

TOWN HALL BUILDING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

March 27, 2019

Members Present: Jay Butler, Jean-Pierre Minois, Tim Olson, Jeff Hubbard, Mike Twomey, and Patrick Reffett

Members Absent: Allison Jenkins

Others Present: Owner Project Manager (OPM), Lee Sollenberger, Just Moller, and John Sayre-Scibona of Design Technique (DTI); FINCOM Liaison, Phil Stearns; Designer/Architect, Mallory Demty and Drayton Fair of Lerner, Ladds, Bartels Architects (LLB) and several members of the public including Marc Johnson, Jack Lawrence, David Neil, Toni Twomey, Darcy Dale, David Wagner, and others.

The Town Hall Building Committee (THBC) meeting was called to order by Mike Twomey at 6:03 PM in the Council on Aging Building. Mike noted that the committee would first discuss the project cost estimate before the public presentation on the project at 7:00 PM.

Mallory mentioned that the Option 8 project cost estimate was provided to the committee only this morning. Mallory pointed out that the hard costs developed by PMC LLC would be \$6,177,330.00 and the soft costs developed by DTI would be \$2,758,050.00 for a total Project Cost of \$8,935,380.00, resulting in total project costs of \$655 per square foot.

She mentioned that LLB had provided an optional additional hard cost of \$400K for a mezzanine level reinforcement for floor loading for storage. However, she also mentioned that the structural engineers recommended against this option. She noted that it was possible to use asphalt shingles for the roof instead of slate for a savings of \$223,270 in hard costs. Finally, she offered that blown in cellular wall insulation could be used instead of gypsum and vapor barrier for a savings in hard costs of \$110K. She also mentioned we could go without insulation entirely and save money and we were within our right to do so since this was an historical preservation project, and according to her and Drayton it would not affect our status as a green community. Mike suggested that we needed to use an insulation solution that would keep paint on the outside of the building. Patrick was concerned over maintenance costs. Drayton offered that using proper insulation will provide payback over the long term. John and Drayton both offered that having a good air conditioning system in the basement will help with good air circulation, and keep the building drier. Mallory noted that the cost estimate provides for both insulation in the exterior walls and waterproofing the basement. Mike noted that similar fixes have been tried before in the basement. Jack Lawrence mentioned that he had recently attended a seminar where it was suggested that vapor barriers were ineffective once plumbing and electrical fixtures pierced the vapor barrier. Mallory countered that LLB was recommending "smart" vapor barriers that minimized this effect. Jack further suggested the use of closed cell foam, but

Mallory indicated that this was not allowed for historic buildings as it was not technically removable since it clings to the foundation and other surfaces. John and Lee pointed out that the cost estimate included a basement waterproofing scheme. Mike pointed out that past issues with moisture have been due to condensing and several different attempts to address it have occurred. Tim noted that he has the plans for the French Drain that was previously installed. Mike noted that the inside of the basement had been sandblasted as well. Tim indicated that there are currently 5 dehumidifiers working in the basement. Jack recommended an HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilation) system.

At this juncture, John wondered if the committee wanted to look at trying to reduce the cost before presentation to the public. The slate roof, insulation, and the foundation were areas where this could be done. The conversation then shifted to what was budgeted for contingencies, and the fact that we are at the conceptual stage at this point but that as we move forward with the schematic design to get better hard costs that the contingency number will effectively be reduced. The design contingency is at 12% with LLB whereas the project contingency from DTI is at 10%.

Mallory suggested that there are three major items that could be eliminated to reduce cost: use no insulation at \$135K; no slate roof at \$223K; and no external foundation at \$75K for a total of \$433K, thus reducing the Hard Cost to \$5.7M and Project Cost to \$8.4M. There would be no savings on contingencies at this time. John noted that we would now be \$431K less.

Mallory noted some other items in the costing that could be examined. The DPW gas tank removal for \$175K could be considered separately, especially since this cost may be shared with Wenham. Other items included in the costing were a new emergency generator, new fencing and paving, and new septic. John questioned how these costs would then be handled. Tim suggested taking out \$50K.

Jay questioned whether or not costs had been included for temporary relocation for town employees. John noted that \$200K had been budgeted for the 17 months of construction and that the basis for the estimate was the costs recently incurred by Topsfield for their Town Hall renovations. This cost included setup, staging and moving with a 10% contingency.

