

Police-Fire Facility Committee
Tuesday, September 30, 2014, 4:00pm
Hanna Cosman and Selectboard Meeting Rooms
Minutes

In attendance: Robin Sweetapple, Steve Phillips, Philip Chapman, Kathy Dowd, Tony Farnum, Dave Emery, Sr., Prudence MacKinney, Eli Gould, and John Allen.

Staff Present: Patrick Moreland, Mike Bucossi, Michael Fitzgerald, Mark Carignan.

Others Present: Steve Horton, Nancy Miller, David Gartenstein, Howard Weiss Tisman.

- A. Sweetapple called the meeting to order at 4:06pm and confirmed that the meeting was properly warned.
- B. Public Participation – Dave Schoales expressed a desire to see the project move ahead without delay.
- C. Approve Minutes (April 10, May 13) – Chapman moved to approve the minutes with a few minor corrections. Emery second. The motion passed unanimously. Introductions followed. Chief Fitzgerald introduced Captain Mark Carignan.
- D. Project Update by Project Manager - The discussion began with a question about what specifically the board was asking of the committee with respect to the available options. The range of options includes finding the best way to spend the balance of the first bond, to some minimal improvements that would remedy health and safety issues, to the more robust (50 year) project originally contemplated. After a brief exploration of a combined facility at Elliott Street, the staff and hired professionals have concluded that such an option is not available. No matter what, certain site challenges exists that cannot be overcome. Other site challenges can be overcome, but that are cost prohibitive. Moreland offers that the committee should review the remaining options, schedule a meeting with the Selectboard to develop consensus on a direction forward, and move forward together.

Gartenstein explained that no consensus exists within the community about how to proceed with the project. The Selectboard will need to move ahead with developing community buy in for the chosen alternative. Gartenstein affirms that the Selectboard is aware of the committee's favor of a 50 year approach rather than a short term band aid of health and safety issues. The political will for such a solution may not exist in Brattleboro. Gartenstein offers that phasing the project sites may be a reasonable solution. The committee must at least examine the full range of options.

Allen wants to know the committee's charge. Allen believes that the committee was asked to oversee a known project rather than reconceiving a new project. Gartenstein states that given the political reality of the moment, more may be

needed from the committee than originally conceived. Phillips states that it is not clear exactly what is asked of them, and would like the committees work to be valued by the Selectboard. Phillips asks if the Selectboard has already voted to limit the project in some way. Emery acknowledges that Town Meeting approved a project scope of \$14.1 Million and how can we disregard that fact. Gartenstein reminds the committee that the budget was voted down. Gartenstein responds that the budget being voted down necessitates a reconsideration of the scope of the project, and of the committees charge needs to change to make this possible. Gartenstein offers that a new charge can be developed in time for the next Selectboard meeting. Some additional discussion about the meaning of the budget vote occurred.

Several committee members expressed that knowing the available dollar amount for the project was needed to move ahead. Knowing the budget informs the work of design professionals. Horton states that we need to know what type of project we are seeking to advance. Some discussion about setting a new budget figure is needed, given that \$14.1 Million is known to be too high. Gartenstein will make certain that the project will be on the next meeting agenda and that a new charge may be considered. Several committee members indicate that if the project is significantly degraded, that their continued participation may be at risk.

Horton passes out a revised options sheet. The new option sheet removes the life safety expenses from the Municipal Center, as they are not rightfully project expenses. Horton describes the challenges faced for a combined facility at Elliott Street. Sweetapple and Dowd confirm that the Municipal Center is similarly a poor choice for a building project.

Horton describes the nuances of the various plans. Plans A, B & B1 all involve the Municipal Center while Plan E replaces the PD site with a site to be identified. Plans C & D are not recommended by the committee. Plan E will not work. Plan F will require the identification of a new site, perhaps with a place holder for property acquisition.

Allen asks where the project failed. With the Municipal Center? With the amount of money? Bucossi states that the project is not a failure. Sweetapple asks how we move forward, because the project needs to address the problems of the departments. Phillips believes that the project is a priority, but that other elements within the GF budget should have been cut to accommodate the increased cost arising from the project. Allen states that the people made it clear that the project needed to be cut down to size. Schoales advises that the committee focus on the project at leave the politics of the project budget to the Selectboard.

Allen states that we cannot separate the politics from the project. The choice at the moment is to choose a direction forward. A previous vote clarifies that Plans C & D have not received the support of the committee. Moreland points out that Plans A, B & B1 all involve the Municipal Center, Plan F does not. There is no agreement that Plan F involves completing the PD in a new facility at the present

time versus doing so at a later date. A new PD location could be almost anywhere in town, doesn't have to be downtown.

Emery moves that the committee eliminate support for Plan C and D. Chapman second. The motion passed unanimously.

Philips moves that the committee would prefer to focus further investigations on plans substantially similar to Plan F. Dowd second. The motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting, October 16th at 4pm.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40pm.