



Town of Plaistow ♦ Board of Selectmen
145 Main Street ♦ Plaistow ♦ NH ♦ 03865

PLAISTOW BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES:

DATE: January 11, 2016

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:32 PM

SELECTMEN:

Selectman, Steve Ranlett, Chairman
Selectman, Joyce Ingerson
Selectman, Julian Kiszka

Selectman, John Sherman Vice Chairman
Selectman, Tammy Bergeron
Town Manager, Sean Fitzgerald

AGENDA

MINUTES

J. Sherman motions to approve the minutes of 01-04-16. Second by T. Bergeron.

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion passes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Barbara Kiszka, Member of the Public Safety Expansion Committee requests the following questions be answered tonight:

- Total project cost.
- How long will it take.
- How will it be financed/funded.
- How will it be spread out among residential and commercial properties.
- What is the tax impact on residents.

PUBLIC HEARING PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX BOND

J. Sherman motions to enter into the Public Hearing on the Public Safety Expansion Bond.

T. Bergeron 2nd

Vote 5-0-0

Motion Passes.

Chief McArdle begins the presentation with a history of the Public Safety Expansion Committee and describes some of the deficiencies of the current building. The committee was established in 2001 and has been active for the past 15 years.

He turns it over to Chief Jones who describes various deficiencies of the Police Department. Some of them being:

- Many rooms and offices are used for multi-purposes as the Department has outgrown the facility, this causes operational inefficiency.
- Dispatch has outgrown its area and has several wiring deficiencies.
- Safety for staff and residents.
- Women's locker room inadequate for the amount of female staff.
- Records storage inadequate.
- Equipment not secure from defendants.
- Confidentiality.
- Inadequate evidence storage.
- No separation for administrative staff.
- Detective trailer outback- deplorable working conditions, no communication between the trailer and the rest of the department.
- Heating/cooling system issues.

Chief McArdle reviews some of the Fire Departments deficiencies:

- Bunker gear stored in the apparatus bay- needs to be separated due to breathing in of contaminants on the equipment after a fire.
- Front entry to building is hazardous.
- Minimal administrative space.
- Limited storage space.
- No private EMS triage/treatment area for walk in patients, they are treated in the lobby.
- Current facility cannot support a 24/7 department which will probably become necessary within 5 – 10 years.
- There is only 1 workstation for call members for report completion.
- Heating/Cooling systems are inefficient, similar to the Police Department.

Chief McArdle explains that in May of 2014 the Board of Selectmen issued an RFP for a \$25K scope of work to help advance the work of the Public Safety Expansion Committee. Dore & Whittier Architects, Inc. were hired to review the HKT's previous programming and site study. The results were used to determine the various options the Town had to choose from relative to renovation and construction. Chief Jones states that in 2015 the Board of Selectman hired Trident as Owner's Project Manager (OPM) and Eckman as the Construction Manager (CM). After much work the Design Team and Town Officials made significant reductions to bring the budget down to a level that would be far more affordable (\$8.5M) while retaining needed functionality for reasonable future needs of 25 or more years.

J. Sherman notes that there was a highly competitive process in selecting both Trident and Eckman and the result is a guaranteed maximum price in which the project can be constructed.

T. Bergeron suggests the Chiefs explain the need for a fitness center.

Chief McArdle begins by stating each firefighter must pass a physical test to be hired and the need to stay fit is important to continue on the job. If a firefighter is working out in the facility when a call comes in, he/she is ready to respond whereas if the workout was happening outside the facility at a local gym the firefighter may not be able to respond to the call.

Chief Jones agrees and states Police Officers must pass a physical test every three years to remain certified. It is much more practical and useful to have the officers working out on the premises rather than another location as working out in a local gym could be problematic if an officer comes across someone who they have previously apprehended. Most Police and Fire Departments have a fitness center in their building. In Plaistow's case there would be one fitness center for both departments, therefore saving money.

J. Ingerson inquires if the 8.5M includes a septic system for the new Police Department building.

S. Fitzgerald responds yes, and believes the existing septic will remain adequate for the Fire Department.

Eckman's first task was an assessment of costs associated with the project. Eckman calculated the scope of work and came up with \$6.7 million which is displayed on a pie chart. Trident was in agreement. Soft costs are 1 million, contingencies are \$650,000, the Fire Department Renovation is 1.3 million, the Police Department is \$2,749,900, general requirements is \$614,600 and the site work is \$1,479,500. The life expectancy for the project is 25 years. The "wants" of the project were removed and only the "needs" remain. The whole project was pared down to produce significant cost savings. It is noted that the cost to borrow money will only increase.

