

TOWN OF NEWINGTON  
TOWN HALL RENOVATIONS PROJECT BUILDING COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

September 7, 2016

Town Hall Lower Level, Conference Room L101

- I. Call to Order – Mr. Miner called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.
- II. Roll Call – Members present: Chris Miner, Chairperson; Dave Nagel; Jim Marocchini; Anthony Claffey (arrived at 5:01 pm), Joe Harpie, Ed Murtha, and Whit Przech. Others present: Members of the public; Roy Zartarian, Mayor; Tanya Lane, Town Manager; Dave Langdon, Director of Facilities Management; and Jeff Baron, Director of Administrative Services.
- III. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes - Mr. Harpie made a motion that the minutes of the August 3, 2016 meeting be approved as presented. A second to the motion was made by Mr. Marocchini. The motion passed by a vote of 5 YES to 0 NO, with Mr. Murtha abstaining (absent from the meeting).
- IV. Discussion on Developing a Request for Proposals – Mr. Baron distributed drafts of Requests for Proposals (RFPs), one prepared by Mr. Harpie and one by himself. Each draft was for the exploration of two options. No action was taken. Discussion revolved around what the scope of work would entail that the Committee would wish to see addressed, and is summarized as follows. The Chair opened discussion by stating that the Committee was looking to develop the most appropriate RFP that would include what the Committee wants. He felt that the greatest emphasis should be placed on maintaining the dollar value as a whole. Mr. Przech asked what was meant by the term “rightsizing”. This would mean the elimination of space that is currently unusable. Mr. Claffey referred to an e-mail sent to Committee members by a representative of Colliers. He felt that Colliers could also be an option. Other members did not wish to respond to or acknowledge unsolicited e-mails sent directly to Committee members. Mr. Miner felt the Committee should structure an RFP for an architect first. Mr. Harpie asked if the Town had any experience with a guaranteed price. Mr. Baron replied that the previous Construction Manager for Town Hall Renovation was hired as a Construction Manager at Risk, but the project never developed to a point where a Guaranteed Maximum Price was ever received. Mr. Marocchini asked what size the Committee wanted for the Community Center. He favors a Community Center with a double size multi-purpose room. He saw no need for an auditorium. He would like to shrink the building to acquire the additional parking that is needed.

Mr. Langdon told the Committee it didn't need an RFP in order to renovate the building as is. It already had a cost estimate from DTC. For that option, the Committee should not hire an architect until after the referendum passes. The Committee could go out to RFP now if it wished to investigate the hybrid approach that was also in the DTC report, but not for the renovate-in-place concept. Mr. Harpie said he would argue for fixing-in-place. He wants to move the project along. There continues to be deterioration of this building (the Town Hall). Twenty five million dollars is still a lot of money. He felt the Committee can still do a gut renovation of the Community Center, but it can't start knocking down buildings and relocating employees. It would be pragmatic to execute the renovate-as-is option. It is just as honorable to fix what is broken. Mr. Marocchini asked if the public would support a building project without any changes to the building. Mr. Harpie reiterated that the Committee needs to fix what is wrong. Fixing the mechanical equipment won't leave a lot of money for other things. Demolition and moving employees out of the building would be a large cost. Mr. Marocchini stated that he could not support a project that lands us in the same spot. Mr. Claffey asked how shrinking the building would compare with the 2020 plan. Can the Committee project out? Will the Town need the 20% of the building size back in the future? The need for services will expand. He saw the lack of parking problem over the summer. Mr. Miner noted that many Towns are going to on-line forums for many things. Mr. Claffey felt that people were still going to want to use the building.

Mr. Marocchini felt the Community Center needed to have the focus. Mr. Miner wants a project that will be supported. He would like to get a feel for the vibe of the project among the residents. Fiscal responsibility is huge. The Committee should identify what benefit the Town is getting and for what length of time. Mr. Murtha felt there had been considerable negligence. If the building had been maintained the right way, these problems wouldn't exist. Mr. Marocchini responded that the Committee has to deal with the issue of how to address the problems. Mr. Claffey asked Mr. Marocchini what he felt was grossly oversized – the entire building, the Town Hall or the Community Center? Mr. Marocchini felt the entire building was oversized. Mr. Claffey asked if space could be left un-utilized. He felt the Community Center was undersized. Mr. Marocchini responded that the Committee would have to figure out where to have the square footage. Mr. Claffey felt that if the Committee renovated the unused spaces, it could sell the project to the public. Mr. Langdon noted that the Town had done that already by proposing the renovate-as-new option during the previous Committee. The cost was considerable, over \$40 million. Mr. Marocchini stated he would like to see the Committee agree on two things, a 30,000 square foot Community Center, and Town Hall governmental services with less space. He can't see the Project Building Committee selling the DTC plan. Mr. Nagel noted that more storage is needed. Perhaps space for storage could be taken from space that is currently wasted.

