

**Police-Fire Facility Building Committee**  
**Tuesday, March 4, 2014, 6:15pm**  
**Meeting with Selectboard**  
**Selectboard Meeting Room**  
**Minutes**

Committee members in attendance: Robin Sweetapple, Steve Phillips, Philip Chapman, Kathy Dowd, Dave Emery, Sr, Prudence MacKinney, Tony Farnum, and John Allen.

Absent: Eli Gould

Staff present: Interim Town Manager Patrick Moreland, Finance Director John O'Connor, Fire Chief Mike Bucossi, Assistant Fire Chief Peter Lynch, Police Chief Gene Wrinn, and Executive Secretary Jan Anderson.

Selectboard members present: David Gartenstein, Kate O'Connor, David Schoales, John Allen, and Donna Macomber.

Media present: Howard Weiss-Tisman representing the Brattleboro Reformer.

Others present: Ray Giolitto, Steve Horton, James Banslaben, Stephanie Bonin, Keith Arnold, Peter Falion, Beth M. Shrader, John Wilmerding, Jason Cooper, Paul Cameron, Stewart McDermet, Tad Montgomery, Ray McNeill, ASL Interpreters Janet Dickinson and Elizabeth Bjerke, BCTV staff and volunteers, and others who did not sign the attendance sheet.

Selectboard Chair Gartenstein called the Selectboard meeting to order at 5:35pm in the Selectboard meeting room. He confirmed that the meeting was officially warned. The Board entered into executive session and reconvened the meeting at 6:15pm. It conducted its business meeting, then took up the following agenda item (excerpts from the Selectboard minutes):

Police And Fire Facilities Building Committee - Design Plans. Gartenstein noted that members from the Police-Fire Facilities Building Committee were present and he turned the discussion over to the Committee and the design team. Present from the Committee were: Co-Chairs Robin Sweetapple and Steve Phillips, Committee members David Emery, Philip Chapman, Tony Farnum, Kathy Dowd, and Prudence MacKinney. Present from the design team were: Steve Horton, Project Manager, and Ray Giolitto, Project Architect. Horton said that the Committee approved the design concepts and plans at its meeting last week, and that the Board was asked to approve the plans at this meeting. He said that in mid-May, the design team would again appear before the Committee and Board to seek design approval before sending the construction project out to bid. He said that a milestone schedule would soon be made available.

Giolitto then provided an overview of plans for West Brattleboro Fire Station that had been approved by the Committee and presented to the public last week. Many Board members asked questions, and voiced comments and opinions about the plans for West Brattleboro Fire Station. Schoales spoke of his concerns about the size of the station, its location, the cost, the structure's dominance in the neighborhood, and the possibility of reducing the cost by having a smaller design. There was much discussion by the design team, other Board members, Committee members, Fire Chief Bucossi, and Police Chief Wrinn, including costs to change the design plans, intended use of the space, indoor storage for the communications trailer and other equipment, visual impact of the building, location of the building,

consequences in delays in the design and construction, planning for future growth and use, and reductions already from the original plans.

Sweetapple asked if the design team could provide a photograph of the area overlapped with the fire station building to scale. Phillips said that the Committee had discussed the design at public meetings, had previously approved this design, and had not received objections from members of the public or others about the proposed building design. He spoke of concerns and consequences in terms of delay, expense, and unpredictable market costs that a delay would cause.

Moreland spoke about purposes of the renovations, including problems with air quality, inadequate size of the building, size of new equipment, and lack of storage space for equipment, all while maintaining a focus on keeping costs reasonable.

John Wilmerding, member of Finance Committee, said that the Finance Committee had been studying the project and costs and he spoke in support of planning for future. He said that taxpayers were concerned about the cost. He also suggested having a dialog about repurposing the existing West Brattleboro station and suggested issuing a RFP for use of the building.

Stewart McDermet, from the West Brattleboro Association, said he was interested in the future use of the existing building, that he had concerns about costs, and concerns about destroying a structure when it could be used for other purposes. He suggested studying the issue before a decision was made. He also spoke in support of Schoales' suggestion to move the new structure back away from street.

Sweetapple noted that the Police-Fire Committee had been charged with oversight of the improvements and cost-savings, but not with the future use of the existing building.

Tad Montgomery suggested housing the communications trailer within the existing building and then reduce the size of the proposed building.

James Banslaben said that more was better when protecting emergency personnel.

Peter Falion spoke of energy concerns with all of the new three facilities and in support of climate protection. He inquired as to the plans to use a propane system in the West Brattleboro station citing concerns amount emissions and the cost of propane, and suggested using sustainable fuel sources such as wood pellets. He encouraged a continuation of energy discussions within the project.

There was also discussion by the Selectboard about the process before the next design approval in mid-May, the intended use of the existing fire station, changes made in original design plans, cuts in plans and costs that were originally proposed, and the need to plan for the long-term.

Gartenstein then asked the design team for a presentation on Central Fire Station. Giolitto reviewed and discussed plans to renovate the current Central Fire Station building and for the new, attached building. He said that no changes had been made since the last presentation to the Board.

Schoales cited concerns over costs and spending and he questioned whether the third floor space was necessary and whether it was affordable to use the old apparatus bays for the storing equipment. He suggested consolidating in order to save project costs.

John Wilmerding suggested redesigning the front corner of the new building to provide for a small observation window in the tower for surveillance over Elliot Street in order to hamper crime in the area.

Jason Cooper spoke in support of providing an adequate footprint to contemplate for future use. He said that systems could be changed in the future but changing the footprint was improbable and very expensive.

James Banslaben supported having more room to accommodate technology changes and the need to grow.

There was discussion by the Selectboard, design team, and Chief Bucossi about the use of the old and new apparatus bays, the purpose and use of the third floor space, accommodating a new location for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), equipment and vehicles that currently had to be stored outside in the elements, health safety hazards in the current building, planning for the future, and reductions made in the design and costs from the original designs.

Gartenstein then asked the design team for a presentation on the Police Station. Giolitto reviewed the design plans for the Police Station that had been previously presented to the Board. He said that the only significant change made was the redesign of the parking lot, including adding traffic calming barriers and redirection of general traffic. He reviewed the updated parking and traffic flow design.

Kate O'Connor inquired about the handicap parking space and voiced concerns about the distance of the parking space to the Library and about aesthetics of the building design.

Jason Cooper suggested moving all parking to the south side of the exit driveway. He also spoke about his objections to the aesthetics of the new building.

Prudence MacKinney encouraged keeping adequate parking close to the State building.

John Wilmerding commented on matching old and new designs and he encouraged continued focus on costs as the project unfolded.

There was further discussion by the Selectboard and the design team about parking, handicapped parking, traffic flow, challenges of adding a new structure onto a historic structure, maintaining security for police functions, and space needs for the present and future. Gartenstein thanked the members of the Police-Fire Committee, design team, and others for their diligence and attention to detail and cost savings.

**SELECTBOARD MOTION BY DAVID SCHOALES TO APPROVE THE DESIGNS AS PRESENTED BY THE POLICE AND FIRE FACILITIES BUILDING COMMITTEE AND TO AUTHORIZE NORTHEAST COLLABORATIVE ARCHITECTS TO PROCEED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF FINAL CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.**

Gartenstein called for a recess at 8:35pm. There was no further business conducted with the Police-Fire Facility Building Committee and Selectboard, and the Committee adjourned.