S. Fitzgerald states the Town has been in contact with The NH Municipal Bond Bank. The estimated cost for debt service of 8.5 million at 4% for 30 years would be \$686,656 for the first year and gradually decrease over the 30 years. This translates into an estimated tax impact of \$183.00 for the first year based on a \$250,000 property valuation (this too will decrease over the 30 years). The Tax impact would be for both commercial and residential property owners. Currently Plaistow has no long term debt and bond rates are the lowest they have been in modern times. The end project will be something all residents will be proud of will be a point of pride in the community.

Chief Jones mentions the Face Book page as well as the project web site are both filled with information about the project and will be updated as the project moves forward. Public informational meeting are scheduled. A logo contest and a coloring contest are being held. The current Safety Complex is offering several open houses for residents to view the facility and see the deficiencies firsthand. If an open house does not fit into your schedule you may call for a tour during a more convenient time.

Chief Jones states the need is great for the Police Department. She encourages residents to please support this project.

S. Fitzgerald invites Dave Mermelstein of Trident and John Deloia of Eckman to respond to a time frame of completion if the project passes at Town Meeting.

D. Mermelstein states the plan is conceptual at this point but construction could begin in the fall and take about 15 months to complete.

J. Sherman notes this requires coordination in keeping the Police Department and Fire Department functional. The biggest issue will most likely be filling in the Frog Pond and obtaining the proper permits. He states an absolute deadline is not necessary and there should be some flexibility built into the schedule.

The presentation is concluded and the meeting is opened to the public for any questions. Jim Peck, Oakridge Rd, would like to know the current total square footage of the Safety Complex, the breakdown between Police and Fire, and the total square footage of the new project again with the Police and Fire breakdown.

The current facility is 15,951 square feet. The new project total will be 29,950 sq. ft. The total percentage increase is approximately 80%.

Discussion ensues regarding the estimated 25 year life of the new building and how the current facility has been in use for 30 years. It is noted that the Police Department has been maxed out for about 10 years. The trailer added 3 offices to the Police Department and was only a stop gap. J. Peck inquires if the \$686,656 is just interest.

S. Fitzgerald states that is principal and interest. The interest rate is estimated high at 4%. He states he is hoping to get an interest rate of 2 to 3%. The tax impact will decrease every year. This does not work like a home mortgage. He states more detailed information will be available on the web site showing the tax impact for different property values.

Richard Foster, 13 Hilltop Road inquires if there is a picture of the conceptual design. It is noted there is one in the lobby of the Town Hall. He also inquires if the whole project will be just one level. The answer is yes. Richard's last inquiry is fire related. He would like to know how many call of the approximate 1000 are EMS calls. Chief McArdle responds approximately 650 are EMS calls or about 70%. Of the calls that are fire related about 65% are residential, 20% commercial and 15% are other calls such as brush fires, auto fires, and gas smells. Richard wants to know if EMS personnel respond to fires. Chief McArdle states yes, all full time employees are Firefighters as well as EMT's. They are cross trained.

Barbara Kiszka, May Ray Ave, would like clarification on the impact of the tax rate. She believes it is 73.2 cents which is the \$183 divided by \$250,000.

S. Fitzgerald mentions you really cannot determine the impact on the tax rate as many factors determine this figure. New development will help offset this. This is purely an estimate. She would also like the "general requirements" on the pie chart explained in more detail. Basically, they are costs associated with the day to day running of the project. For example fees, bond costs, insurance, and a construction trailer. All costs that support a construction project are the general requirements.

Kimberly Raymond, 7 Lynwood Street, appreciates the opportunity to speak and thanks both Chiefs for their hard work. She understands the clear need of the project but her concerns are those of transparency and sharing of information. She wants to know what Trident's fees are and the terms of their contract.

The Board of Selectman voted to support a \$21,500 contract with Trident paid with impact fees for an OPM to help with the scope of the project. K. Raymond questions the process and adhering to the process stating the team was picked prior to the contract terms.

J. Sherman states the Board of Selectman did hire Trident first and directed the Town Manager to work with Trident to get a number that was agreed upon by the Board. The initial number from Trident was \$8.9million. The Board approved a number of \$8.5million therefore site work changes were made to get the number down to \$8.5million. Discussion ensues regarding the site work that has been changed. K. Raymond states she wants the Fire and Police Departments to have all the bells and whistles. J. Sherman is offended that she referred to the needs of the departments as bells and whistles. She clarifies she did not mean “extras” by bells and whistles, to her, that is the normal necessary items. She is concerned that a Construction Manager is hired without approval of the project and is trying to understand the process. She is also concerned with the tax burden. She states resident population growth has been slow while commercial growth has been increasing and the commercial property has not been revaluated. She would like all to pay their fair share. She states the commercial valuation has been done in over 10 years.

S. Fitzgerald states we took the advice of our professional assessors and followed the regulations of the law to be fair in property valuations. He states in 2016 all properties will be re-valued by law.

