

Building and Facilities Committee
Minutes of 11-19-20; Zoom.

Members Present: Bowers, Hogle, Cross, Bianchi, Sherman, Cardillo, Beasley; Absent: Cannon,

Also present: Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. The roll was called, and each member present stated that no one else was in the room with that member.

1. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting of November 12, 2020, were reviewed by the Committee and were then approved unanimously.

2. Discussion of DPW Presentation/Report

The Chair suggested that the Committee first address questions about the DPW presentation and report; then take up old business after that. Discussion ensued, and Mr. Bianchi suggested that the Committee should ultimately make recommendations to the Selectmen related to the DPW. There was general agreement on that suggestion, such as whether the Town should seek to purchase the land that is for sale abutting the DPW property, and whether there is any need for other construction (buildings) on the property at the present time. The Committee agreed to postpone until the next meeting any recommendations.

Mr. Cardillo noted that the issues regarding the transfer station seem to be postponed continuously and have not been resolved. (Transfer Station study has been delivered to the Committee and is available on the Town website.) The Committee inquired of Ms. Hallquist as to whether the Selectmen were acting on this study, and she responded that there were other issues facing the Town which the Selectmen determined were of higher priority. The Committee agreed to discuss the transfer station in more depth at its next meeting, including what could be done with the current "cottage" on the property, now used for recyclable storage, Town records storage, and the bathroom facilities for employees. One suggestion made was to tear it down and build a new structure better designed to handle all recyclables on that site, rather than moving them to the DPW site for storage. That would free up the space currently used for that purpose to be available for other DPW purposes. Mr. Sherman noted that Mr.

Harrington's discussion about moving the metal and brush recycling to the transfer station would not result in any personnel savings and would add more traffic to the transfer station site. He suggested that this issue should be discussed in terms of whether such a move is an actual need, or even a good idea.

Mr. Beasley suggested that it would be important for the Committee to lay out for the Selectmen a list of priorities related to buildings and facilities, listed in order of value of investment to the Town, *i.e.*, which are critical needs and which are things that would be nice to have, but aren't critical to Town operations. The Committee agreed that a future meeting should be devoted to this topic and to setting forth an overall assessment of all buildings and facilities. Mr. Sherman noted that there are other buildings – sewer building, beach facilities – that haven't required review for current needs, but which should be included in any overall assessment.

The Committee then discussed the work being done by Mr. Harrington to establish a facilities management data base and ongoing personnel management of that operation. The Committee was very supportive of those efforts and felt Mr. Harrington was doing a good job in its initial stages. There was concern that it would require constant attention, and should not just be an inventory that sits in a file and is not attended to on a regular basis, and that it should be established in a way that will ensure its continued viability through future DPW Directors. The Committee concluded that it should ask for a statement of current status on those efforts and should request a periodic report and review of those efforts going forward, until it is fully operational, which the Committee felt should be no more than six months. This will be addressed to Mr. Harrington.

Mr. Sherman noted that Mr. Harrington had mentioned the need to keep a spare sewer pump under cover and that it was in the garage at the sewer building, so that the garage was not available for a truck used by the sewer manager. He wondered why this could not be moved to one of the other buildings available to the DPW. Other members had questions about other stated needs, and whether they could be handled without any additional construction. The Committee decided to address these question at its next meeting; and the Chair will invite Mr. Harrington for that purpose.

Mr. Bowers informed the Committee, and Ms. Hallquist, that although he had said at the last meeting that he would meet with Ms. Hallquist, Bob Brown, Mr. Harrington, and perhaps Mr. Hogle (who is an abutter) regarding the possible purchase of land abutting the DPW, he did not feel he had anything to offer on behalf of the Committee in that discussion, and would not be participating.

