

New London Police Department

**Building and Facilities Committee - Subcommittee on
New London Police Department**

Buker Building Update and Stahlman Building Analysis

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1) Introduction

- a) The origination of the need for new or renovated space for the New London Police Department (NLPD) appears to have begun in October 2014, with the former chief raising the need for additional space for dispatch, and other needs he felt existed. In November of 2015, the Planning Board Capital Improvement Plan committee issued their 2016 CIP report stating that the dispatch center should be expanded, and in the future, a new station should be provided. The discussions concluding in the need for a new station are not clear in the record, as a 2014 study by architect Dennis Mires, and statements by the former chief, appear to draw the opposite conclusion. After a failed 2018 warrant request to purchase land, Harriman was retained to study the needs of the NLPD, concluding in a 12/7/18 report that these needs could not be met within the existing building. In early 2020, Dennis Mires was again retained to study what could, in fact, be provided within the existing building, resulting in a report dated 8/24/20.
- b) Since the issuance of the Mires report, additional issues and thoughts have been identified by the Building and Facilities Committee (BFC) and by the NLPD. Other conclusions in the Mires report have been questioned. Further, the NLPD has generated a proposal to purchase an existing building at 74 Pleasant Street, known as the Stahlman Building, and to renovate it for NLPD use.
- c) At their meeting on 12/7/20 the Selectmen requested the BFC to investigate the potential for the Stahlman building to serve NLPD use. The BFC assigned the review of the Buker issues and the review of the Stahlman proposal, to the NLPD subcommittee, consisting of Richard Cross, Colin Beasley, and Philip Sherman, chair of the subcommittee. This subcommittee was assisted in their work by NLPD Chief Emily Cobb, whose assistance is appreciated.
- d) The subcommittee divided the analysis into two phases:
 - i) The first phase, lasting through early March 2021, consisted of a first pass at the issues. This phase was completed without an outside architect, and this preliminary report serves to set forth the findings and recommendations of that work, for presentation to the BFC and the Selectmen. Phase 1 addresses site, space, work process and flow, and other issues, followed by a cost comparison (where costs are available), and conclusions.
 - ii) The second phase, lasting until the end of April 2021, will proceed if approved by the Selectmen, and is intended to develop these options for presentation to the town meeting in the summer of 2021 if the Selectmen choose to proceed with either option. This phase is expected to require the services of an architect.

2) Purpose of this exercise

- a) The purpose of this exercise is to update the Buker analysis and review the Stahlman proposal, setting forth the factual basis, and, in the opinion of the subcommittee, offering conclusions as to the best approach. Where agreement on a specific issue was not reached with Chief Cobb, the open issue is identified in this report.
- b) The efforts of this subcommittee are not to be interpreted as a due diligence review of the potential purchase of the Stahlman building. If the Stahlman approach proceeds, this review is required to be performed by others.

3) Site issues

a) Parking

- i) The required NLPD normal daily parking count is 12 spaces, as identified in the Mires report and confirmed again during this exercise. If necessary, the public parking in the front lot could be assigned as well. Additional parking for up to 30 vehicles is required for various training functions.
- ii) The Mires sketch indicates 18 spaces on the Whipple/Buker site, leaving an excess of six spaces for visitors or other public use. Additionally, there are four public spaces on Seamans Road, next to Buker. Some spaces within the site would be reserved for NLPD purposes, reducing those available for public parking. Parking for training functions would be partially off-site, as it is today.
- iii) The Stahlman site plan indicates that 43 spaces currently exist. The preliminary approach is that the rear lot, consisting of 22 spaces, would be reserved for NLPD. At least four spaces will be removed from the rear lot due to the proposed addition, leaving about 18 spaces. Additional spaces in the rear lot may be lost due to required traffic aisles. The front lot, with 21 spaces would be available for visitors and the public. Spaces may be lost if separate access routes for NLPD and the public are provided.

b) Street access

- i) Street access, from the Buker rear lot, is to Seamans Road, where sight distances can be limited as a function of car parking, as identified in the Mires report. Improvements could be made by removing parking or installing a traffic control device. The front lot is striped to provide entry from Main Street and egress to Seamans Road. Sight distances for this lot are reasonable.
 - (1) There has been some discussion about making Seamans Road a one-way street near Buker. The subcommittee concludes that this approach is probably not viable and warrants no further discussion.
- ii) Stahlman street access is currently via a single drive to Pleasant Street. Sight distances are poor, due to landscaping and snow, which could be corrected with relative ease.

