

MINUTES
Sanbornton Building Construction Committee (BCC)

Meeting Date and Time: Saturday, November 19, 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 7:03 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), 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: Chuck Flanders (Citizen Rep), Steve Cobb (Citizen Rep - Vice Chair)

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 eighth and final presentation on their two design recommendations for the Police Department and Town Office. There was a total of six residents present.

- a. Nina began the presentation by providing an overview of the Committee's history and charter, and the process the Committee has followed. She introduced the members of the Committee. Brendan Morrison covered the safety and security issues with the Police Department.
- b. Steve Cobb joined the meeting at 7:24 PM.

- c. Nina Gardner discussed some of the history of the PD facility, dating back to when the office was located in Old Town Hall. She noted that in 30 years the PD had grown from 4 to 6 officers, and that the space in the Life-Safety Building was designed as administrative space only.
- d. Steve Cobb presented the summary of issues with the current Town Office space. Nina noted that when the Town employees were surveyed, they didn't ask for more space – just better conditions. Quieter work areas and privacy required for some of their tasks were the top requests. She provided the key factors that led to the Committee's recommendations for the current design options.
- e. 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. 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
- f. Nina asked if the attendees had any questions or comments. Justin Howe clarified that his proposal only addressed the PD and made allowance for no renovation at the Town Office. That was in order to keep the tax impact as close to zero as possible. Jim Dick explained Justin's total proposal for the other public members who hadn't heard it before. He also mentioned another suggestion which was to move the Town Office behind Old Town Hall and convert the current building for the PD. He explained that if the Selectmen's meeting room was eliminated and meetings moved to Old Town Hall, that could free up enough space within the existing Town Office footprint to add the office space for Welfare and Recreation, along with a restroom and possibly a small (4-5 person) meeting area. That approach could also be done with Option 3b, but it made relocating the Town Office more logical since the employees would be the ones using the Old Town Hall meeting space the most. 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. Abby Howe mentioned that Option 3b also had the advantage of putting the PD closer to the school.
- g. Jackie Brouillard said she still felt strongly that the bond should be limited to 10 years, for the reasons she articulated on Tuesday. She said she has been talking to several people about the proposals and trying to put the tax increases into practical terms. For example, the proposed tax impact presented for a 10-yr bond on Option 3b (\$108/yr) is about 1 ½ meals at a restaurant for a family of 5, or one less cup of coffee at Dunkin Donuts per week. Catharine Farkas pointed out that the 20-yr bond might be easier to convince voters about because of the lower tax impact. Jim Dick explained Jackie's comments from the last meeting about how a 20-yr bond ties up the Town's resources and could leave it unable to address any future needs because we can't support two large bonds at the same time. He also pointed out the cost difference, which could be in the range of \$400-\$460,000 depending on the starting price of the proposal. (Note: At some point Steve Cobb dropped from the online meeting.)
- h. Abby Howe asked if it would be worth having another public presentation, given that BPS has provided updated cost estimates and the numbers have changed. Nina said it was certainly something to consider. Jim Dick pointed out that if the project moves forward, there will be a required bond hearing where all the updated information can be presented. He

noted that the Historic District Commission was very successfully recently in getting resident participation in a public presentation of a survey of the Historic District (30% attendance), due largely to Nina Gardner's efforts to mail each resident a letter inviting them to the meeting. He said the Board of Selectmen could consider doing something for the public hearing, so that the discussion and debate could take place there, and not at Town Meeting.

- i. Jim Dick asked Jamie Holland for any comments. Jamie said he was in favor of the 2019 project, but he likes the reduced tax impact of the current proposals. He said that as long as Chief Hankard is satisfied that either plan addresses his needs, he is in favor of them.
- j. Jackie Brouillard asked if the space being vacated by the PD would be available in Option 3b for the Welfare and Recreation directors. Jim Dick said that was certainly an option, but it might not be the best location because it requires people to walk past the active roadway for the fire department. Repurposing the Selectboard meeting room space would achieve the same results and keep all of the staff together. She also asked if the plans for the sally ports took into account the size of current police vehicles. Steve Hankard said he believes it does, and they are usually sized for larger vehicles than the PD owns. Jim Dick said the drawings show each sally port is 15 feet wide. She also noted that Jax Riendeau and The Saplings School have very effective online questionnaires because of their design and the software she uses. She recommended the Committee contact her to get more info to help increase resident participation.
- k. Nina Gardner thanked the participants for attending and reminded them of the available online information resources.

Review of Minutes

A **motion** was made by Ken Carleton and seconded by Brendan Morrison to approve the minutes from November 17 with any changes. There was no discussion. Roll call vote: Roll call vote: Gardner – Aye, Morrison – Aye, Carleton – Aye, Dick- Aye. The motion **passed** unanimously.

New Business

- a. Nina Gardner brought up the information on bonding that Jim Dick had sent out to the members. She asked him to provide an overview of the new tax rate. He explained that the preliminary rate from DRA was \$1.52 above the current rate. The Board of Selectmen voted to use \$350,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance to reduce the total increase to \$0.96. Nina said she was still concerned about a dollar increase to the tax rate, and that it means the Committee can't be as aggressive as it might want to be with its proposals. The Members agreed that keeping the tax rate increase to a minimum was still a top priority.
- b. Nina asked if the Members felt it was worth exploring Option 4 (moving Town Office behind Old Town Hall) further. Ken Carleton said that parking was still a huge issue, and Option 4 could address that which is a huge plus. Nina noted that increased use of Old Town Hall by the Town Office staff could increase attention on it.
- c. Steve Cobb rejoined the meeting at 9:05 PM.
- d. Jim Dick asked if it was worth considering to ask H.L. Turner to do a plan for the interior of Town Office under Option 4. It would be pretty similar to any plan for the renovation of the building under Option 3b except with the entrance moved to the side of the building. The Committee agreed it would be worth pursuing. Brendan Morrison mentioned elevation views of Option 4, but there was agreement that getting the floor design first was a priority.
- e. Nina mentioned that the Budget Committee still hasn't been engaged. The Members agreed that having the support of the Budget Committee was essential to success of the project. Jim Dick said the Budget Committee was meeting on Monday and he would remind them of the offer for a brief, especially on the finances.

- f. Steve Cobb asked if there was any chance the proposed access drive for Option 3b/4 would be through wetlands. Brendan said the area is a gully, but he didn't see any standing wetlands. He will ask the Town Planning assistant to check plot plans to see if any wetlands are designated. Steve also asked about concerns of increased watershed from the impermeable surface of a drive way. The Members agreed to ask Chuck Flanders, since he is a DOT road engineer. Nina Gardner will reach out to Chuck.
- g. Brendan Morrison said he had found the agreement for shared use of the septic system at the site of Old Town Hall but there was no mention of capacity. He will check with the Planning Assistant to see if he has the site plan for when it was installed in 2005.
- h. The Committee agreed the next meeting will be the final design presentation, via Zoom, 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 Steve Cobb and seconded by Ken Carleton. There was no discussion. Roll call vote: Roll call vote: Gardner – Aye, Cobb – Aye, Morrison – Aye, Carleton – Aye, Dick- Aye. The motion **passed** unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:59 PM.