

**BUILDING COMMITTEE  
MINUTES APRIL 06, 2012  
APPROVED**

**Present:** Jack Petropoulos, Chairman; Mike Bouchard, Clerk; Halsey Platt; Jeremy Januskiewicz; Val Prest; Susan Daly, Ex-Officio; Chief Joe Bosselait, Ex-Officio

**Also Present:** Mark Haddad, Town Manager; April Iannacone, DPW Assistant

Chairman Petropoulos called the regular meeting of the Building Committee to Order at 9:00 a.m. He then stated that they would pass on the approval of minutes to the next meeting.

Mr. Haddad informed the Committee that the square footage of the current center fire station was 7,100 sq. ft. on the first floor and garage, and then there was 2,000 sq. ft. upstairs. Mr. Petropoulos asked if the square footage stated included the hallways and stair area. Mr. Bosselait replied that the square footage quoted came directly from the Assessors database for the building. Mr. Bosselait also noted that when discussing the issues with the current center fire station it should be noted that the building itself has been standing since 1909 and the date of 1949 was when it was converted to a fire station so they were dealing with a building that was 40 years older than most people were discussing that it was. Mr. Petropoulos stated that when he was creating the Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FAQ) for the public he wanted to be sure that they had a good explanation of the difference between the current square footage and the proposed square footage.

Mr. Haddad then stated that he had spoken with Mr. Kevin Lindemer and the Electric Light Department (GELD) was looking into the option of taking down the current center fire station and turning the lot into a parking lot with 7-10 spaces dedicated to GELD and then the remainder of the lot could be used as overflow parking for the Fire Department. GELD has gone back to their engineer to look into revisions of the layout with these specs. Ms. Daly asked if there was a possibility of the Town purchasing the vacant lot behind Town Hall for that purpose rather than tearing down the old station. Mr. Haddad replied that the lot behind Town Hall was an expensive lot and it would actually be cheaper to tear down the building on the other lot. However it would be subject to the Demolition Delay Bylaw which states that the building has to be vacant for 6 months before it could come down. Ms. Daly noted that it may be cheaper to tear down the building than to buy the vacant lot, but it would still add a large expense to the project as a whole that might not be feasible.

Mr. Bosselait stated that there has been mention of using the current station as a site for smaller trucks, apparatus and offices for the fire department which could reduce the footprint of the new building on the GELD site in order to reduce some of the issues with the wetlands buffer zone. Mr. Haddad agreed that the issue of non-consolidation would likely come up again. He then asked if there had been an opinion from the public as to whether or not the department should be split up or have everyone under one roof. Mr. Petropoulos stated that he did not recall the way things went. Mr. Prest stated that it wasn't completely expressed, but the committee opinion was that it was best to remain under one roof. Mr. Bosselait stated that it should be noted for the public that the footprint of an ambulance is similar to that of the fire trucks and that there are just as many issues getting them into the old building as well. Mr. Januskiewicz stated that the general public opinion tends to be that there are smaller vehicles and equipment that are non-essential and only used occasionally that could be garaged in the older building

which is not the case as every vehicle used is essential for many different situations. Mr. Petropoulos stated that he would construct the answer to this public question with a 3 part answer. He would state that the concept of the new station is to have all responders under the same roof; that none of the vehicles were unnecessary for response to calls; and that having to send personnel across the street for vehicles would reduce response time.

Mr. Val Prest stated that Places had designed the building set back with a 5% grade down to Station Ave with additional parking along the rail trail. If this plan is used it keeps the design out of the 50 foot buffer zone but within the 100 foot buffer to the Conservation land. The other issue then becomes how much of the lot needs to be raised by fill to get grading issues corrected as this could then throw off drainage and cause more issues on Station Ave. Mr. Prest also stated that the new plan for the building would be 84 feet by 116 feet for a square footage of 9,744 and a 3 story building to meet everyone's needs. Mr. Haddad asked Ms. Collette if there was a height restriction for buildings on Station Ave. Ms. Collette replied that there was no height restriction but agreed with Mr. Prest that there could be drainage issues. A design plan had been done for improvements to the drainage on Station Ave with some work already done through the Mass DEP/EPA 319 grant which designed the improvements based on the current grade. If work done to the GELD site caused a need for regarding parts of Station Ave it would negate the design work and any actual work that had already been done for Station Ave improvements.