c) Shared driveway

- i) The Buker rear lot shares its driveway with the adjacent structure, and conflicts have been problematic over the years, as identified in the Mires report. This could be corrected either by enforcement of the present easement, purchase of the adjacent lot, or by minor adjustments of the lot line, and providing two physically separated driveways within the space currently occupied by the drive and walkway. Reworking of the Buker accessible route and the current parallel parking in the drive aisle would be required. The front lot shares NLPD parking with public spaces, but this has not been identified as a problem.
- ii) Stahlman currently has a single drive that might serve both NLPD and public purposes. If this is

deemed to be a problem, a second entrance to the public lot could be created (not included in the Stahlman cost estimate), at the loss of some parking in front of the building. The provision of a single drive aisle to the rear lot, and potential conflicts with emergency response traffic leaving the site, is thought to be manageable, either by orienting traffic patterns to provide sufficient sight distances, or by providing traffic control or warning devices.

d) Communications tower

- i) The Buker communications tower is currently at capacity. If equipment is relocated from the attic of Whipple hall to the tower, the tower needs to be increased in height by 20 feet, which will require a structural analysis. Relocating the equipment currently in the attic is driven by the fact that the first floor and attic of Whipple/Buker is not currently sprinklered, and the equipment in the attic is not secure. Both issues will be addressed, potentially eliminating the need to relocate equipment, with the resulting tower work. As no engineering documentation on the installation of the tower has been located, the subcommittee agrees that a detailed record search should be performed. Based on any documentation that might be located, or starting without documentation, a structural analysis should be completed to justify the additional weight of equipment installed since the original tower installation. Further, the subcommittee agrees that appropriate security fencing should be provided for the existing tower. Both costs have been included in the Mires cost estimate.
- ii) Stahlman would require a new tower with appropriate security, and an engineering analysis is required to determine the height. The subcommittee has carried the Mires cost in the Stahlman estimate below.

e) Other site issues

i) Buker

- (1) The Mires report, appendix E, #3-4, indicates that parking on the Sallyport ramp should not occur. Parking adjacent to the ramp will be formalized and used for NLPD purposes.
- (2) The relocation of the recreation department out of Buker also relocates related pedestrian and drop-off traffic away from the building.

ii) Stahlman

- (1) Traffic congestion at both the Gould Road and the Main Street intersections with Pleasant Street, and conflicts with bus and parental traffic, require further review.
- (2) Pedestrian traffic in the area, including school children, requires further review.

f) Summary

i) Parking and drive issues

	Buker	Stahlman	Comparison
NLPD parking	12 required, 12 provided. 30 required for periodic training	12 required, 18 provided	Both sites provide sufficient daily PD parking. Buker uses off-site parking for periodic training
Visitor parking	6 provided on site, plus 4 on Seamans Road	Up to 21 provided	Reasonable visitor's parking is provided at both sites
Accessible parking	Two provided, one required	One provided, two required	Sufficient parking is available at both sites to comply with accessible parking requirements
Street access	Improvements required	Improvements required	Options are available at both sites permitting sufficient sight distances for safe street access
Shared driveway	Shared with neighbor, solution available.	PD and public share one drive, solution available.	Options are available at both sites, except the front Buker lot, permitting dedicated drives for PD purposes

- ii) Communications equipment within the Whipple Hall attic likely could remain in place, given sprinklers in the entire building and securing all or part of the attic. If this is not warranted, the existing tower requires an increase in height. An engineering analysis should be conducted, and security fencing provided, for the existing tower. A new tower is proposed for Stahlman, requiring an engineering analysis to determine the height.