3. *Old Business*

The Chair noted that there were several items of old business that should be discussed further. One was whether the Committee wished to discuss further with Chief Cobb her concerns with the Mires study as stated to the Selectmen at their meeting on October 14, 2020, at which most Committee members were present. He informed the Committee that he had put into bullet point format those concerns and would send it to the Committee. After discussion the Committee concluded that Chief Cobb had made her concerns known to the Committee, and that the Committee pointed out to her that those concerns could be addressed in the process of formalizing any final plans, if the Mires alternative were pursued. Therefore, there was no need to invite her to return to the Committee on these concerns.

The Committee then expressed some concern about Chief Cobb's expressed interest in the "Stahlman" building for a new police department and what the status of that was. The Chair noted that the Committee had sent a Memorandum to the Selectmen asking that, if this subject came before them for consideration, the Selectmen refer the matter to this Committee. He also noted that he had sent a copy of that Memorandum to Chief Cobb, in which he invited her to bring the topic directly to this Committee if she wished its input, and that we would be glad to discuss it with her.

The Chair then informed the Committee that he had misunderstood the Selectmen's request to him at the meeting on October 14, 2020. He had understood that Nancy Rollins with no objection from the other Selectmen had asked him, individually, as Chair of the Committee, if he would meet with Chief Cobb to sort out what safety and security issues she wished to have addressed, and to work through the timetable for attending to those issues, and attempt to establish a cost for those issues. He had met with Chief Cobb, along with John

Cannon, to discuss those issues, and they had sent to the Selectmen a Memorandum as to their conclusions, a copy of which was sent Committee members. (Attachment A.) The final approved minutes of that meeting, however, state: "The Building and Facilities Committee will be meeting with the Police Chief regarding safety issues with the building." Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator, has confirmed to him that this is in fact what was intended by the Selectmen. Thus, the minutes do not reflect that the Chair was asked to meet individually, as Chair, with Chief Cobb. Because the Committee has on earlier occasions discussed and discouraged individual Committee members meeting separately with Chief Cobb on matters within the Committee's purview, and the Chair has honored that sentiment except in this instance of misunderstanding, he does not feel he had the authority to meet with Chief Cobb, and, as such, his meeting was *ultra vires*, with neither the Selectmen's nor the Committee's specific authority to do so.

He then asked how the Committee wished to address this issue. Upon discussion, the Committee concluded that there was no need to take any action with regard to the Memorandum sent to the Selectmen by Chief Cobb, John Cannon, and the Chair. However, the consensus was that this issue, based on the Selectmen's minutes, should be addressed to a subcommittee, and, further, that there was no need to form a new subcommittee; rather, this should be given to the existing Police Station Subcommittee to handle. The Chair then assigned the resolution of these issues to that Subcommittee.

There followed discussion on procedure in the Subcommittee on these issues, with the conclusion that this work should be addressed simultaneously with the issue of renovations to Whipple Hall, which was the subject of the recent Memorandum to the Selectmen. (Attachment B.) The Committee felt that the same professional retained for the work related to Whipple Hall should also be retained to look at the issues of safety and security raised by Chief Cobb and offer advice on the matter. Based on this, the Chair will send to the Selectmen a Memorandum making that request and will forward it to Committee members before sending it out to be sure there are no misunderstandings.

Mr. Cross then inquired regarding Selectmen's minutes referencing installing curtains in Whipple Hall. Ms. Hallquist responded that they were

moving forward with that effort, and with the advice of Mr. Perkins, Archivist, hoped to have something done soon. Mr. Cross objected to that, as did other members of the Committee, since all the work there, including any installation of drapes, should be done pursuant to a carefully designed plan for the entire space to ensure all proper steps are taken for sound quality and historic preservation in the room. Drapes are a part of that analysis and should be included in the work the Committee has requested in its Memorandum to the Selectmen.

There was then discussion of future meetings. In addition to a meeting to discuss DPW issues, and a meeting to discuss overall priorities, a meeting will be dedicated to revisiting the Committee's original statement of purpose, which was presented to the Selectmen as a work in progress that would likely be amended as the Committee established a better understanding of what is involved. The Chair will send to the Committee the background information developed by the Committee and the Selectmen.