John asked again, what number did the committee want to use as the bottom line cost, i.e., \$8.342M vs. \$8.935M.

Jack asked why not use plastic slate material vs. real slate but Mallory indicated that it did not have the same "look". Mallory recounted: roof slate vs. asphalt shingles offered a savings of \$223K; taking out the insulation of gyp and vapor barrier would save \$135K; and taking out the gas tank would save \$50K. When all other costs were adjusted the reduction in cost would be \$427K or $\$8,935,380 - \$427,000 = \$8,508,380$.

Mike stopped the committee meeting at this point for a 5 minute break before the advertised public presentation.

Public Presentation

Mike began the public presentation by: reviewing the history of the building; the purpose of the project; some of the reasons for project including space and storage; and mentioned the THBC and the project consultants. Mallory took over the presentation at this point and proceeded to report on the findings of the various consultants on the examination of existing conditions, noting that there were no serious issues. She then proceeded to mention the history of the building layout, the space needs study that had been done with the building employees; some of the constraints placed on the project; and then briefly talked about all of the renovation options that had been considered to date. She then showed the proposed Option 8 that included taking out the main staircase and the ADA ramp on the side of the building. She then described the second floor layout with the large meeting room with view of the domed ceiling. She presented a summary of previous projects with their total project cost per square foot noting that the current range was typically over \$600 per square foot. The estimated cost of the recommended project without some proposed reductions was \$8,935,380 that represented a \$655 per square foot cost. Finally, Mallory went over the timeline for the project moving forward.

A question from one of the public attendees noted that Option 1 preserved the grand staircase but no cost estimate has been provided to see what that option would cost. Jay and Tim suggested that Option 6 would be something to consider that preserved the staircase, especially as originally designed the Option 1 did not include the DPW offices in the building. Mallory did mention however that another layout might allow for that. John noted that we had previously discussed option 6 costing approximately \$750K more money than Option 8.

Marc Johnson asked if Town Hall Department heads had been asked for comments on the Option 8 office layout. Tim indicated that that had not yet been done but that in doing so we will need to stress the need for less paper.

David Neil noted that back in the 80's when he was in town government that there had been several discussions about relocating the DPW operations elsewhere and was wondering had the committee considered that alternative. Tim and Mike noted that we had looked at that idea and that we were planning on moving the gas tank and the fence back to provide more parking spaces. Tim indicated that he planned to look at the layout more closely in the future as there was some unused space in the yard.

Patrick mentioned that the committee was looking to hear some comments about removing the ADA access ramp on the side of the building and not returning the second floor meeting space to its original grandeur. Jack Lawrence had no problem with either. Mike briefly reported on comments made to the committee by Ray Whipple when he was apprised of the Option 8 features. Basically, Ray had no issues with removing the staircase, the ramp, or the second floor meeting room. David Neil mentioned that the stairs were designed initially for crowd control but were no longer needed.

Tim interjected at this point that that there will be two warrants at Town Meeting, both asking for money for the same thing, funds to complete the schematic design phase by the Fall 2019 Town Meeting, i.e., a \$150K CPC grant request and a \$75K DPW capital request. Jay and Tim noted that the reason for two warrants had to do with CPC limits and the CPC required schedule of eligibility and funding steps.

Jay asked the committee if we were prepared to comment on the effect on the tax rate for the project cost. Mike noted that he planned to meet with Marissa Batista to develop a number or spread sheet for Town Meeting.

Mike reiterated that the most important aspects of the current recommended design that we need comments and feedback are: grand staircase, second floor meeting space, ADA ramp, and the fact that all offices are contained within the building.

Another comment from an attendee indicated that as long as we have provided for handicap accessibility that removing the stairs was not an issue. He also wanted all offices in the building.

Tim said that he would be using social media including the website and the Chronicle to get this info out to the public.

Jack made a final comment that he had previously worked on a Salem cemetery that needed to digitize records from 1840 to the present and that he had used a Wakefield company that did the work in two months for \$9K. Tim wanted to know if they were still in business but Jack said they worked on just cemeteries.

Mike adjourned the meeting at 8:17.

Secretary
Jay Butler
Attested 3/28/19