Mr. Harpie observed that there was no room to move offices without a partially empty building. The Committee can't just displace workers. Most Towns in New

England repurpose buildings. If the Committee wanted to repurpose the Town Hall, it should find another location. The Town and previous Town Hall Renovation Committees have experienced real losses in terms of time and effort. This Committee needs to be more careful and to work smarter. The current Town Hall campus is jammed. The Town would need a new location to correct all the issues. The problems get worse as time goes by. Mr. Claffey asked if the \$25 million had to be spent at this location. The Committee could send the buses to Milk Lane and put a Community Center where the bus garage is. Mr. Murtha explained that the land next to the Highway Garage is leased from the dairy for recreational purposes only. Mr. Marocchini noted that this would open the door for relocating the buses permanently. Mr. Miner observed that however the project goes, it will be a logistical nightmare. Mr. Harpie suggested the Committee could start by just fixing the mechanical equipment. Mr. Langdon reminded the Committee members that the renovate-as-is concept addresses interior finishes, ceiling tiles and the like. Going from steam heat to hot water is the difficulty with the mechanical renovations. The \$24.3 million DTC estimate doesn't include roofs. Roofs are estimated at another \$1.4 million. The cost of the roofs could come down, as the cost of metal roofing has come down. When the Town is ready to go out to bid the figures could be favorable, but the estimator can't guess. The Committee would have to use 5% for inflation, etc. The longer the Committee waits the more it will cost and the more deterioration will occur. Phasing will be the difficulty. That is part of the project. He reiterated that the Committee did not need an RFP now for renovate-as-is, but it could find out the cost for conceptual architectural drawings for other options. He recommended giving the architect three months to develop a design concept. If the Committee is spending more money for designs, this is what others have also spent money on. Mr. Przech noted that the architect for the previous Town Hall Renovation Project Building Committee performed their work at no additional charge. Mr. Miner felt that the public would like to see efficiencies for a return on their investment. Ms. Lane felt the RFP should have options that will show residents what they will get. Mr. Claffey asked what the cost was for going out for an RFP. Mr. Langdon responded that there was a cost. The Committee would get a conceptual design with a conceptual cost. The Building Committee could then weigh in on the hybrid approach. The cost should be roughly \$35,000. Mr. Harpie felt the Committee needed to hear from the public. He favors an RFP with options, some selective teardowns and shrinkage.

Mr. Przech felt the Committee couldn't have someone design the mechanicals if it didn't know what the end result would be. He asked what the bonding capacity for the Town was. Ms. Lane replied that a recent report showed \$82 million, although the Town would not want to borrow that much at one time. Mr. Claffey asked Mr. Baron about the section on School Facilities Grant Funding in his draft. As this is not something the Committee expects to use, it should be taken out. Mr. Claffey verified that prevailing wages would be required. Mr. Marocchini asked if a referendum were held in February, would a project be shovel ready in May. Mr. Langdon responded

that it was unlikely, but possible if the Committee was renovating-as-is. Mr. Miner concluded discussion by calling for a two week digestion period of the two drafts.

- V. Any Other Business Pertinent to the Committee – The Committee’s next meeting will be on September 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 PM. Mr. Claffey requested a list of meeting dates. The aspects of both Regular Meetings and Special Meetings were stated. Regular Meetings would make it difficult for the Committee to move the dates or times of future meetings. Committee meetings are posted on the Town’s website and on NCTV. Mr. Przech stated that he would not support the renovate-as-is concept. He would support an alternate project that expands the Community Center. Mr. Harpie clarified that his draft RFP had two options, and allowed for some new space and shrinkage.
- VI. Public Participation – Gail Budrejko, 21 Isabelle Terrace, on the Committee’s activity over the next two weeks and when information gathering would end. Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive, on Parks and Recreation comments at the previous meeting and the time for decisions. Michael J. Fox, 1901 Main Street, on how his wife’s recent experience was symptomatic of the problems of the building.
- VII. Response to Public Participation – Mr. Miner responded to the earlier speakers. The Committee is looking at either renovating-in-place or consideration of an alternative. These are concepts that should be explored. Regarding the time period, he understands the public’s frustration. This is only the fifth meeting of a relatively new group. The Committee is aware that the public wants success, and the Committee wants a true understanding of what that is. It may need to quantify the cost of a consultant in order to determine if another alternative is viable.
- VIII. Adjournment – the meeting adjourned at 6:38 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Jeff Baron*

Jeff Baron  
Director of Administrative Services