4. *Other items to come before the Committee*

- a. None.

5. *Action Items.*

- a. The Chair to contact Mr. Harrington and request that he provide the Committee with a timeline for when the facilities management plan is fully in place and operational; and request that a description from Mr. Harrington of his view of what this plan will look like.
- b. The Chair to invite Mr. Harrington to the Committee's meeting on December 3, 2020, and inform him that the Committee would like to discuss further the stated needs of the DPW.
- c. Chair to send to Committee information on purposes and on Chief Cobb's concerns (10-14-20) re Mires report.

The next meeting is by Zoom, on Thursday, December 3, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bowers, Chair

ATTACHMENT A
MEMORANDUM

To: Selectmen

From: P.D. Chief Emily Cobb; Selectman John Cannon; BFC Chair Bob Bowers

Date: November 13, 2020

Re: Police Department Safety and Security

The Selectmen requested at their meeting on October 14, 2020, that Chief Cobb and BFC Chair Bob Bowers meet to determine the immediate needs, for the upcoming budget year, for safety and security measures at the Police Department. By agreement, Selectman Cannon joined the discussion due to his knowledge and background on some of these issues. They met at the office of Chief Cobb on Thursday, October 29, 2020.

At that meeting, they discussed the three Safety and Security Investments as determined by the BFC and as noted in Scenario B of the BFC Fourth Report to Selectmen dated September 24,: (1) a sprinkler system and fire safety improvements; (2) bullet-proof glass and walls at specified locations; and, (3) relocation of the electronic equipment now housed in the room containing the water intake system and piping.

Sprinklers

The group concluded that the addition of sprinklers is an essential upgrade for not only the safety of the officers and personnel, but also more generally for the safety of all who use the building, including Whipple Hall, and for the protection of the integrity of the building itself. They concluded that whether the P.D. remained in its current location, or was relocated, it was an essential safety measure to have sprinklers installed as the Buker Building and Whipple Hall are municipal buildings and therefore warrant a fire suppression system. They also concluded that it is not just the area of the P.D. without sprinklers that should be attended to, but all of Whipple Hall, which presents the same personal safety issues; and, in addition, it would provide protection for the integrity of public safety operations (not only for the Town of New London, but for all of the

regional municipalities that the Town contracts dispatch services to) while the P.D. remains in the Buker Building.

Mr. Bowers will gather existing information from Tracy Library and Town Administrator Hallquist as to the contractors used and the contract cost for installing sprinkler systems in the Library and Academy building. Information available indicates that the cost at the Academy building is in the neighborhood of \$50,000, and at the Library \$250,000. Mr. Bowers will get the specifics of this information, and will contact one or both of those contractors about reviewing the area in question as to both process and cost. Continuation of operation of Police Department activities is an essential element of that inquiry. Meeting(s) will be scheduled to accommodate the schedules of Chief Cobb and Selectman Cannon.

Recommendation: It is recommended to the Selectmen that they explore options for a sprinkler system and fire safety improvements to possibly include within this Town budget cycle funding to install an operable sprinkler system to cover those areas of the Buker Building not already covered, and Whipple Hall; and that the Selectmen establish a “placeholder” in this budget for this work in an amount acceptable to the Selectmen, with a more specific amount stated when that information becomes available.

Bulletproofing

There are many elements to be considered in providing bulletproofing for the P.D. The most immediate would be the street-facing window serving the communications center. Other areas may include walls where appropriate and the bay window in the patrol officer area and other office windows. Chief Cobb stated several concerns: (1) work of this nature should not be undertaken without a thorough analysis of any disruption in operations; (2) there should be a cost analysis to determine different costs for different scenarios; and (3) depending on the answers to the first two concerns, care should be taken not to invest heavily in this until the Town determines whether the P.D. will remain in Buker or will be relocated.

With this in mind, the group proposed to undertake to determine the answers to these first two concerns in order to have clear information to apply to the third concern – if the P.D. is to be relocated, the work would not proceed; and if the P.D. were to remain in Buker, bulletproofing would be undertaken based upon the input received.

