

Town of Newbury, MA

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Municipal Building Committee Meeting Minutes 2015-11-05

Town of Newbury Municipal Building Committee

MINUTES

DATE: November 5, 2015 *Approved as written, 11/17/2015*

Present: Eric Svahn, Chair; Tracy Blais; Mike Doyle; Donald Jarvis; Sam Joslin; John Lucey, Jr.; Martha Taylor
Absent: Steve Fram; Damon Jespersen, BOS Liaison; Richard Ronder; Nathan Walker
Guests: Cary Boyd; John Ferrara; Mark Gleckman; Alicia Greco; Adele & Bob Krumpholz; Jim Moran; Jim Slane; Geof Walker

Eric Svahn, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

- **Meeting Minutes:**

Motion: A motion was made by Sam Joslin and seconded by Mike Doyle to approve the minutes of October 8, 2015, as written. The motion passed with five in favor (Svahn, Blais, Doyle, Joslin, and Taylor) and one abstention (Jarvis, who was appointed to the MBC after that meeting was held). Due to issues in the Police Station that needed to be dealt with, J. Lucey arrived after the review of minutes.

- **Recap of October 8, 2015 Meeting:**

For those members of the audience who were not present at the October 8 meeting, E. Svahn gave a brief recap of his presentation on the revised building program and estimated cost and the State's requirements for hiring consultants and contractors for building design and construction.

- **Public Participation:**

E. Svahn noted that a number of people have expressed interest in serving on the Municipal Building Committee (MBC). With the recent addition of Donald Jarvis, who will be working on ways to disseminate information to residents, the Committee has grown to 10 people, the maximum workable size. The MBC now needs to move forward with the charge that was given to it by the Selectmen and focus on outlining and refining the project, selecting an OPM (Owner's Project Manager), and selecting a designer. As it carries out its charge, the Committee welcomes input and participation from interested residents. He acknowledged the concerns that have been raised about the early morning meetings, but said that his work schedule generally makes evening meetings difficult for him to commit to.

- **General Discussion Regarding the Proposed Project:**

Jim Slane of Plum Island voiced concern that the Town was spending too much money. He said that school expenses are growing, Newbury's population is shrinking, there is no commercial base, and no plans to grow it. In his opinion, money should be spent on services, not building. He then asked how the program for the new building had been developed and questioned whether the building needed so much space.

E. Svahn replied that the program had been developed with the Committee's consultant, CSS Architects out of Wakefield, which specializes in municipal facilities and has broad experience programming and designing public safety buildings. When the program was complete, E. Svahn then reviewed it with other architectural firms which specialize in municipal work and also compared the square footage with the square footage of facilities recently designed for other, similarly sized communities. S. Joslin added that the police station was being designed to meet Federal and State requirements for

spaces that it currently doesn't have. In addition, some of the spaces, such as cells and dispatch, require specialized construction, which is more expensive to build than conventional construction.

J. Slane said that prisoners should be housed elsewhere and not in Newbury at all and suggested that the Town look at ways to solve problems in ways that haven't been used before, such as regional dispatch, and questioned the need for a police station at all. E. Svahn replied that no town board or committee has recommended that Newbury not have a police station. The Town needs a place where people can go 24/7; not having that would not meet the needs of the community. He concluded by saying that this is not a decision for the MBC, but a decision that would need to be made at a higher level. The MBC's directive has been to determine how to provide a cost-effective facility that will meet the long-term needs of the Town.

T. Blais said that the Town has spent a substantial amount of time developing a significant capital plan which will ensure that buildings are maintained and brought up to where they should be. Replacement of the elementary school roof is included in the plan. The Triton Regional School Committee has a facility subcommittee, but there has been no discussion of any major renovation of the high school. Financing the public safety building would have resulted in an average tax bill increase of \$60.00 per year due to current debt being reduced/paid off in the next six years.

G. Walker confirmed that the Board of Selectmen had charged the MBC to look at the project at hand and move forward and that the Town is paying down debt, which will keep the cost of the project to the taxpayers at a minimum. He said that the Town needs to address its municipal facility needs, in particular the Police Station. He suggested that Mr. Slane come to a Selectmen's meeting to discuss his ideas.

J. Lucey said that the working environment in the Police Station is not healthy for his officers; they are getting sick. Despite that, they don't complain – he said he has never seen such a dedicated group. J. Slane said that no one is arguing about the need for the facility, but asked if there is a different, innovative way to deal with police, fire, and the Town Offices. He ended by saying that the Town needs to spend as little as necessary. T. Blais replied that that is what the Committee trying to do.

- **Communication:**

The need for better communication and outreach was discussed. Questions and concerns were raised about the availability of information and meeting minutes. Suggestions were made about ways in which to keep the public informed, such as a monthly e-newsletter, monthly updates to the Selectmen at one of their regular meetings, and setting a standing MBC meeting schedule and making sure the meetings are posted well in advance.

- **Schedule/Next Steps:**

E. Svahn reviewed a preliminary schedule of next steps, including: CSS update of the Building Needs Assessment report incorporating edits from the MBC (November); independent cost estimate, followed by new recommendation to the Selectmen (December); MBC public workshops on the recommendation and creation by the BOS of a Project Committee to be responsible for OPM Selection (January); OPM selection process (February); OPM Final selection (March); OPM review of the project and presentation at the April 2016 ATM.

On a motion made by M. Doyle and seconded by J. Lucey, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING:
Tuesday, November 17, 2015, 7:00 a.m., Town Hall**

Respectfully submitted,

Martha L. Taylor, Town Planner
MBC Secretary