

Building and Facilities Committee

Minutes of 5-13-21; Zoom

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

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 May 6, 2021, were reviewed by the Committee and were then approved unanimously.

*2. Reports*

Mr. Sherman reported that Dennis Mires is pulling together information to include in a report to the Committee, and the Whipple Subcommittee is hoping to present that report at the next meeting of the Committee. Dennis will be out of the office for the next few weeks, so if the information isn't available, then it will be a while before the report is ready.

*3. Old Business*

The Chair introduced for discussion the topic of finalizing the information the Committee wishes to include in the Priorities Report pertaining to storage needs of all departments. To assist in an orderly discussion, he has forwarded to the Committee an outline of the storage issues raised in the several departments' earlier reports to this Committee.

He noted that there appear to be no storage issue at the Fire Department and at Tracy Library; and that the storage questions at Archives are partly dependent on an assessment of what records and materials can be digitized and culled, including in its allocated storage room in the Academy Building, and what materials will need storage that are not needed for immediate access at the Archives office. Thus, further review and information will be needed from Archives to address what issues may exist.

He then noted that records retention throughout the Town departments is an ongoing issue, as noted in Kim Hallquist's Administrator's Report to this Committee dated July 11, 2019: "the volume of paper that comes into the office every year, storage and easy access to material is always a challenge. Storing items in bankers boxes and file cabinets takes up space and also slows down the time needed to retrieve documents. This issue could be addressed by contracting with a records management firm." He has forwarded a request to the Selectmen for an update on adoption and the carrying out of a records retention policy, but has not received a response. That remains a primary

issue for resolution, including any need for an outside firm to assist in the digitization and carrying out of any policy ultimately adopted by the Selectmen. Thus, this issue remains in limbo until that is done.

Next, he addressed the other departments' issues of storage needs:

(1) the Emergency Management Committee (EMC) request for office space, and a solution to any storage needs the EMC has related to the Academy Building, as well as office space for other departments' use and storage as it relates office use, that may be accommodated at the Academy Building. If the current EMC materials were removed to another location, the size of the office space currently being used for EMC storage would meet the needs of the EMC for an office with the ability to use that space for other/shared use. That would also allow use by the Welfare Officer if needed or appropriate, the Health Officer, and other committees, etc. as noted by the Administrator as needing some office capability. Were the Welfare and Health officers to use that space, the space they currently occupy could be used for other purposes, including temporary storage or file cabinets.

(2) the Town Clerk has storage issues related to election materials, absentee ballot storage and access, PPE and related supplies (as well as financial records, which would be covered by a retention policy). These all need further assessment and evaluation with the Town Clerk, but it appears these needs could be met within the Academy Building with review and reassessment and at Whipple Hall. A determination needs to be made whether, after carrying out digitization of records and the retention policy, what issues may remain.

Mr. Sherman stated that the whole issue of storage cannot be resolved until the Selectmen adopt and carry out a retention policy, so that the Committee could then determine what space is needed after all departments have digitized what is possible and have ascertained what remains as a records storage need. The Chair noted that this is exactly what he has stated, and is contained in the outline presented, namely that records retention and digitization is a Priority A (to be carried out in this budget year) or B (to be carried out in next year's budget). He reported that he had sent a request to the Selectmen, as requested by this Committee, inquiring as to the status of adopting and establishing procedures for carrying out a policy of records retention and digitization. He will forward that request to the Committee. There followed some discussion about the need for the Selectmen to act on this so that the matter could move forward. There was some frustration on the part of the Committee that this had been identified as a need early on in this process, and that this request was not being

addressed. The Chair suggested to John Cannon that the Selectmen needed to make some decisions on this with input from the Town Administrator, and adopt and carry out a policy on records retention, including digitization, in order for this Committee to be able to move forward on records storage needs. Mr. Cannon stated that he understood the Committee's concerns and agreed that he would take the matter up with the Selectmen.

