanders – Aye, Carleton – Aye, Dick-Aye. The motion **passed** unanimously.

### **New Business**

- a. Nina Gardner brought up the issue of bond counsel. She recommended that the Board of Selectmen contact counsel soon to get information – especially on bond anticipation notes - and to make sure the Town gets a spot in someone's schedule, given the amount of projects being proposed around the State.
- b. Nina brought up the School District construction planning, and said that they also experienced a significant increase in their cost estimate. She asked if the Committee had unintentionally driven up the cost by adding features, like an extra employee restroom. Jim Dick said that scope creep is always a concern, but the few things that had been added to the design were considered necessary. He said the Committee will have an opportunity to remove some things once BPS provides the option list discussed on 11/12.
- c. Jim Dick presented an overview of the tax rate situation. He said the preliminary tax rate came in \$1.52 over the current rate. He explained the status of the unassigned fund balance and the options the Board has to use it to reduce the tax rate. He said it is important to balance reducing the rate this year with retaining some flexibility for next year, since there's never a guarantee that the fund balance will increase. That means the new tax rate increase will still be in the vicinity of \$1, even after the offset. That has implications for the building project, since it may make people more hesitant to approve a project that will add to the tax rate next year.
- d. Jim also presented a suggestion made by the Town Administrator: rather than moving the PD to a location behind Old Town Hall, move the Town Office there. That would make sense if the Board meeting room was being eliminated to provide additional office and restroom space, since the meetings would be moved to Old Town Hall. Jim noted that this was Option 4 from the Committee's report. The Members discussed the suggestion and agreed that it had merit, especially with respect to parking and addressing some of the other resident comments about preferring the PD to remain next to the Fire Department. Jim said they would have to ask BPS, but the cost should be roughly the same as Option 3b. The original Option 4 in the study added 1000 sq ft to the Town Office, which made it a more expensive option. By using the existing space within the current footprint and moving meetings to Old Town Hall, it becomes cost competitive. Chuck said he thought the cost to renovate the Town Office for the PD would be higher than the cost in Option 3b for the Town Office reno. Jim agreed but said the cost for new construction should probably be cheaper because the Town Office doesn't require as many specialty materials as the PD, so it could be a wash. There was discussion about fire suppression at a new Town Office. While the Committee agreed it was certainly the preference, the new tax rate and the additional tax impact of the fire suppression system (it adds \$0.05 to the tax rate impact of the project) have to be taken into consideration. If there is general pushback about the lack of a system, then it could be added if people would support the extra cost. The general

feeling from the Committee was that it looked like a favorable option with some benefits, but it's too early to get excited about it until we understand the actual costs better. Jim Dick will ask Keith McBey to provide a cost once he has finished with the list of options.

- e. The Committee agreed the next meeting will be the final design presentation, via Zoom, on Thursday, November 19 at 7 PM. The Committee also plans another Zoom meeting on Monday, November 23 at 5 PM to review the option information from BPS and discuss Option 4 in more detail.

A **motion** was made to adjourn the meeting by Ken Carleton and seconded by Steve Cobb. There was no discussion. Roll call vote: Roll call vote: Gardner – Aye, Cobb – Aye, Morrison – Aye, Flanders – Aye, Carleton – Aye, Dick- Aye. The motion **passed** unanimously.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:43 PM.**