Chair Bowers will gather information regarding bulletproofing and share it with the group, so that they can move forward on understanding the costs and construction concerns that will be involved.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Selectmen take no action to include bulletproofing in this budget year; but be prepared to do so in the future based upon the determination of the location of the Police Department.

Communication/Electronic equipment relocation

Chief Cobb stated that the relocation of the communication/electronic equipment from its current location is an operational concern; but, she noted that there are back-up systems in place to deal with sudden, short-term outages. Chief Cobb will review the back-up protocol that is in place and will undertake testing that protocol to be sure of its viability in case of an emergency.

With this in mind, the group agreed to undertake to determine the answers to these first two concerns (disruption of operations; cost) in order to have clear information to apply to the third concern – whether the P.D. is to be relocated, or will remain in Buker. Relocation of this equipment, and any schedule for doing so, would be undertaken based upon the input received.

Chief Cobb will contact Beltronics, the firm which has done, and continues to do, the work of this nature for the P.D., and will schedule a meeting with the group and Beltronics, accommodating their respective schedules, so that they can move forward on understanding the costs and construction concerns that will be involved, including where the equipment would be relocated.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Selectmen take no action to include relocation of the communication/electronic equipment in this budget year; but be prepared to do so in the future based upon the determination of the location of the Police Department.

ATTACHMENT B

MEMORANDUM

To: Selectmen
From: Building and Facilities Committee
Date: November 13, 2020
Subject: Request for Actions

The Building and Facilities Committee met on November 5, 2020, and determined that it should request actions from the Selectmen on three matters: (1) Whipple Hall renovations; (2) Building Inspector; and, (3) referral to the Committee of all considerations of real estate purchases and uses of Town buildings and facilities.

Whipple Hall

Town Administrator Kim Hallquist has filed a supplemental report with the Committee regarding her assessment of the potential need for more meeting space and a possible need for expansion of existing office space; and reported to the Committee on this at its meeting on November 5, 2020. She confirmed that this is not an immediate need, and the current problem of space relates mainly to Covid restrictions. In the ensuing discussion, the Committee concluded that these needs could best be addressed by initiating and completing work at Whipple Hall as soon as possible to make it appropriate and adequate for meeting space for Boards and Committees. This would allow the use of the Syd Crook room for the expansion of office space in the Academy building, when and if it became necessary to do so.

The Committee concluded that: (1) it is a priority for the Town to make the necessary improvements to Whipple Hall for Town use; (2) the cost of these improvements to be taken from existing, available funds, and/or included in the current budget cycle; (3) the Selectmen should take the appropriate steps to make available from existing funds approximately \$10,000 to hire the necessary professional(s) to determine what is required to upgrade Whipple Hall for appropriate and adequate Town meeting space; and, (4) the Selectmen should give the Building and Facilities Committee the authority to take the necessary and appropriate actions to retain and expend up to \$10,000 for professional assistance to determine what is required.

Request: The Committee requests that the Selectmen take the following formal action at its meeting related to this subject as follows (in the form of a *suggested vote*):

VOTED: That the Town shall make available from existing funds an amount not to exceed \$10,000 for the retaining of a professional or professionals to assess and design the necessary improvements and modifications to Whipple Hall to make it appropriate and adequate Town meeting space for Board and Committee meetings; and that the Selectmen authorizes the Building and Facilities Committee to interview and retain such professional(s), and to present to the Selectmen a proposal for making such modifications and improvements, stating the estimated costs.