The Chair then explained that there remained other storage issues that could and should be addressed, related to physical property – EMC storage at various locations, in particular at the Academy Building, which could be relocated to free up that office space for use as an office; Recreation Dept. property which could be removed from the sewer building to allow EMC materials that required a temperature controlled environment (which is available at the sewer building) to be stored there; Rec. Dept. materials in the balcony of Whipple, which should be removed to accommodate renovations at Whipple and its used, including the balcony, for Town meeting purposes. He informed the Committee that he had sent a request to Justin Garzia, Chair of the Recreation Commission, as requested by this Committee, requesting that the Rec. Comm. review its inventory and make a determination of what could be disposed of and inform this Committee of what the space needs would then be for that inventory. A determination of what would be needed cannot be made by this Committee until it has that information. Nonetheless, the Chair suggested that those items of Rec. Dept. inventory at the sewer building could be removed and stored either in the storage shed used by the Rec. Comm. at the sewer plant property or temporarily at the former office of the Rec. Dept. at the Buker building until it was determined what space would be needed and whether that could be accommodated in the existing storage shed used by the Rec. Comm., or an additional shed or garage. Mr. Sherman suggested that storage of inventory at Buker could create unintended issues arising from that use of that space. Mr. Bianchi stated that it should not be this Committee's role to suggest how the space used by the EMC could be used for EMC office space instead of storage, and its role should be limited to simply stating that no need existed and that the Selectmen should fashion any action to be taken on this issue. Mr. Sherman suggested that the whole records storage issue could be addressed in one or two sentences to the effect that records retention and digitization should be addressed and resolved by the Selectmen and that the Committee should await that resolution before proceeding further.

The Chair stated that he disagreed and that although the records storage issues certainly warranted waiting until such a policy was adopted and carried out, the

Committee should assist the Selectmen in the remaining issues of physical storage, as those issues have existed for some time and have not been addressed in a coherent way. He stated that this Committee's suggestions would be only that – suggestions – and that it might actually be helpful to the Selectmen. He felt that was part of our obligation and role.

He then suggested that if necessary the storage issues, other than retention of records/digitization, could be addressed in the course of considering whether any other buildings, such as a garage with multiple bays, should be installed at the sewer plant property, and noted that this was a suggestion of Bob Harrington as a means of dealing with the need for a garage for the sewer dept. truck and/or relocation of the pump stored in the current garage at that building.

The Chair suggested that Town Clerk materials, other than records, could perhaps be relocated or otherwise accommodated to serve the needs of the Town Clerk's office. The Chair inquired of Peter Bianchi whether the Academy Building Subcommittee had as yet had a discussion with Will Kidder as to those needs for that office. Mr. Bianchi reported that they had not yet done so. This issue of Town Clerk storage needs cannot be addressed until that information is established.

There then ensued discussion of the storage of recyclables and how that affects the use of DPW buildings and property. At this point, the Chair noted that this was a matter that should be addressed at the next meeting on the topic of the transfer station, and that since there was no progress at this meeting in addressing the priorities as he had outlined them to the Committee, it might be best to adjourn the meeting and take up that issues again at a later time.

The next meetings will be a discussion of the transfer station and other DPW issues on May 20, and May 27, 2021. The Solid Waste Management Committee will be attending the meeting on May 20, and will talk with the Committee about the background of the Sanborn Head Report and its current thinking regarding the transfer station.

*Action Items*

*(from 4-1-21)*

- A. Peter Hoglund 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. **In process.**

*(4-15-21)*

B. Peter Hogle to confer with Bob Harrington, Mike Williams, and Phil Sherman to establish meetings and discussions to analyze facilities software issues. **In process.**

(4-22-21)

C. Chair to contact Selectmen re retention policy, and Rec. Commission re storage needs. **Done.**

(5-6-21)

D. Chair to invite Solid Waste Management Committee to meet with this Committee on May 20, 2021. **Done.**

E. Colin Beasley to add the conclusions of the Committee regarding the Academy Building/EMC space to the draft priorities report. **In process.**

(present)

F. Chair to contact Bob Harrington to assure that he can attend the next meeting of the Committee on May 20, 2021.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, May 20, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bowers, Chair