Mr. Haddad stated that the biggest problem with the GELD site was whether or not it was truly viable and whether or not the Conservation Commission would approve the designs. At a minimum it would be a few weeks before GELD would even be ready to file with the Conservation Commission, 21 days for Conservation to advertise for a hearing, and then 21 days to render a decision after the close of the hearing. The question then becomes whether or not this Committee was willing to wait the few months for a possibly compromised plan, or is there a better alternative with a different site. Mr. Petropoulos stated that they should consider that there might likely be a similar delay in negotiating and planning with the Lawrence Homestead Trust site. Mr. Haddad stated that he believed there would be a conclusion to negotiations and tentative agreement with the Lawrence Trust as of Monday. Mr. Petropoulos then stated that they would continue to move forward and consider things as if the site was an option.

Resident Scott Harker asked if there was going to be a need for improvements to existing utilities if the station were to be built on Station Ave in conjunction with the new GELD Building. Ms. Collette stated that she believed that the sewer system was fine but thought there had been improvements needed to the water system. Mr. Januskiewicz stated that he believed they had been advised that the water lines would be ok for this size building. Mr. Petropoulos requested that someone contacted the Water Superintendent again to get a definitive answer to that question.

The Committee then shifted the discussion towards the costs associated with each site as well as any advantages and disadvantages of the sites. Mr. Petropoulos stated that it appeared that the Lawrence Homestead site would be the least costly of the 3 options and the most of what the Fire Department needed with the least compromising. Mr. Haddad stated that the Town has up to \$500,000 of available funds through the levy limit for the project. If the Town did a 22 year bond the total project funding could probably be about \$7 million with a separate \$200,000 or \$250,000 for land acquisition and keep the project within the levy limit. Mr. Petropoulos stated that the last update from Halsey Platt that he had listed likely costs of \$7.4 million for the Lawrence site, \$8.3 million for the Station Ave site with

\$200,000 in land cost, and though the Prescott school site did not have land cost there would be an additional \$950,000 in renovation costs to make the old building work with the new building making a total project cost of approximately \$8.5 million. Mr. Petropoulos then introduced Mr. Don Walter, an architect from Dore & Whittier, Inc. who would update the Committee and the public on their findings of costs and concerns with the locations being discussed.

Mr. Walter explained that they broke down costs for each site to include the building itself, contingency costs for construction, design, a 1.5% escalation change and a 3-5% increase in cost per year and then soft costs to include design team, consultants, permitting and all other related expenses. Mr. Bouchard asked if the costs also included a project manager. Mr. Walter replied that they had included the project manager in the costs as well. Looking at all information at this moment in time they were confident in their projections for cost as \$6.9 - \$7.5 million for the Lawrence site, \$8 million to \$9 million for the Prescott site, and \$7.4 to \$8 million for the GELD site. The other issue that they wanted to look into further was how the fire station would work on the GELD site as both the fire and electric would be 24/7 facilities which could complicate things.

Mr. Haddad asked the Committee if they would be in the position to consider the Station Ave site as a viable location given the cost information as well as the risks involved. Mr. Prest stated that at this time he would not be comfortable completely ruling it out at this time. Mr. Bosselait stated that it would be most helpful to make sure that once the Committee came to a decision they remained committed to it and show a united front with GELD whether it be chosen as a site or not because if they were not united on which way worked best it would be less likely to pass on the floor of Town Meeting. Mr. Haddad stated that he did not believe this would be a huge issue because if the Committee took the position that the Station Ave site was not a viable option it would be based on specific facts and research this time as compared to the last Town Meeting.

Mr. Petropoulos left the meeting at this time. Mr. Walter continued with the presentation showing a rough layout of the building design with the specs of the Fire Department needs. Their goal was to design a building that meets all functionality as well as a view and design that fits the Town and neighborhood for abutters concerns.

Mr. Walter stated that he would look into the questions asked of the GELD site and try to have an answer back to the Committee before they presented to the Board of Selectmen on Monday night April 16<sup>th</sup>. The question to answer was “would both proposed buildings fit on the Station Ave site?”

The Committee thanked Mr. Walter for his work.

**Mr. Bosselait moved to adjourn at 11:15 a.m. Mr. Januskiewicz seconded. Unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

April Iannacone  
DPW Assistant

Date Approved:           Approved 5-18-12