Building Inspector

In its Third Report to the Selectmen (3-2-20), the Committee reached no conclusion regarding the hiring of a building inspector for the Town, and noted that it continued to study the matter. At its meetings on October 8, and November 5, 2020, the Committee continued its discussion. For the reasons outlined in the Minutes of October 8, 2020, the Committee concluded that it was not cost-effective to retain either a full-time or a part-time building inspector, and did not recommend doing so, leaving to the Selectmen whether there were public policy considerations that it should consider. At its meeting on November 5, 2020, the Committee heard from Frank Anzalone, Architect, who noted that he had worked with other towns, such as Wilmot, which had retained the services of

the State Fire Marshal to act as the building inspector for commercial properties (not 1-2 family dwellings), and that those towns did not have a separate town building code to handle non-commercial properties. He stated it worked well, and the Fire Marshal acted in a timely manner on requests.

The Committee discussed the issue of town authority to retain the State Fire Marshal for commercial building permits, while not adopting its own building code for the additional purpose of dealing with non-commercial building construction. It was not clear to the Committee whether that authority existed, but concluded that if it did exist, the Town should retain the services of the State Fire Marshal to perform the functions of a building inspector for commercial properties on behalf of the Town.

The relevant statutes appear to be RSA 674:51 I (which permits the town to enact a process to enforce the state building code. New London has not done so.), and RSA 155-A:7 (which permits the State Fire Marshal to enforce the building code in towns without an enforcement process upon written request of the municipality). (*See also*, SAF -C8105.1, relating to fees charged by the Fire Marshal,

<https://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/firesafety/building/documents/Saf-C8100.pdf> .)

At its meeting on November 5, 2020, the Committee voted as follows:

VOTED: To recommend to the Selectmen that they retain the State Fire Marshal to act on behalf of the Town of New London to do building inspections and issue building permits for proposed commercial building requests covered by the State Building Code; provided that it is legally permissible to do so under the Code.

The questions which the Committee felt required an opinion of Town Counsel are:

1. May the Selectmen request the State Fire Marshal to enforce the State Building Code in New London, and if so, is this request permitted to include one and two family dwellings?
2. Is this request required to be on a project by project basis, or can it be a standing request?

3. Given that RSA 155-A:2 VI requires the contractor to notify the State Fire Marshal prior to construction, should the selectmen, or town employees, also notify the State Fire Marshal of construction requests that they are aware of, in case the contractor does not do so?

Request: The Committee requests that the Selectmen obtain the opinion of counsel, and if favorable, request the State Fire Marshal to enforce the State Building Code in New London.

Purchases and uses – Town property, buildings, facilities

At the Selectmen’s meeting on October 26, 2020, the Selectmen considered

a request by the Center for the Arts to use as a “home” base space in the Rec. Dept. area; and a request by the Town Administrator to allow the Emergency Management Team to use the Rec. Dept. space. (The Selectmen did not grant either request.) At the Building and Facilities Committee’s meeting on November 5, 2020, Rip Cross reported that he had been asked by Police Chief Cobb to review and offer input on the potential use of the “Stahlman” property on N. Pleasant St. for a new police department, which may be a matter Chief Cobb brings to the Selectmen for consideration.

The Committee concluded that although these are clearly matters for the Selectmen, it would be helpful to the Selectmen, and in keeping with the charge to the Building and Facilities Committee, for the Committee to review and offer recommendations on matters which relate to use of the Buker building space, and requests from Department heads for purchase, lease, or other long-term use of buildings or real estate that reach the point in such Department’s review that they are brought before the Selectmen. (This would be especially true for suggestions to the Selectmen relating to the Police Department, if and when the Department reaches the conclusion that action should be proposed to the Selectmen, since the Committee has been intricately involved with the issues of space and use for the P.D., and has studied, discussed, and analyzed those issues.)

Request: The Committee requests that the Selectmen refer any requests which come before them for the purchase of property, or the use of existing buildings, facilities, or property (other than for normal departmental use

of the department then-utilizing that building or space) to the Building and Facilities Committee in the first instance, for its review, and its recommendations to the Selectmen.

Respectfully submitted

New London Building and Facilities Committee

By Robert Bowers, Chair

cc: Members of the Building and Facilities Committee

Kim Hallquist, Town Administrator

NLPD Chief Emily Cobb