

Building and Facilities Committee

Minutes of 9-5-19

Syd Crook Room, Academy Building; 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Bowers, Cannon, Lewis, Williams, Bianchi, Cross,
Hoglund, Cardillo

Absent: Beasley, Sherman

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. *Approval of Minutes*

The minutes of the previous meeting of August 22, 2019 were reviewed by the Committee, and were then approved unanimously.

2. *Reports*

Mr. Cross reported that the insurance carrier for Town buildings had raised some issues related to the newly installed boiler, and that North Branch will pursue a resolution. North Branch has stated that the State inspector reviewed it and approved it.

3. *Discussion of Preliminary Report to Selectmen*

The Committee discussed the proposed draft of a Preliminary Report to the Selectmen, and had no further suggestions for changes.

After further discussion, it was MOVED, and unanimously

VOTED: To Approve the Preliminary Report to Selectmen in the form attached hereto; and to submit it to the Selectmen prior to their meeting on September 23, 2019.

4. *Discussion of Buker building issues and Police Dept. space needs options.*

The Chair informed the Committee that Colin Beasley and Mike Williams were gathering the pertinent information to prepare an analysis of the six options settled on at the last meeting. When this is completed, the Committee will review that analysis for further discussion. The Chair then suggested that the Committee should develop a list of those questions which it felt were pertinent to its review and should be pursued, and to document those questions in writing. The Chair referred the Committee to

some questions that might be considered, and asked that each member review them and respond with suggestions for deletions, changes or additions. There was general discussion on this topic, with the conclusion that it would be addressed more fully after reviewing Mr. Beasley's analysis of the options discussed. Mr. Lewis noted that in considering the option related to the Police Dept. utilizing the space now used by the Recreation Dept., the Committee would have to address where the Rec. Dept. would go. The Committee agreed that this was an issue that would have to be addressed as to that option.

5. *Discussion and determination of next steps and information to seek*

The Chair noted that the Committee still had much to do with regard to other issues it must consider, and presented an outline of some of those issues. Mr. Bianchi inquired whether it was the role of the Committee to make recommendations to the Selectmen as a result of its review and data gathering. After some discussion, it was the general opinion that recommendations would definitely be in order in appropriate cases.

6. *Action Items.*

- a. Chair to present the Preliminary Report to the Selectmen prior to their scheduled meeting on September 23, 2019.
- b. Colin Beasley and Mike Williams to prepare a synopsis of the options agreed-upon by the Committee, for presentation and discussion at the meeting of the Committee on September 19, 2019.

The Committee agreed it would not meet on September 12. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in the Syd Crook room on Thursday, September 19, at 6:30 p.m.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert Bowers, Chair

PRELIMINARY REPORT
To Selectmen

Buildings and Facilities Committee (9-5-19)

Background

The Selectmen established the Buildings and Facilities Committee and appointed its members on May 20, 2019. The Committee began meetings on May 23, 2019, and one of its first acts was to better define its mission (attached as Appendix A, approved June 12, 2019). This was submitted to the Selectmen for any comments or changes at their meeting on June 17, 2019.

The Committee began its examination of the buildings and facilities by looking at the issues and needs of five separate departments, encompassing three separate buildings: Archives (June 13, 2019); Fire Department (June 20, 2019); Tracy Library (June 27, 2019); Town Clerk (July 18, 2019); and Administration (July 18, 2019). Each department head was requested to provide information based on a questionnaire submitted to them (attached as Appendix B); and each responded accordingly, followed by an oral presentation and a viewing of each building/department by the Committee. This Preliminary Report sets forth the observations of the Committee after that review of those five departments. Some of these observations may apply to additional departments/buildings as those are reviewed.

ARCHIVES

The Archives space is sufficient and well-designed. The Archivist believes there may be a need for some off-site storage space, for records which are redundant, accessed infrequently, or designated for removal from general public access. Additional space would be welcomed, but reallocating the use of the current space may address these concerns. Electronic storage is not an option the Archivist would favor, though some microfiche records conversion may be workable.

Observations: The Archivist believes the space and use is satisfactory, with a possible need for future off-site storage of records and/or artifacts.