J. Sherman states the commercial properties were revalued 5 years ago but no changes in the valuation was recommended. 5 years before that all commercial properties were revaluated and again no change in the valuations were recommended. He states there was a presentation done in October by the Director of Assessing at NH Department of Revenue on valuation processes of residential and commercial property.

J. Kiszka mentions that the cost of revaluating commercial properties every year is extremely expensive and other NH towns use the same process we use. He has addressed these questions with other towns surrounding Plaistow.

Discussion ensues regarding the tax impact and property valuations. Both Chiefs talk about how calls have increased in length and more administrative time and paperwork are required. Not all calls on Route 125 are commercial related. Many of them are auto accidents. The type of calls by commercial properties tend to be similar while residential calls vary much more. Also, the Town’s aging population has caused an increase in the number of calls.

K. Raymond believes not enough notice and specific details of the public hearing were made clear to residents.

It is noted the Public Meeting on the Bond was advertised in the Eagle Tribune on Saturday January 2, 2016. It was also posted on channel 17, the Town’s website, at the Public safety Complex and the Plaistow Library.

S. Fitzgerald will check with counsel regarding the posting of the meeting.

Geoff Adams of Newton Road inquires what type of heating system will be in the proposed project. The response is forced hot air. He questions where the access road will stop with pavement and start with gravel. Chief McArdle shows the details on the slide. G. Adams next comment is the channel 17 notification regarding the public hearing was misleading.

D. Mermelstein states the job of the OPM is to protect the community with this project. S. Ranlett states the Board of Selectman are elected officials with the best interest of the town and they have hired the best companies to represent the Town's best interests.

B. Kiszka shares information of expanded services. In 1986 a domestic abuse call was completed in 10 to 15 minutes and today it may take 1 ½ hours. The increase in work and services is not necessarily related to the number of calls.

S. Ranlett closes the Public Hearing at 8:46pm. He wants all residents to know that the Board of Selectman are happy to answer any questions at any time. Chief Jones and Chief McArdle are also available to answer all questions.

2016 BUDGET REVIEW

Library Budget Review, Cab Vinton Director

C. Vinton states they received their health care premiums after they had presented their budget to the Board of Selectman.

J. Sherman motions to change the bottom line of the Library's 2016 proposed budget to \$537,940 and increase the Operating budget in the amount of \$7000. J. Kiszka 2nd

Vote 5-0-0

Motion passes.

It is noted the increase is due to the health premium cost changes and the change in Library census, these figure came out late in the budget season after the Board had approved the Library's budget. The Budget Committee was presented the current budget number of \$537,940.

Default Budget

S. Fitzgerald states the Default Budget did not roll up properly and therefore the Default budget number is not correct. This number should be decreased by \$36,950 for a default budget in the amount of \$8,319,818.

J. Sherman motions to reduce the default budget by \$36,950 for a new bottom line of \$8,319,818 as recommended by the Town Manager. J. Ingerson 2nd

Vote 5-0-0

Motion passes.

It is noted that the adjusted operating budget bottom line number is now \$8,353,355 and the default budget adjusted bottom line is \$8,319,818. These numbers reflect the net effect of the adjustments above.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Budget Committee Meeting- Public Hearing tomorrow night

2016 Proposed Budget Adjustments

Default Budget

Assessing/Abatements

Atkinson Dispatch

Unitil Meeting

Westville Road Bridge

Interviews Finance Director

Building Maintenance

RMON Networks

Annual Report

Deliberative Session

Zoning Violations

Residential/Commercial Development

ACTION ITEM REVIEW

Reviewed

OTHER BUSINESS

None

SIGNATURE FOLDER

S. Ranlett states the manifest and signature folder is going around.

SELECTMENS REPORTS

J. Sherman

- Budget Committee meeting Tuesday January 12 – Public Hearing @ 7:00, Budget Committee @ 6:30.
- Apologizes to K. Raymond if she feels he attacked her. He does not like to hear that taxes for commercial property have not gone up in 10 years. Taxes have increased, it is the valuations that have not changed.
- Project web site – put a sign out front.

J. Ingerson- Nothing to report

S. Ranlett

- Planning Board on Wednesday - zoning changes.
- Attended a Moderator Seminar last Saturday.
- Town Deliberative session will be @ 10:00am @ the Town Hall on January 30th.
- School Deliberative session will be on February 4 @ 7:00pm.

- Public Hearing this Thursday Night for the school budget.

J. Kiszka

- Mentions he has received many complaints of potholes and manhole cover issues on route 125. This is already on the Action Items List.

T. Bergeron

- The deadline for the Logo Contest for the Public Safety Complex is 1/18/16.
- Post on channel 17 – the kids coloring contest & the Logo Contest.
- The Board will vote with a February 1 deadline, all entries should be displayed.
- Attended the informational night at St. Luke's on Public Safety.
- Mentions using an electronic sign for Public Engagement.

Public Meeting Adjourned at 9:35 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle Hamel
Recording Secretary