

TOWN HALL BUILDING COMMITTEE/ All Boards and Committees Meeting

NOTES FROM MEETING

May 22, 2019

Members Present: Jay Butler, Jean-Pierre Minois, Mike Twomey, Tim Olson, Jeff Hubbard, Patrick Reffett, Jack Lawrence

Members Absent: Bill Olson

Others Present: Owner Project Manager (OPM), Lee Sollenberger and John Sayre-Scibona of Design Technique (DTI); Designer/Architect, Mallory Demty and Drayton Fair of Lerner, Ladds, Bartels (LLB); Hamilton Town Manager, Joe Domelowicz; Hamilton Selectmen, Shawn Farrell, Rosemary Kennedy, and Darcy Dale; FINCOM Chair and THBC Liaison, Phil Stearns; and approximately 17 others.

New Committee Member

Just prior to the start of the meeting, Jack Lawrence introduced himself as the newest member of the THBC.

Mike Twomey opened the meeting at 7:10 PM in the large meeting room in the Hamilton Wenham Library.

Past Meeting Minutes

No past meeting minutes were approved.

Consultant Reports

No consultant reports were presented.

Town Manager on Idea Sharing

Joe Domelowicz opened the meeting by announcing that he sees this type of meeting amongst all Boards and Committees as a way to promote idea exchange.

Presentation on Town Hall Renovation Status

Mike opened the presentation by introducing the committee members and the OPM and Designer/Architect teams. He briefly described the activities of the committee over the last 9 months or so and then briefly reviewed the history of Town Hall while pointing out some of its significant issues such as lack of fire protection as well as electrical issues. He then asked everyone to complete the survey to help the committee choose between two renovation options.

Mallory began her part of the presentation by again noting some of the reasons for the renovation effort, mentioning the committee members, and identifying the OPM, Designer/Architect and their consultants. She then showed pictures of cramped offices in town hall. She mentioned as

Mallory said that the committee reviewed eight different design options before choosing Option A and a backup Option B. She then proceeded to explain the office layouts, elevator and other details pertaining to both design options, noting that the principal difference was the removal of the grand staircase vs. the construction of a building addition for an elevator. She noted the \$8,583,000 estimated total project cost (construction costs, employee relocation expenses, furniture, engineering management, etc.) for Option A and the Option B differential of \$750,000 more, and then briefly presented the overview of activities leading up to the final dollar ask at Town Meeting in the Spring of 2020. In finishing she mentioned the areas of the design where the committee is looking for input by way of the Town Survey, i.e., the second floor large meeting room, grand staircase, and elevator location.

Town Survey

At this juncture, Mike, Tim, and Joe D. all emphasized the importance of taking the town Survey on the town website in order to provide guidance to the committee.

Participant Comments

Jack Hauck, committee member, Hamilton Historic District Commission, opened the comment section by asking several questions and making some comments. He was very concerned that the current Memorial Room had been previously dedicated to veterans and that the designs proposed to eliminate it. – Mike said he did not know that fact. Jack asked if we had costed refurbishing the stairwell – the committee did not see the need. Jack asked why we need the stairwell as the only reason must be sentimental or historical. He wondered if the enclosed offices on the second floor would reduce heating costs. – the enclosed offices will help but more efficient heating systems and insulation will help as well. Jack wondered why we are keeping the balcony. – we are not. Jack asked for an explanation of second floor egress in case of fire. – Mallory explained it well. Jack thanked the committee for removing the access ramp on the side of the building.

Bill Bowler, past Selectmen, past Zoning Board of Appeals chair and now Town Moderator, asked if the committee had analyzed future space needs. Mike explained the addition of office space for an accountant, ass't DPW Director, HR, and a flex office, in addition to two smaller conference rooms. Patrick offered that many employees are part-time.