Budget: The Archivist anticipates requesting, or has requested, funding for semi-enclosed, compact mobile shelving.

Recommendations: The Committee recommends the adoption and carrying out of a records retention policy. See attached Appendix C, delivered to the Selectmen by Memo dated June 20, 2019.

FIRE STATION

The Fire Chief believes the Fire Station space is sufficient and well-designed. The Department feels that the current location is close to perfect, being geographically in the center of New London, and on the Main Street. The newer equipment is getting taller, so the Chief believes there may be a need to provide a fire engine bay with a higher access door within the next 10-20 years. He believes this this can be done on this site by extending the footprint to the east. If, at some future date, there is a determination by the Town that there is a need for ambulance service, this, too, in the Chief's opinion, could be accommodated on the site. He noted that, should this occur it would entail a significant annual personnel cost. The Department does not favor re-locating, or merging with other emergency services for a safety services building. The Department anticipates the need for a full-time fire prevention officer, approved by the Town in 1999, but not yet filled. The Chief stated that the station would not need any additional space to accommodate this position.

The Chief noted that a portion of the roof will need replacing within the next 3-5 years, and he believes it should be done at the same time as any solar panels being added, if that is to be done as part of the Town's energy sustainability efforts.

Observations: In the Chief's opinion, there is no need for the Town to consider a separate safety services building. The Town may wish to consider adding solar panels at the same time as re-roofing is done. The Committee believes the Town should determine a sufficient amount to contribute each year to the Capital Reserve for general maintenance of Town buildings, specifically including the needs of the Fire Station, but as a general proposition for all Town buildings.

Budget: The Fire Chief anticipates requesting, or has requested, funding for a split air system for air-conditioning in the training room (\$7500); for expansion of the vehicle exhaust system (\$20,800); and for roof replacement in the capital reserve budget (\$45,000). The Committee recommends that the Selectmen also consider including a request for funding for the addition of solar panels to the roof at the time of replacement of that roof. (Vote of the Town on March 14, 2018, Article 19.)

TRACY MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Tracy Library has no current or anticipated space needs, and considers the space it has to be excellent. The Director believes the site is also very good, being in the center of Town. The Director has stated that there are a number of maintenance and normally occurring projects contemplated or in the works, some of which are noted below in budget considerations. The Library operations are separately overseen by its own Board; while the building itself and the site are owned by the Town. Approximately 90% of the operating budget and 100% of capital expenditures made for the benefit of the Library are funded through the Town budget.

Observations: Because most of the monetary expenditure for the Library is funded by the Town, the Committee believes the Library should be included in the Town analysis of expenses, maintenance and uses as with all other Town-owned buildings. The Committee believes the Town should determine a sufficient amount to contribute each year to the Capital Reserve for general maintenance of

Town buildings, specifically including the needs of Tracy Memorial Library, but as a general proposition for all Town buildings.

Budget: The Library anticipates requesting, or has requested, funding for: replacing/repairing the roof over, and replacing the floor in, the stack room; repair of areas of exterior rot and peeling paint in two locations; repair/refinish original Tracy furniture (technically not a “building” need); a fire suppression system in the near future; replacing flooring installed in 1990; new furnaces and mechanical systems at some point in the future; and rebuilding of the exterior stone walls. The Library also anticipates maintenance costs not arising in the ordinary course for renovation of the kitchenettes and bathrooms; interior and exterior painting; and repaving of the parking area.

TOWN CLERK

The Town Clerk has stated that she does not have a need for additional gross square feet for the reasonably foreseeable future. That said, she believes there is a need to redesign the interior layout and use of the current space, to include an examination of the furniture, storage cabinets and shelves, file cabinets, and the value of built-in accommodations, in order to make the current space more efficient and better utilized. She also believes there is a specific need for an additional window for providing services to residents. In addition, she expressed a concern regarding storage space for records, and such things as ballots and ballot boxes for elections. The issue of space for records might be favorably addressed by the proposed Records Retention Policy. In addition, the Administrator (see below) has noted that there is available software designed for records storage. It would also appear that a redesign/allocation of space of space used for storage in the basement of the Academy Building may alleviate the need for more storage space. The Town Clerk has stated that both of these needs/concerns will be addressed by the Town Clerk in working with the Selectmen’s office to reconfigure and remodel the space available for more

efficient use; the possibility of records retention software; and through the normal budget process for those requests.