4) Space issues

a) Buker

- i) Several space issues internal to the building were identified in the Mires report, categorized as "What we don't get". These included a dedicated breakroom, space for supervisory expansion, a rectangular shaped lobby, space to store a vehicle used as evidence, and a 30-person training room. Most functions were allocated the space (or more) identified on the program requirements; however, some functions received less square footage than that requested, as identified in the program tabulation. It is important to note that the Mires Report delivered a proposal with a significant proviso, that being that proposal was preliminary, and changes could be made without materially affecting the structure or the costs.

ii) To that end, a revised, highly preliminary, sketch of the Buker renovations (attached) has been generated that address many of these issues. These comments are based on this preliminary revised approach, which addresses the following:

- (1) A dedicated breakroom is provided within the existing structure.
- (2) Space for office expansion is provided within the existing structure.
- (3) The lobby is not rectangular but is larger than the size that was requested.
- (4) Space for an evidence vehicle is provided within the existing structure.
- (5) The Corporal/Sergeants office is larger.
- (6) A second bathroom is provided on the upper floor.
- (7) Further, a Whipple Hall meeting room not identified in the Mires report, which is similar to the existing meeting room, is provided.
- (8) The large conference function is satisfied using the training room that is provided.
- (9) The 30-person meeting function is satisfied using an upgraded Whipple Hall, as identified in the Mires report.

iii) Appendix E of the Mires report was reviewed, and all space issues identified there have been addressed either in the Mires report, or in the revised sketch except:

- (1) #21-1, fitness center needs to be 10 feet wider. Both Mires and the revised sketch provide a fitness center about the same size as currently exists. The specific size of the room, based on the layout of the required equipment and number of occupants, requires further review.

b) Stahlman

- i) NLPD had obtained the pro bono services of architect Frank Anzalone prior to the beginning of this exercise, and his preliminary drawings were referenced. Highly approximate square footages were backed out of the Anzalone sketches and added to a spreadsheet from the Mires report, attached. This spreadsheet compares existing, desired (program), and provided room sizes for Mires, Revised, and Stahlman approaches.
- ii) The existing building is about 7,600 sf on two floors. A proposed 1,800 sf addition brings the total area to about 9,400 sf, which is approximately the same area that is available in Buker.
- iii) Spaces identified by Frank Anzalone essentially accounted for those identified in the Buker program, although areas were not aligned for all spaces. As there is significant slack in the Anzalone sketches, the subcommittee is confident that all required spaces will fit in the building with the proposed addition, and in fact a smaller addition might suffice.

c) Summary

- i) To house the spaces identified in the Buker program tabulation, Stahlman will require an addition, currently expected to be about 1,800 sf, but potentially smaller.

5) Work process and flow issues

a) Buker

- i) Several work process and flow issues internal to the building were identified in the Mires report, categorized as “What we don’t get”. These included file transfer between dispatch and the processing/booking area, and proximity of the dispatch center to the process/booking area, to assist an officer in distress.
- ii) These issues are addressed as follows:
 - (1) The file transfer need between dispatch and booking/processing should be dealt with electronically, as identified in the Mires report.
 - (2) In the revised sketch, the stair has been reworked to reduce the distance and resulting travel time between dispatch and the booking/processing area.
- iii) Chief Cobb also felt that the Mires approach resulted in a congested layout that did not permit the free flow of people. The revised sketch provides a more straightforward circulation path, that may be more efficient in terms of use and flow.
- iv) Appendix E of the Mires report was reviewed, and all work process and flow issues identified there have been addressed either in the Mires report, or the revised sketch except:
 - (1) #3-1, soft interview room should have an exterior door. Chief Cobb agrees that having the soft interview room off the lobby satisfies the intent of this issue.
 - (2) #19-2, office area not on the same floor as processing. This is deemed acceptable in the Stahlman design and should therefore be deemed acceptable for Buker.
 - (3) #22-1, use of the training room as an emergency animal shelter. The subcommittee agrees that this use should be relocated out of NLPD.
 - (4) #24-7, building is unsafe. The subcommittee concludes that this is an overall redundant statement, addressed by other issues.

b) Stahlman

- i) The Anzalone approach locates dispatch, process/booking/cells, soft interview, sallyport and miscellaneous spaces on the first floor. Offices, training, patrol, break room, lockers and fitness are located on the second floor. Chief Cobb feels that the file storage might better be on the second floor.
- ii) Some issues were discussed, and found acceptable in the Anzalone approach, including:
 - (1) A two-story building is acceptable.
 - (2) A remote hard interview room is acceptable, provided an exterior entrance is located nearby.
 - (3) A chief’s office remote from the building entry is acceptable, although the location of the administrative assistant requires further review.
 - (4) A patrol area remote from the processing/booking and on an upper floor relative to vehicle locations is acceptable.

