



TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES Wednesday, October 14, 2020 Whipple Memorial Town Hall 6:00 PM

PRESENT:

Janet Kidder, Chairman
Nancy Rollins, Selectman
John Cannon, Selectman
Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT:

Emily Cobb, New London Police Chief
Justin Garcia, Recreation Commission
Bill Helm, New London resident
Tina Helm, New London resident
Maureen Prohl, Citizen's Advisory Committee Chair
Leigh Bosse, *The Messenger*
Building and Facilities Committee Members: Bob Bowers, Peter Bianchi, Joe Cardillo, Peter Hoglund, Rip Cross, Colin Beasley

Chair Kidder called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Dennis Mires, P.A. & Building & Facilities Committee Presentation

Dennis Mires, P.A. The Architects, presented his report "New London Police Department - Renovate Buker Building - Summary of Findings." Mr. Mires explained that he looked at the existing plans of the building and developed proposed modifications to those plans. Based on the plan, a detailed budget was built, and formed the basis of the total project cost which comes in at \$3.3 Million dollars.

Mr. Mires explained that the Program fits within the available space with the exception of a dedicated breakroom, a large training room, additional garage space for processing vehicles held for evidence, and expansion space for supervisory offices. It was noted that many of these issues can be accommodated in other ways.

Chair Kidder asked if it was fair to say that if Mr. Mires were to design a Police Station for the number of officers we have, this would not be the design he would bring forth. Mr. Mires responded he was not charged with designing a Police Station he was charged with overlaying the program and feels they have done a good job showing how they can accommodate the needs with the modifications presented. He agrees that not all program issues are 100% accommodated the way they would like them done.

Bob Bowers, Chair of the Buildings and Facilities Committee, reported that based on the report the committee felt it was unanimous that the town should not be seeking to build a new building for the Police Department. The square footage is almost sufficient for everything that was outlined in the

original statement that former Police Chief Ed Andersen had listed as issues. The location is ideal as it is accessible and near the college. Parking has been discussed several times and the Committee concluded that twelve spaces are sufficient so there is enough parking onsite. This proposal works on this site and there are many reasons to keep it on this site.

Mr. Bowers noted any serious security and safety issues that have been identified should be dealt with earlier rather than later.

Colin Beasley commented that it is important to look at the data. The Buker building has sufficient space to meet the program requirements of the Police Department. Mr. Beasley noted that this is a preliminary design, and it can be modified. He stated that moving the Police Station elsewhere may be compromising the character and historical value of the town.

Chair Kidder asked Mr. Bowers if the intention is to put this on the warrant for the FY2022 budget for March. Mr. Bowers stated it is not their intention until they get support from Chief Cobb. It would not be wise for the town to move forward with a proposal to spend money if the Chief of Police is opposed to it.

Police Chief Emily Cobb stated she has participated in many meetings with members of the Building and Facilities Committee. She is new to her role as Chief of Police and has been dealing with challenges related to the COVID 19 pandemic. She appreciates their patience as she has transitioned during this process. Chief Cobb stated she has concerns about the “what they don’t get” list. There have been several options listed as possible solutions to these items, however she is not convinced these are viable solutions including an addition, offsite storage or purchasing of the adjacent property. This indicates the building does not fit what their needs are. It is also unclear what the timeline projection would be if the project were to move forward. She is also concerned about the workflow of the space and it seems cramped. Colin Beasley responded that the projection is until the year 2037.

Chief Cobb observed that the people of the town should feel confident that a project of this magnitude is going to address Police Department needs for the foreseeable future. This should not be a short-sighted solution because it is cheaper. She hasn’t heard enough about the daily operations and functionality of the space to determine that the renovation is worthwhile and fiscally responsible. Analyzing the data is important but it does not allow for the humanity of what the Police Department requires. There are several things outside of the building that should be taken into consideration as well.

Chief Cobb stated she cannot support the renovation as it stands as it does not seem fiscally responsible and there is a fairly big list of things they will not get. All of the department needs should be addressed.

Selectman Rollins asked Chief Cobb to discuss the safety and security issues. Chief Cobb stated the electronic equipment should be relocated but is unsure of what that entails. Bullet proof glass and walls should be addressed.

Town Administrator Kim Hallquist stated the Chief of Police transitioned to her new position at the worst possible time due to the pandemic, however, she brought herself up to speed amazingly fast. Ms. Hallquist stated that during meetings with the Subcommittee and Mr. Mires, it did not seem to her that anyone was looking at operational efficiencies and were just trying to fit things in. Although the Police Department is functioning in the space now, it was Ms. Hallquist’s impression that they would be thinking more long term. Ms. Hallquist stated it is important to find out what the taxpayers want and if they support what the Police Department feels they need. The Police Department should have a space that they can be successful in.

Peter Bianchi commented that anything that can be done to protect the dispatchers and Police Officers should be done, noting there was a shooting in Newbury several years ago. Ms. Hallquist agreed and stated that protective measures should be considered for the Academy Building as well, pointing out that the Newbury incident occurred at their town offices.

Bill Helm thanked the Building and Facilities committee and noted that two years ago there seemed to be some mistrust and disagreement when the Harriman study was done. The Mires report seems to reaffirm much of what they learned back then. The town needs to stand back and look at the other things that are on the agenda and start thinking about long term plans. Mr. Helm stated we are still waiting to see the Master Plan and it seems inappropriate to spend any money without the opportunity of looking at that first. Mr. Helm does not think anything should happen at the next town meeting as it is way too soon since it is already October. He encouraged the Selectmen to slow down and consider all of the other issues facing the town.

Chair Kidder would like to get estimates for bullet proof glass for the Police Department and the Academy building. Selectman Rollins would also like to explore the relocation of the electronic equipment and get an estimate for a sprinkler system.

Selectman Rollins expressed frustration and would like to see the Outing Club and the Recreation Department come up with a proposal or plan to come before the Board of Selectmen. Bob Bowers offered to meet with the SAU to get information as a potential space for the Recreation Department. Selectman Rollins feels that space is much more suitable than Whipple Hall. Chair Kidder stated the Recreation commission met today and will be meeting with the Board of Selectmen on Monday night.

The Building and Facilities Committee will be meeting with the Police Chief regarding safety issues with the building.

Determine location for next CAC meeting, November 7, 2020 – Deferred until the next meeting

UPCOMING MEETINGS & SPECIAL EVENTS

- Next Regular Selectmen's meeting – Monday, October 19th - 6:00 PM – via Zoom
- Selectmen and Budget Committee Joint meeting to work on FY2022 Budget – Monday, October 19th – 6:30PM – via Zoom
- Conservation Commission – Wednesday, October 21st – 8:30AM via Zoom
- Master Plan Committee – Thursday, October 22nd – 8:30AM - via Zoom
- Buildings & Facilities Committee – Thurs., October 15th – 6:30 PM – Whipple Town Hall
- Planning Board – Tuesday, October 27th – 6:30 PM via Zoom

IT WAS MOVED (Nancy Rollins) AND SECONDED (John Cannon) to adjourn. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Trina Dawson
Recording Secretary
Town of New London