

**Progress Report to Board of Selectmen
Space Needs Study Committee
May 14, 2015**

Committee members include: Don Bormes, Craig Davis, Nina Gardner, Earl Leighton, Karen Ober, Doug Rollins and Tracy Wood.

Meetings of the Committee were held on: December 8, 2014; January 13, 2015; January 29, 2015 (Center Harbor complex); February 9, 2015; March 2, 2015; March 30, 2015; May 4, 2015.

We have met with the Recreation Commission, Welfare Overseer; DPW director, Police Chief, Fire Department Chief, Town Clerk/Tax collector, Town Administrator, Town Hall steward.

Our initial charge was to review the needs of the Recreation and Welfare departments as a result of the loss of the two modular buildings at the Town Park which were abandoned and removed due to mold, water damage and structural issues. The resulting relocation of these two departments has impacted other town facilities and departments. Although both of the departments have been found good temporary locations, a long term solution, especially for the Recreation Department needs to be developed. It should also be noted that the town had significant storage capacity lost when these two modular structures were removed.

In view of the ripple impact of relocating both Recreation and Welfare and the loss of storage space, the charge of the committee was expanded to look at all town facility space needs. We did not include a review of the Library in this study as the town's responsibility lies with the exterior maintenance of the facility (the library is responsible for the interior) which can be addressed in a proposed Facility Maintenance Review.

What follows is a concise (not fully detailed summary) of our findings to date of space/facility needs by department and function. A detailed summary will be included in a Final Report to the Board.

Recreation- A new structure, utilizing the existing footprint at the Town Park with the existing water, septic and electricity already in place, appears to be the general consensus as an appropriate solution. Currently the Recreation Department is housed in an office at the Town Garage. Its equipment is stored in the summer kitchen at the Town Hall and in the bays of one of the Transfer Station buildings. While the immediate need to relocate the department has been accomplished, it has impacted the operations and space needs of the DPW department. It has also limited use of the Town Hall as well.

The identified needs for Recreation include (of approximate size) a 24 x 30 ADA compliant building adjacent to the Town Park. The Recreation Commission provided a detailed sketch of a facility which would be a barnlike/ garage/ like wood frame building capable of housing the department and all of its equipment, both internal and external restrooms, and a small meeting room. The Commission provided additional detail regarding some specific needs of the meeting room, overhead garage doors, a mezzanine storage area, outdoor automatic lighting, security monitoring, outdoor drinking water bubbler (identified but unlikely to be viable due to permitting issues) and a safe turn around area for drop off area for children.

Mr. Leighton developed a similar sketch proposal for the Space Needs Committee to help provide an estimated cost of a similar structure. This cost can be adjusted to reflect the final design and structure. The obvious next step would be to work with the Rec Commission to bring a final proposal to the selectmen, including potential means for funding. We have obtained information from Primex regarding the potential use of volunteers for any town projects.

Welfare Department- Space has been allocated in the Town Office by creating a temporary wall in the kitchen area where the Welfare department desk and files have been relocated. Privacy and confidentiality, as well as security, is difficult in this space. There should be a door that can be closed to ensure privacy. Currently the kitchen door is closed when needed. Depending on the direction of other building/ space recommendations, a more permanent wall divider and review of proper egress/entrance from the space should be considered. A more appropriate solution might be to relocate this office to a renovated Police Department space or other newly created space at the Town Offices.

Police Department- The needs of the Police Department have been part of the CIP plan for a number of years, but have been put off due to lack of a coherent plan and funding capacity. Its relocation/ renovation has been tied to the so-called Domino Effect which included a relocation of the department to the existing Town Office, and subsequent renovation of that space. This project would also entail relocation and building of a new Town Office complex for which additional land was acquired by the town several years ago. In addition the existing Life Safety building would ultimately solely house the Fire Department with increased capacity and space for the future needs of the department as determined by the town. This plan has not had much public discussion. However, should it be the preference of the Board of Selectmen and/ or Budget Committee, it would significantly impact the potential recommendations of the Space Needs Committee.

The Police Department put forth a more modest plan for renovation and increased space for the department. This plan does not specifically call for a new building or relocation. It does, however, address a number of very significant safety and procedural difficulties in the existing space of the department. These include: a sally port (garage) for 2 vehicles; secure booking room with attached restroom; secure evidenced storage rooms; secure armory; room for interviews or filing of complaints; secure secretarial/dispatch area; employee locker room; equipment and uniform storage areas; and file storage areas. Most of these spaces require video monitoring. Initially it has been thought that these needs could be met with an addition to the existing Police Department space. However, other space considerations might lead to a different conclusion.

In support of its proposal the Police Chief arranged for a tour of the recently renovated Center Harbor Police facility to serve as a bench mark of what a small town police facility should include. A facility audit was also completed by Primex, the town's risk management provider, which details in very precise terms the real deficiencies in the current Police Department facility. Clearly these findings and recommendations cannot be ignored and highlight the need for a priority commitment by the town to address the risks and issues identified by Primex.

