

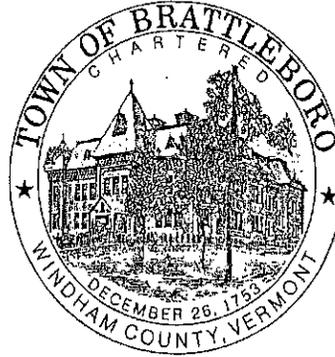
MEMORANDUM

To: Selectboard

From: Peter B. Elwell, Town Manager

Re: Police-Fire Facilities Project –
Next Steps

Date: March 31, 2016



As you know, Representative Town Meeting approved the use of previously authorized bond authority for the purchase and renovation of 62 Black Mountain Road and adopted an FY17 Budget that includes the first year debt service on the additional bonds needed for this project. Since no petitions were received that contained sufficient signatures to require a Townwide referendum regarding either the Police Department's location or the FY17 Budget, we are now ready to proceed with implementing the approved plan. That plan will provide the community with a relocated and fully modernized Police Department headquarters, a renovated and expanded Central Fire Station, and a new (replacement) West Brattleboro Fire Station. Implementation actions have already begun, as summarized below. Throughout the months ahead, the project team will provide regular updates and will bring additional matters to future Selectboard meetings for action.

Purchase of 62 Black Mountain Road

Per the Selectboard's approval on March 30, the Town Attorney sent a letter on March 31 (with a Town check in the amount of \$35,000) to the current owners of 62 Black Mountain Road to officially exercise the Town's option to purchase that property. We have begun the process of arranging for an Environmental Phase I Site Assessment and other inspection work to be completed. The closing currently is scheduled for August 10, but that could be accelerated if the inspections are completed and the additional financing is obtained faster than expected.

Financing

Over \$4 million remains unspent from the \$5 million of bonds issued for this project in 2013. Since the purchase price for 62 Black Mountain Road is \$720,000, additional financing is not required to complete that purchase. Nevertheless, since acquiring that property is integrally connected to the other components of this project, we plan to obtain the approximately \$7.7 million of additional financing required to complete the entire project before closing on 62 Black Mountain Road. Town staff has submitted an application to the Vermont Municipal Bond Bank. If we proceed with that method of financing, the funds are expected to be available in mid-July. If we use bank financing instead, the timeframe for obtaining the needed funds would be sooner. However, outreach to several banks has so far not drawn any local interest in direct financing of these improvements via a long-term tax exempt loan to the Town.

Retain Professionals for Final Design and Construction

To move forward with final design and construction of the project, we need to either reassemble the team of contracted professionals that the Town previously hired for this purpose or conduct a competitive process for assembling a new team. I strongly recommend that we reassemble the previously hired team. Owner's Project Manager Steve Horton and architect Ray Giolitto have continued to provide essential services to the Town while we have worked during the past 2 years to reduce the overall scope and cost of the project. We will benefit from their talents and from the continuity of their service by retaining them for the final design and construction phases.

In 2013, the Selectboard approved (upon the advice of Town staff, the contracted professionals, and the Police-Fire Facility Building Committee) using a CM-at-risk methodology for this project, and (after a competitive selection process completed by the same team) retained DEW Construction Corp as the construction manager. I have met with the DEW representatives who would be our project team and found them to be professional and well qualified for this project. On our behalf, Steve Horton is obtaining a design services proposal from Ray Giolitto and a pre-construction services proposal from DEW, and I am obtaining a proposal from Steve Horton. I plan to recommend Selectboard approval of those engagements at the April 19 Selectboard meeting.

Reconvene the Police-Fire Facilities Building Committee

All but one of the members of the PFFBC who served from 2013 until 2015 have indicated that they wish to continue serving as the committee is reactivated for the final design and construction phases of this project. Tony Farnum has chosen not to continue. Those who will be continuing are Chair Robin Sweetapple, Vice Chair Steve Phillips, Philip Chapman, Kathy Dowd, David Emery Sr., Eli Gould, and Prudence MacKinney. John Allen has indicated his desire to continue serving as the Selectboard's liaison to the PFFBC. If the Selectboard is content to proceed with this group of PFFBC members, we will reconvene the committee as soon as possible. If you prefer to appoint a replacement member to fill the one vacancy, then we should announce that vacancy at the April 5 Selectboard meeting so you can appoint the new member at the April 19 Selectboard meeting. Under those circumstances, we would plan to reconvene the committee during the last 10 days of April. In either case, it would be appropriate for the Selectboard to modify its charge to this committee. Here, in "legislative draft" format, is the change staff recommends for the Selectboard's charge to the PFFBC:

~~The Police-Fire Facilities Building Committee was formed on February 5, 2013. Its original mission was to provide financial and technical oversight to the Police-Fire Building renovations/addition Facilities capital improvement project. The Selectboard amended the Committee's charge on October 7, 2014 to include: that the Police-Fire Facilities Building Committee make recommendations as to costs and related plans for moving forward with That project includes the following 3 components: (1) reconstruction and expansion of the Central Fire Station, (2) reconstruction replacement of the West Brattleboro Fire Station, and (3) for developing plans and purchasing a location for a potential new renovation of 62 Black Mountain Road as the new location of the Police Station.~~

Construction Timing and Sequence

If the process of hiring the contracted project team and reconvening the oversight committee proceeds as planned, I expect that we will be able to present a preliminary project schedule at the May 3 or May 17 Selectboard meeting, and that we will be able to "put a shovel in the ground" by mid-summer. The first project to commence construction will be the West Brattleboro Fire Station, followed by the Central Fire Station (because of the substantive redesign work needed to implement the reduced scope of that project component), and finally the Police Station component (because the design for 62 Black Mountain Road is purely conceptual at this time).

Public Education

Town staff recognizes the importance of this project to our community. We intend to provide frequent updates at Selectboard meetings, occasional updates in the news media, and postings on the Town's website and Facebook pages to give the public convenient access to the status of the project and to related documents.

Future of the Municipal Center

State officials are eager to tour the Municipal Center and to discuss the potential to meet State office space needs in the approximately 8,500 square feet that the Police Department will vacate when it moves to 62 Black Mountain Road. We will schedule that tour and commence those discussions as soon as possible. Similar communications are planned with the leadership of the Brattleboro Housing Authority (dba Brattleboro Housing Partnerships) along a parallel path. I expect this to begin in April and I will keep the Selectboard apprised of our progress. While I am hopeful that a partnership with the State of Vermont, the Brattleboro Housing Authority, or some other similarly substantial entity will provide a cost effective way for the Town to maintain the Municipal Center as Brattleboro's seat of government, I understand that some people in our community (including on the Selectboard) think we should explore office space options for Town administrative staff elsewhere in downtown Brattleboro. If the Selectboard as a whole wants that alternative to be actively considered in the short term, I will explore potential off-site options while I am working to develop more specific tenancy plans with our potential Municipal Center partners.

PBE:

c: Bob Fisher, Town Attorney
Patrick Moreland, Assistant Town Manager
Steve Horton, Owner's Project Manager
Mike Fitzgerald, Police Chief
Mike Bucossi, Fire Chief
John O'Connor, Finance Director
Rod Francis, Planning Services Director
Russell Rice, Town Assessor
Members of the Police-Fire Facilities Building Committee