(5) The location of dispatch on the same floor, but not adjacent to, processing/booking and cells is acceptable.

iii) Chief Cobb feels that Stahlman seems to provide a better flow through the building.

6) Other issues

a) Codes and standards

- i) The subcommittee reviewed the fact that no legal or model standards for space planning of police stations are known, which was the conclusion reached in the Mires study. While Harriman cited national standards as justification for their conclusions, no such standards could be produced upon request, nor has research identified any that can be referenced in any NLPD design. Moreover, the Chief is not aware of any NLPD space and design standards. The subcommittee believes this should no longer be addressed as an issue in any going forward NLPD discussions.
- ii) FEMA documents make some general statements about environmental hazards, such as flood, earthquake, and wind.
- iii) Some building code requirements will apply to Stahlman, due to the proposed change of use, resulting in a change in code classification, that will not apply to Buker. It is not clear whether the cost estimates provided for a Stahlman project accounts for these building code requirements.
- iv) Code requirements are accounted for in the respective projects, except as noted below.

b) Buker

- i) At Buker, car washing is currently done by NLPD officers, outside during the summer. The desire is to wash vehicles inside the building during cold weather. The subcommittee concludes that car washing should be performed at another site, perhaps the fire department or DPW.
- ii) Three issues were identified as critical, including sprinklers in the remainder of Whipple Hall and Buker, protection of the existing communications equipment from the risk of leakage at the sprinkler riser, and bulletproofing.
 - (1) The Whipple Hall subcommittee is addressing the installation of sprinklers in the first floor and attics of Whipple Hall and Buker. This subcommittee supports this, to increase life safety, property protection and operational continuity.
 - (2) The reasonable risk of damage from the sprinkler riser is deemed to be spray from a small leak. The equipment can be protected by means of an easily moveable shield between the riser and the equipment. Chief Cobb is pursuing the installation of this relatively low-cost shield through ordinary town channels.
 - (3) The subcommittee and Chief Cobb reviewed the extent of bulletproofing provided at police stations in Sunapee, Brookline, and Tilton. Each protected the building from its lobby, and Brookline added protection at a wall along a parking lot. As the Buker exterior walls are brick, exterior issues involve only windows. The subcommittee recommends that bulletproof walls, windows, and doors be installed between the PD lobby and the building interior, and

that the exterior window on Seamans Road into dispatch also be protected. The cost for this work has not yet been obtained.

c) Stahlman

- i) The Stahlman property deed was reviewed and no apparent restrictions apply. This would need to be confirmed by a formal due diligence effort by others.
- ii) The subcommittee confirmed that the town is not required to abide by zoning requirements.
- iii) The subcommittee confirmed that all wetlands shown on the site are regulated only through local zoning.
- iv) The subcommittee confirmed with DPW that there is no prohibition on car washing facilities relative to the sewer, but that a sand/oil separator will be required.
- v) Papers in the town building file indicate some type of oil spill in 2014, and the resolution of this should be confirmed by others as part of a due diligence review.
- vi) Gravity, wind, and seismic upgrades that may be required are not included in the cost estimate.

d) Other

- i) Communications and building wiring are budgeted in both buildings.
- ii) Soundproofing of dispatch relative to noise from processing/booking and cells and other areas can be accounted for as a design issue in both buildings.

7) Cost

- a) A preliminary cost estimate of the proposed work was generated during the Mires exercise in 2020. This estimate has been escalated due to inflation to the current date.
- b) A preliminary cost estimate of the proposed Stahlman work was generated by Milestone Engineering and Construction, 2/22/21. This cost, with additional costs not included in the contractor's estimate, are identified below.