Observations: The Town Clerk has made clear that the office has a very real need to have an additional service window, and to have work done to make the space more efficient. There is a potential storage problem for records retention, and other election-related materials. If both of these concerns can be addressed through discussions with the Selectmen's Office, there should be no needs that would have to be addressed for the foreseeable future.

Budget: The Town Clerk anticipates requesting, or has requested, funding for a new service window and remodeling and perhaps related furniture needs for a redesign of the office space to be more efficient. The Committee believes the Selectmen should consider including in its budget requests funds for a Town-wide analysis for and purchase of records retention software, to include use for and by the Town Clerk and other departments.

ADMINISTRATION

The Town Administrator anticipates no space needs and no additions to staffing. She feels that the primary need would possibly be for more records storage space. She noted that there is software available that could help alleviate this need, not only for Administration, but for other departments as well. She believes there is a need for an alarm system, for safety and security purposes; and perhaps a keyless door system. The Administrator also noted that there are space/storage needs for the Emergency Management Team, and she suggested that the Committee should address that more specifically with the EMT. She noted that for the present, the activities necessitated by any emergencies can be adequately addressed with the space available, including the use of Whipple Hall by the EMT, and the Sydney Crook Room for a communications center. Although the Administrator does take note when there are structural or other significant issues that should be addressed at the Academy Building, she feels it is not within

her expertise or background to best address these issues. She noted that there is software available that can track building repairs and needs, and create an “institutional memory” of those actions and needs. [See discussion below.] The Administrator also noted that there are companies that can be retained that review and digitize Town records, and provide software for continued management of records. She stated that that would have an initial cost of some significance, and, although the software itself might not be very expensive, she believes the ongoing upkeep, records review, and updating of the software would have an annual cost associated with it. However, she feels this would be less expensive than constructing new facilities simply to store records. She noted that there is a need for roof replacement in the near future, with, in addition, some needed repairs to the roof system, since the roof has not been replaced since the Town’s acquisition of the Academy Building in 1999.

Observations: The Committee believes the Selectmen should consider actively pursuing software and the related actions necessary to provide more efficient records retention; and to establish, Town-wide, an ongoing record of work done or needed for all buildings, facilities, and mechanical equipment.

Budget: The Administrator anticipates requesting at some point, or has requested, funding for re-roofing and repairing the roof of the Academy building; painting the Academy Building (last done in 2008, at a cost of \$27,300); replacement of carpeting and bathroom flooring; and parking lot resurfacing (last done in 2016). The Committee believes the Selectmen should consider including in its budget requests funds for software to establish, Town-wide, an ongoing record of work done or needed for all buildings, facilities, and mechanical equipment.

PRESENT

POLICE STATION

The Committee is currently addressing the issues raised by the Police Department related to the use which exist at the Buker building, most notably as to the current space usage and needs. The Committee has reviewed the Mires report and the Harriman report, and is cognizant of the attention and consideration given to all these sources by the Selectmen. The Committee is using that information and those efforts as a base for its discussions and considerations. As part of this process it has become apparent that further discussions with, and input from, Chief Andersen will be essential to the Committee in understanding and assessing the many issues he has raised. The Committee anticipates that it will set forth its conclusions after this process has been concluded.

FUTURE

The Committee will be following the same procedure as above for the other departments – the Recreation Department and the Department of Public Works. The Committee anticipates that the DPW will be a source of significant information regarding all buildings and facilities in Town, as well as providing information on its own needs and situation.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Committee has set as topic for further deliberation by the Committee, consideration of establishing a designated means by which all building and facilities will be properly managed for all Town buildings and facilities. When this review and discussion is completed, it may result in more specific recommendations.
2. The Committee believes the Selectmen should consider establishing an annual contribution to the Capital Reserve Fund for general building maintenance and needs, in order to have sufficient funds available for roof replacement, furnace replacement and repairs, HVAC needs, generator and sump pump, and all

manner of other mechanical equipment repairs, replacements and ongoing maintenance.

Respectfully submitted,
For the Committee
Robert Bowers, Chair