Town Clerk/Tax Collector- The loss of storage space at the modular buildings has resulted in important town records being stored in the old police department room located in the front of the Town Hall. This arrangement should be considered as a temporary solution while the town investigates statutes on document retention and appropriate means of archiving some of the very old and valuable town records. It is clear that this situation does not provide a secure and

fireproof means of records retention. The current safe, in the Town Office, has water pipes running through it which poses an imminent risk of damage and destruction of documents. This needs a more immediate solution. If the pipes were to break, there could be costly water damage and loss of many historically significant and irreplaceable documents.

Town Offices- The current configuration of town office space does not appear to be optimum, in terms of, worker productivity, records storage/files, and room configuration. The building also has parking space shortages. The current relocation of the Overseer of Welfare may be in a space that is below standards. There is a shortage throughout the building of private work space for those involved in assessing, town finance and personnel meetings. It has been suggested that the Board of Selectmen might consider seeking the assistance of a building professional to assess the existing space utilization in the Town Offices. This could be a construction/home designer or office space architect. Based upon further professional assessment, it might be that there are additional space needs which have not been fully identified, that could result in the need to modify/ enlarge or remodel the existing Town Offices. Should this be the case, the recommendations of the Space Needs Committee might be impacted.

Fire Department- The Life Safety Building was completed in 1986 and some small renovations were made by volunteers in 1991-92 which created a small 7 x 9 work space for the duty firefighters. The room is also utilized for radio charging and pager equipment, all of the training library and storage of EMS equipment. This space needs to be enlarged and additional electrical work needs to be done. As the department expands coverage, there will be need for additional office and work space and bathrooms with showers at a minimum. If the department was to have 24 hour staff, there would be need for sleeping quarters. The Chief suggested the work space needs could be addressed most easily if the Police Department's needs were addressed in another building. Clearly this is a reference to the "Domino Effect."

The needs of the Chapel Fire Station were discussed as the building is more than 40 years old. This building houses the second engine and forestry equipment. At some point in time it will need a new roof, either new siding or painting, resealing of the concrete pad and electrical updates, as well as upgrading of the bathroom. The items should be included in CIP as they are maintenance rather than space needs.

DPW- This department has been impacted by the emergency relocation of the Recreation Department. Office space has been reallocated to Recreation and at least two bays at one of the Transfer Station buildings has been devoted to storage of some of the larger recreation equipment. While this has been a short term workable arrangement, DPW needs this space.

The department suggested that a metal roof structure to cover all open containers at the Transfer Station would help keep snow and water out of these containers. With the increased cost of tonnage, this could also help keep the cost of what we are shipping out down, by limiting water and snow weight. Additionally, a hoop structure with electricity to house the backhoe and to stock pile sand for use on that side of town, could save the department time and money. These might be items for the CIP plan as they are not strictly space needs.

Town Hall- This building has been impacted by the need to provide records storage for the Town Clerk/Tax Collector, as well as storage in the summer kitchen for a large amount of Recreation programming materials.

The Town Hall steward provided a detailed list of proper repairs which need to be made to the building. While these are not technically space needs, if they were done, the space in the building could become more usable for the Town and its citizens. It would/could provide space that could alleviate or eliminate some need for future space in the Town. It could also provide a facility for use by town groups and larger town committee meetings. These maintenance items will be included in an Appendix to the Final Report. However, one item, to jack up the building and add a full basement, could provide a secure space for records storage and potential handicapped entrance for future use of the building. It would begin the process of doing substantial stabilization of the building. Items should be prioritized and added to the CIP.

Maintenance issues have continued to arise during our committee discussions. Little attention was paid to the “free” modular buildings at the Town Park. Similarly, we see the external water damage to windows at the Town Offices, and note the immediate concern for water pipes running through the vault. It was also noted by the Fire Chief that the station will need to be painted again soon and there is work to be done at the Chapel Station. There are on-going maintenance issues at the Town Hall and more will surely arise. Despite the fact that there is a sum of money, \$20,000 suggested in the CIP Plan, these funds traditionally have gone to dealing with emergency repairs wherever needed. It will be a recommendation of this Committee that the Selectmen form a Facilities Maintenance Committee to complete a comprehensive review of all Town Buildings in order to develop a manageable approach to doing preventive as well as emergency building repairs. The model used by the WRSD to utilize a designated amount of fund balance each year to do maintenance might be a prudent model.

Next steps.

The purpose of this Interim Report and meeting with the Board of Selectmen is to chart our next steps. Clearly we will complete a Final Report.

Committee recommends the following priority of Space Needs Projects.

1. Recreation- to enable the project to move forward. It is a relatively small project with limited cost and immediate need. Selectmen should clarify next steps to be taken.
2. Police Department- critical issues which cannot be put off in light of Primex audit. Will require good planning effort.
3. Town Office assessment- Needs to be undertaken now to make certain we are not being short sighted in our planning. It could impact how to move ahead. Selectmen should authorize a professional review of the space utilization.
4. Maintenance Committee and development of plan. This is much needed and long overdue. Selectmen should establish such a committee as soon as possible.
5. Town Hall- Continue repairs and restoration. There are some town funds available. A working group needs to continue to assess and prioritize work to be done.
6. Fire Department- Some items can be added to CIP. Much depends on town decisions including how to deal with Police Department needs.
7. Parking issues.

What does the Board of Selectmen want the Space Needs Committee to do next? We are scheduled to meet again on June 8.

Revised: May 13, 2015