	Buker	Stahlman	
Purchase cost	\$0	\$1,100,000	
Closing and due diligence	\$0	\$10,000 *	
Contractor's estimate	\$3,432,000	\$3,336,000	Buker w/one year 4% inflation
Furniture, Fixtures, Equipment	Included	\$112,000	Buker value carried to Stahlman
Beltronics estimate	Included	\$175,000*	Buker value carried to Stahlman
Revised changes to the layout	\$150,000*	\$0	Buker cells/booking, move stair
Code required structural upgrades		TBD**	
Soft costs	\$50,000*	\$10,000*	e.g., temporary facilities, moving
Demolish Buker, rework Whipple lobby	\$0	\$250,000*	
Incremental life cycle costs for additional town building	\$0	\$385,400*	e.g., heat, repairs, and maintenance. Use NLFD as surrogate. Capital repairs not included. Present value, 25 years, 3% interest, 2% inflation, \$17,500 /yr.
Reduce Buker Life cycle cost for demolition		-545073*	Reduce 45% of current \$55K cost, Present value, 25 years, 3% interest, 2% inflation, \$24,750
Lost tax revenue, present value	\$0	\$271,000*	Present value, 25 years, 3% interest, 2% inflation, \$12,300/yr. (2018)
Renovate SAU for Rec Dept	\$225,000	\$0	
Rec dept SAU life cycle cost	\$123,000*		Present value, 25 years, 3% interest, 2% inflation, \$5,600 /yr.*use Academy sf cost x 1400 sf
Total	\$3,980,000	\$5,104,327	Difference is \$1,124,327
Incremental tax rate impact	\$84/yr. for 20 yrs.	\$108/yr. for 20 yrs.	On \$400,000 house, grand list \$1265204773, 20 yr. 3% int

*Planning estimate.

**Needs evaluation; costs could be material.

- c) While many of the cost elements represented in the Stahlman Building alternative are planning assumptions, the Subcommittee believes they are good assumptions, if not conservatively low. Moreover, the Subcommittee believes that two elements identified in the Stahlman Building alternative (structural upgrades and Buker Building disposition) have the potential to be more material than that represented in the cost table of Section 7. It should be noted that when the cost planning assumptions identified by an asterisk in that cost table are brought to zero (a completely unrealistic scenario), the Buker Building alternative still costs \$568k less than the Stahlman Building. The Buker Building is less financially burdensome in any sensitivity analysis of the cost planning assumptions.

8) Conclusions

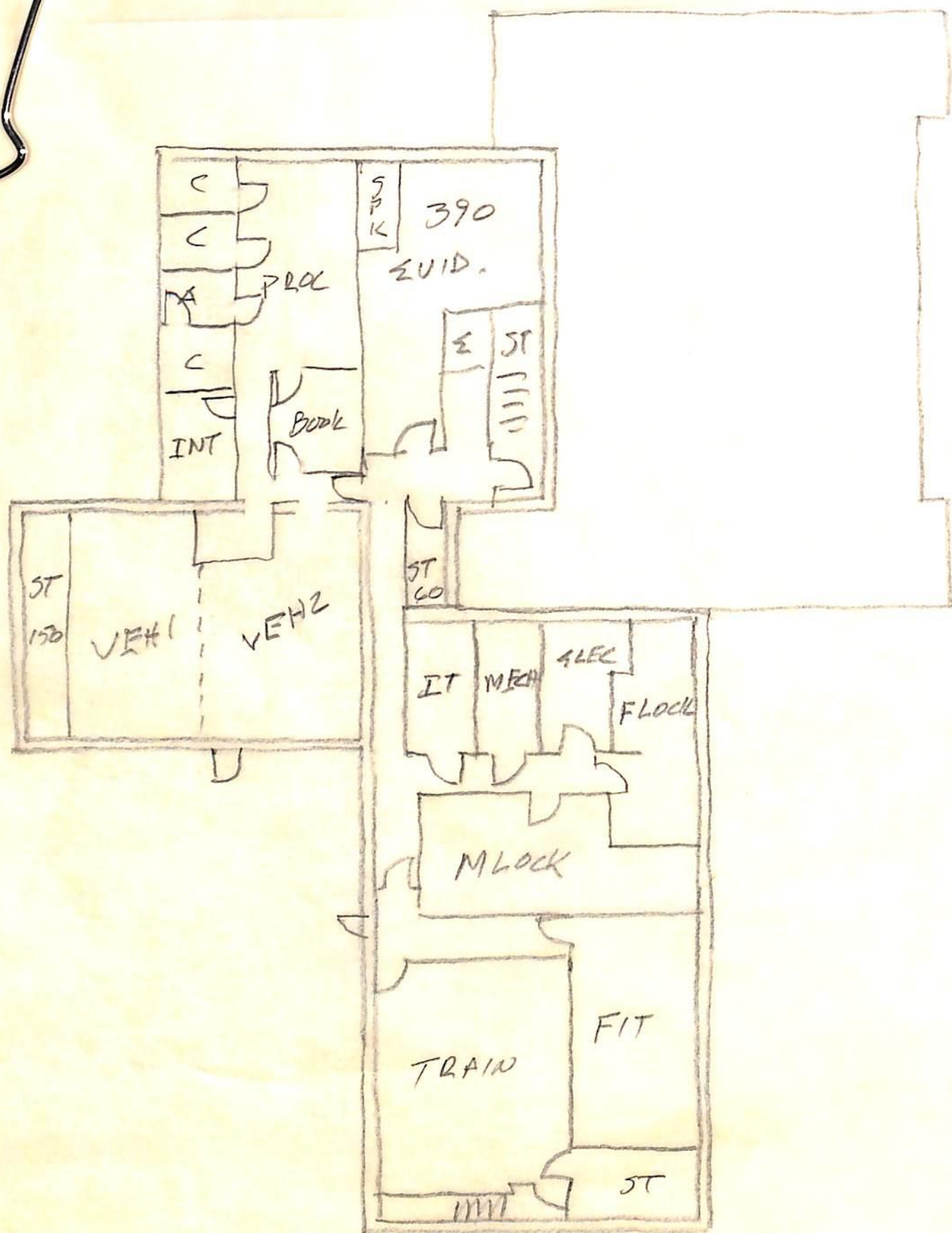
- a) Chief Cobb has reviewed the site, space, and work process issues at Buker, and has offered the following:

