

Building and Facilities Committee

Minutes of 4-1-21; Zoom

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

Others present: Kim Hallquist, 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 March 18, 2021, were reviewed by the Committee and were then approved unanimously.

2. Reports

a. Whipple Hall. Phil Sherman reported on recent meetings and that the subcommittee was preparing a proposed contract for work to be done at Whipple Hall – retractable shades. Cost will be in the order of magnitude of \$15,000. He noted that although the contract itself wasn't finalized, the Subcommittee would like the approval of the Committee to move forward with it and seek approval from the Selectmen when it is ready.

It was moved, seconded, and upon roll call unanimously

VOTED: To approve submission by the Whipple Hall Subcommittee to the Selectmen for their approval a finalized contract proposal for the work identified by the Subcommittee.

Phil then noted there were other proposed improvements, such as acoustic wall panels, which will be discussed further, and that they discussed estimates of a timeline for purchases. More fine-tuning will be involved. Next will be discussion of audio-visual/sound, padded chairs, and appropriate tables, possibly wired. Also, insulation in the attic, air conditioning, completing the sprinkler system, and other matters.

b. Academy Building. Peter Bianchi reported that at its recent meeting the Subcommittee had analyzed the requests and concerns which had been raised with regard to use of and space at the Academy Building. [Safety needs and concerns have been separately discussed and are included in the Priorities Report the Committee is preparing.] Those issues, including those identified by

Kim Hallquist, Administrator, to the Committee in her most recent updated memorandum, were: adequate filing space for the Welfare Officer; office space to accommodate the EMD for two hours on each of three days a week; office space for other Committee use and filing; Supervisors of the checklist materials; reallocation of storage within the building, with re-working of storage in the basement and purging of non-essential materials; and the possible future need to expand the area used by the Town Clerk/Tax Collector. The Subcommittee has concluded that there is sufficient space in the Academy Building to meet current needs and needs which may arise in the next few years. It also concluded that the possibility of a need to expand the Town Clerk space should be monitored, but that the stated need has arisen out of the current Covid pandemic and may well abate over time, either through a natural return to earlier processes; due to new procedures better designed to handle resident needs arising out of the pandemic; or reduced in-office visits by residents who have become accustomed to a new way of handling their Town matters. Kim Hallquist noted that the Clerk's office has now added a third, part-time employee, and that will affect space use in that office. Peter Bianchi stated that they will be meeting with Will Kidder, Town Clerk, to discuss any additional concerns.

He also noted that the Subcommittee understands that it is a function of the Town Administrator working with the Selectmen to make determinations about the allocation of space and use, but that there are a few possibilities available that have led to the conclusion that the overall space is adequate. First, they spoke with almost all users of the building, and reached out to the Welfare Officer for her input, and there were no concerns raised other than those he had just stated. Second, they concluded that office space should be allocated for office use rather than storage, with other solutions found for storage needs. And, third, the office space, other than that requested by the Town Clerk, is space that can and should be shared by multiple users as no need has been identified for office space use for any significant periods of time during any particular week.

Examples are that Louis Botta has indicated a need for approximately 100 sq. ft. of office space with a desk and filing capability; but that the office would be used approximately three days a week for two hours each of those days. [Note:

His other space requirements are all currently met, as he stated when meeting with the full Committee, by using the Syd Crook Room for an emergency operations center; the Fire Department training room for large training needs; other conference rooms available in Town, including the Syd Crook Room, for smaller meetings for staff and volunteers; and the office space which would be made available for other discussions and needs for smaller groups.] The office currently used for storage of EMD supplies is larger than that requested by EMD and would be more than sufficient for EMD purposes. The other days of the week, or other times of day, would be available for other committees, the Supervisors (and perhaps the Welfare Officer and Health Officer, which would free up that office space). AS identified by the Town Administrator in her Memorandum of October 25, 2020 Updating Memo of July 11, 2019: “. . . space for the use of the various volunteer boards and committees that would include a desk, phone, computer/printer and file cabinet(s) so each board could have a drawer to store their records. This would be a shared space that would allow town business to be conducted in a town facility.” Also, the Supervisors of the checklist have various alternatives available for meeting within the building, or at other locations if immediate access to a substantial volume of records at the Clerk’s office isn’t essential. Similarly, the current lunch/kitchen area is sufficient for office personnel under all normal circumstances, and as noted by the Administrator personnel can utilize the Syd Crook Room for breaks if needed during any future pandemics.

c. Transfer station. Peter Hogle reported that he has discussed with Bob Harrington, Director, DPW, possible software for use in facilities management, and that they will continue this discussion. He also noted that Bob Harrington was looking at actions that could be taken at the transfer station to ease congestion. The Chair asked Mr. Hogle if he would be willing to discuss with Mr. Harrington what specific needs he saw as requiring attention and to gather together the relevant facts and information with Mr. Harrington for a Committee discussion with Mr. Harrington regarding those needs and concerns. Mr. Hogle agreed to do so, and the Committee was in agreement that this was a more efficient way to gather the information needed for a full Committee discussion. Mr. Hogle may decide to call upon one or two other Committee members to help in this process.

3. *Old Business*

a. Discussion of priorities. Colin Beasley will incorporate the discussion regarding the Academy building into the draft of the priorities report. He noted that there remain other areas which need to be addressed, as well.

b. The Chair introduced the topic of the Charter proposal, and noted that it had been revised to include most of the concerns which had been raised by Kim Hallquist in her memorandum to the Selectmen. This revised version was sent to the Committee prior to this meeting. Ms. Hallquist noted that there remained the question of having non-residents as members, as she believed that could be helpful in instances where there was an insufficient background of expertise, knowledge, and experience in future members of the Committee. This would allow that expertise to be included in the Committee by turning to non-residents. The Chair then stated that unless there was further discussion or objection, he would forward the revised proposal to the Selectmen, noting that it was the for the Selectmen to make all decisions on all issues raised.

4. *Other items to come before the Committee*

None.

5. *Action Items*

(from 3-18-21)

A. Academy Building Subcommittee to refine those issues related to the Academy Building. **DONE**

(New)

B. Peter Hogle to discuss with Bob Harrington his thoughts on needs and solutions related to the DPW/transfer station, and to gather the relevant information and facts for future discussions with Mr. Harrington and the Committee.

C. Chair to send the revised Charter proposal to the Selectmen.

The next meeting to be Thursday, April 15, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., by Zoom.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bowers, Chair