

## Meeting Minutes – May 9, 2017

### Public Safety Building Committee

Attending the meeting are committee members Carol McLeod, Eric Shears, Mark, Tocci, Ralph Spencer and Richard LeSavoy. Also attending, Selectman Andrew Connor and Joel Breen.

Meeting commenced at 6:05 PM

Eric stated that the objective of the meeting is to evaluate what we have learned from the recent town meeting and election vote and to decide where we go from here.

#### Comments:

- Eric felt that feedback he received was that we went for too much money at \$15 Million and residents did not like the idea of doing all three projects at once.
- Carol McLeod felt the police station received support but it was not the same for the DPW portion of the project.
- Rich felt that the “elephant in the room” was the pending school project which dissuaded people from making this commitment
- Ralph felt there was potential to proceed with just a police station project.
- Mark re-stated the gross inadequacy of our current building and the potential problems which lie ahead. He mentioned another town which was renting temporary space at a cost of \$500,000 for five years.

#### Discussion:

- There was a question as to the timing of the school project. Carol McLeod felt it would be 18-24 months before the voters are asked to commit money. Mark felt the school building committee
- There was discussion on the idea of pursuing only the design and engineering costs for the public safety complex. Committee members felt the downside to this would be the need for a tax override to fund it, the fact that it would be more expensive as a stand-alone item and the risk of wasting these funds in the event the designed project does not proceed.
- There were a number of comments from residents attending the meeting. One former teacher and school committee member felt the school project was not the reason the safety complex was opposed. He felt it all had to do with the \$15 Million cost. He also felt the police station had overwhelming support but citizens did not understand the need or issues requiring the building of a new DPW facility.
- Carol Traynor, former selectman expressed the view that we should continue to pursue all three projects rather than just a police station. Carol also expressed views on what could have made the presentation and public information process more effective. Her guidance was to figure out a way to reduce the overall cost.
- There was then discussion on the Farmington, NH Police and Fire Station which cost \$2.5 Million. Eric spoke to individuals up in Farmington and learned that the police

station had no cell block or dispatch center which are significant cost drivers in a proposed Merrimac design. Eric shared a Q & A document Farmington used to communicate the project to residents.

- One of the other residents attending the meeting had the idea of creating a survey to solicit feedback from the residents. The committee thought this was a great idea and discussion proceeded on the process, timing and mechanics of such a survey.
- Carol McLeod shared a planned meeting with the Merrimac BOS and school representatives to discuss how we can coordinate both the public safety project and the school building project so that we are working together rather than opposing one or the other project.

#### Action Steps:

1. We agreed that we would develop a survey of town residents to solicit feedback on why the proposal failed. We can then use this feedback to develop our strategy for next steps.
2. Joel agreed to help “frame” the questions properly as he is in the marketing and advertising business and has resources who do this professionally.
3. Committee members and residents were urged to create questions and provide them to Carol.
4. We agreed to meet next on May 23 at 6:00 PM at Town Hall upstairs.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22