Over the past year or so, I have not seen a plan to renovate Buker in the existing footprint, considering the inside and outside of the building, that would adequately address the needs of the police department and communications center.

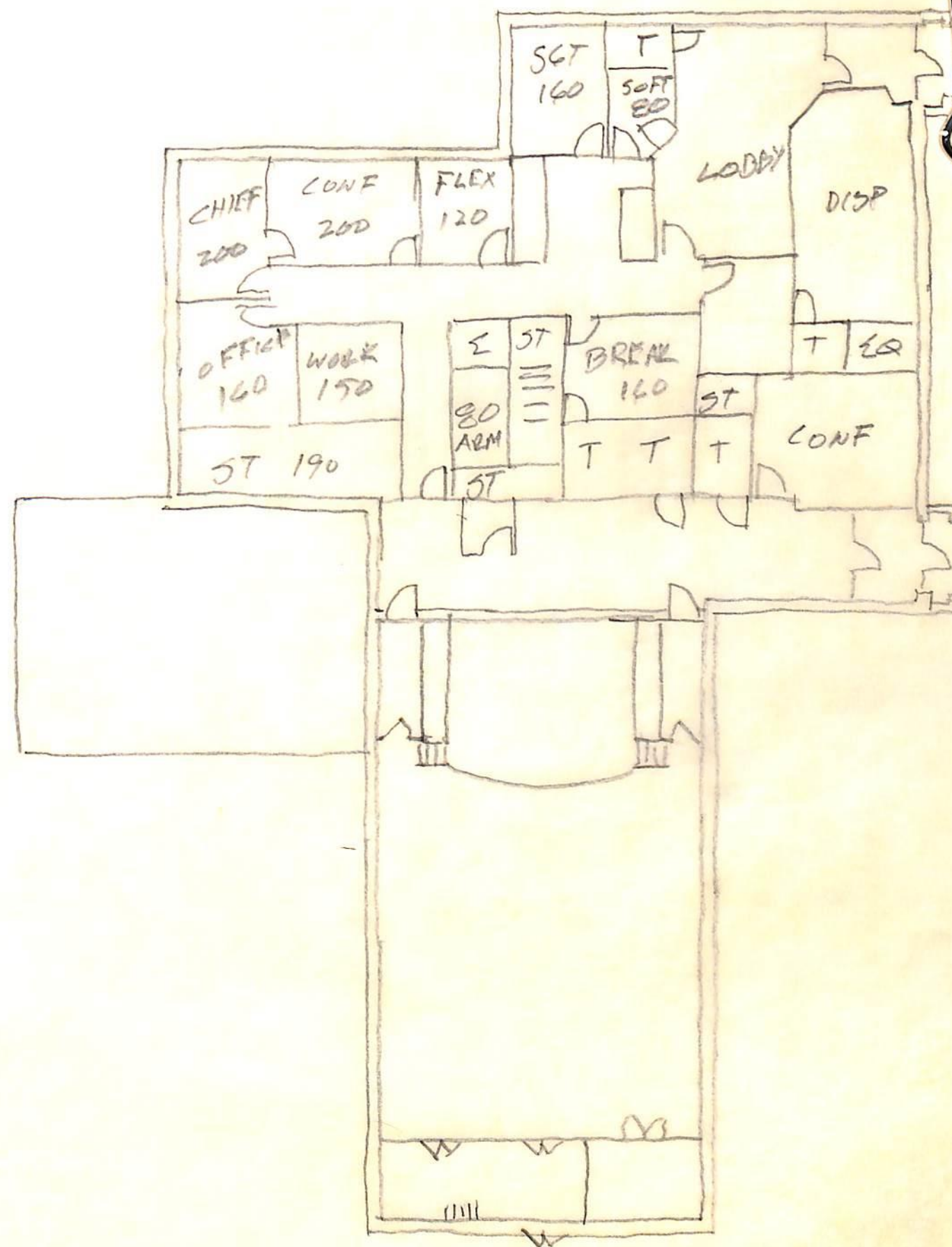
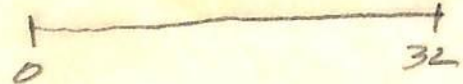
Respectfully, I believe the Stahlman building is a worthy option to continue investigating.