John Rodenhizer, member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, mentioned that the building needs rehabilitation, including good insulation, and that as a green community we could make the building have a zero carbon emission footprint. He further commented that we could realize zero energy costs with the availability of the newest mechanical systems. At this point Joe D. introduced the town's energy manager, Vicky Massone who will work with the THBC as we move forward.

David Wanger, past chair and member of the FINCOM, asked about the cost difference between Option A and B if averaged over a 30 year bonding period. Phil Stearns then mentioned that he had met with Town Finance Director, Marisa Batista, and from that meeting he had become more familiar with municipal bonding which was quite different from one's home mortgage. He

estimated that a 5%, 30 year bond for the Option A estimated cost of \$8,583,000 would add \$0.46 to our tax rate in the first year and Option B would add \$0.50. Both amounts would then decrease over time and average approximately \$0.30 overall. Phil then mentioned that the cost of bonding was not included in the bond repayment costs but that since the handling of bonds is done by third party companies that there is a bidding process that often allows a community to actually make money rather than pay money for bonding costs.

Ed Howard, chair of the Historic District Commission (HDC), said that his committee will decide their formal opinion at their 6/13 meeting. (This meeting was subsequently changed to 6/6.)

Kristen Weiss, member of the HDC, observed that she was in favor of keeping the grand staircase as an important historical feature of the building.

Nick Tensen, member of the FINCOM, asked about the cost of new construction vs. the renovation. Mike said that while new construction would be less expensive, he would not support it as it would destroy an important building to the Town that is part of the National Register of Historical Places.

John Rodenhizer asked if the committee had looked at using some of the DPW buildings. Mike noted that we had looked at moving the DPW personnel into the DPW garages but the committee opted to keep all offices in the same building. Tim Olson mentioned that he plans to look at relaying out the DPW yard as a necessary part of this project, especially to address parking.

Russ Tanzer, Chair of the Affordable Housing Trust, asked if the costs as presented would be going up or down. Mike mentioned that the committee had not yet reviewed any of the cost in detail and that he was determined to bring them down. Tim noted that as better estimates are made that the costs should hopefully go down as design details are finalized. Jay mentioned that in recent discussions with voters who knew something about discussion, he realized that there was some confusion about costs, especially between total project cost and hard construction costs. Total project cost in our case contains employee relocation, furniture, and other elements that may or may not be contained in another project, hence, total project costs are difficult to compare amongst projects. He noted that the \$8,583,000 Option A Total Project Cost resulted in a \$629 per square foot cost but that the hard or construction costs portion was \$5,529,000 or \$427 per square foot. Jay thinks that several comments received complaining about our high per square foot costs were looking at Total Project cost vs. Construction cost. Mallory reiterated the fact that the Total Project Cost contained many items. She then noted that LLB need a decision by mid-June at the latest to proceed under the current schedule which is to complete Schematic Design and Detailed Design by Fall Town Meeting.

Nick Tensen noted that we needed outreach to get opinions. Joe D. noted that we will be shortly adding a narrative to the Option A and B layouts currently in the Town website along with the survey. Tim mentioned the urgency of the responses needed.

John Rodenhizer mentioned that the operating budget for town hall should drive the need for insulation and more efficient equipment.

Mike made another plea for voters filling out the survey. Joe D. wants to get this project done in the near term before conditions turn bad in future years and drive up costs even more.

Jack Hauck made a suggestion that the committee needs to sell this project as a matter of safety and employee comfort and efficiency.

Selectman Shawn Farrell asked what the employees thought about Option A vs. B. Mike mentioned that he and Mallory had met with most all town employees on the office layout for Option 8 and most all were satisfied.

Nick Tensen thought a mailer to the Town would be effective but then noted that it was probably not possible in the short time before a decision need to be made.

A motion to adjourn was made at 7:15 PM was seconded and voted unanimously. **Next meeting of the THBC will be at Town Hall on Wednesday, June 5th from 5:00 to 7:00 PM.**

Secretary
Jay Butler
Attested 5/24/19