- b) The committee exhaustively reviewed site, space, and process/workflow issues for both Buker and Stahlman. The subcommittee has provided a revised sketch that provides all identified needs except for a large meeting room. The large conference function is accommodated in the proposed training room, and large training functions are accommodated in an upgraded Whipple Hall. The subcommittee finds that space needs can be accommodated at Stahlman only with the construction of an addition. The above report clarifies that the subcommittee has addressed all of the issues raised by Chief Cobb and former Chief Anderson.
- c) Given the fact that there is no identified need for Buker if vacated by NLPD, the town would be burdened with additional costs associated with a vacant building and the community impact of abandoning a public building. The subcommittee has factored into the Stahlman alternative costs associated with the Buker building demolition. The subcommittee believes demolition is the appropriate planning assumption to avoid the ongoing costs of maintaining a vacant building, the community impact of a public building vacancy and / or the implication of town departments filling the building with an ineffective use, and the associated physical, and perhaps personnel, costs to do so.
- d) Given that no identified issues have been found that cannot be resolved at Buker, and the fact that preliminary estimates indicate the Stahlman alternative would cost \$1.1 million more than that to renovate Buker, the subcommittee finds no reason that the purchase of the Stahlman building should be investigated further.

	Existing	Program	Buker Mires	Buker Revised	Stahlman Anzalone	
Vestibule	83	83	83	83	362	
Lobby	226	250	326	392		Buker existing total 333
Dispatch	289	450	448	448	660	
Soft interview	80	80	120	80	135	
Administrator	120	140	140	140	110	
SGT/CPL	112	112	112	160	120	
Chief	145	200	272	200	135	
LT/DET	160	166	253	160	115	
Patrol	411	192	276	200	365	
Conference	0	400	338	200	110	
Work	169	156	120	150	0	
Hard Interview	0	80	96	0	0	
Storage	218	144	173		130	
IT	107	120	120	120	0	
Break	150	120	0	160	160	
Armory	43	80	56		60	
Mlocker	143	320	332	332	145	
Wlocker	123	200	218	218	115	
Booking, process	394	400	412	924	637	
Adult holding	94	94	94			
Juv holding	47	47	47			
Juv ante room	61	61	61			
hard interview	82	82	82			
Trap	38	38	38			Buker existing total 722
Secure vestibule	108	108	108		0	
Sallyport	587	587	457	835	900	
Sallyport storage	0	0	130	150	0	
Evidence	237	372	428	390	230	
Fitness	385	450	371	371	550	
Training 30 people	864	500	563	563	790	
Storage	156	373	0		270	
Mechanical	104	104	104	104	177	
Electrical	114	114	114	114		Buker existing total 218
Janitor	25	50	69		50	
Staff toilet	0	56	64		75	
Utility	36	36	120		0	
Net total	5911	6765	6745		6401	
Net recreation	1060					
Grossing factor	1.34	1.38	1.39		1.47	
Gross total	9351	9351	9351		9400	



LOWIE LEVEL
02/25/21



UPPER LEVEL
02/25/21

