

TOWN HALL BUILDING COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
March 4, 2021

Members Present: Mike Twomey, Jay Butler, Rosemary Kennedy, Darcy Dale, Jean-Pierre Minois, and Jack Lawrence

Members Absent: Tim Olson, Patrick Reffett

Others Present: Owner Project Manager (OPM) - Design Technique (DTI), John Sayre-Scibona; Pat Shannon, Assistant to the Town Manager and CPC Coordinator; David Wanger and Nick Tensen, FINCOM; and Kirsten Alexander, Communication Consultant

Mike Twomey opened the Zoom audio/video teleconference at 1:03 PM. Jay then took a roll call of committee members, determining there was a quorum.

**Past Meeting Minutes**

**Jay made a motion that was seconded to accept the 2/18/21 meeting minutes and the 2/25/21 meeting notes, and hearing no comments, recorded a roll call vote of 6 – 0.**

**Project Direction and Cost**

Mike opened the meeting by referring to an email he had sent to the committee earlier in the week that summarized his report to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) this past Monday. He explained that the BOS felt that the committee should proceed to the May 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Town Meeting (ATM) using the current numbers and some escalation costs without going through a project rebid. He said that the vote at the polls might be delayed until as late as September depending on the pandemic and the state of the economy. Mike then summarized the current situation of having the \$300k in reductions discussed last meeting and the additional \$1M from the CPC (assuming CPC approval at their March 11, 2021 meeting). He noted that Tim was preparing the CPC grant application, but Jay said that he had not seen it yet. Jack asked if we had a number for the effect on the tax rate yet and was told no as we had not yet determined the project Ask for the ATM. Mike then wondered aloud what we should use as a budget number going forward, asking if we should consider reducing some of the scope to lower the number further.

John interjected at this point mentioning that he had been in discussions with LLB and a contact at the low electrical Filed Sub Bidder (FSB), Wayne J. Griffin Electric, regarding escalation costs and learned that electrical supplies have gone up 17% since their October 2020 bid. However, he also noted that the low General Contractor (GC) bidder, Castagna Construction, had this week contacted all of the low bid FSB's and found that all of them, ex one, will hold their bids, as will they, until our ATM on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The one exception is for Metal Fabrication where it will be necessary to take the next lowest bid as the lowest bidder dropped out which will mean an approximate \$60k increase to the GC bid. This means that we will not have to factor in escalation costs. John said he was not comfortable voting on a number for the project Ask, if the vote at the polls were to be delayed as the GC and all of the FSB bids would not be valid and

thus a rebid would be necessary, likely with higher numbers. Further, it would then be necessary to estimate escalation fees or more likely a need to address each of the various construction trades for escalation.

Mike asked if we should consider reducing scope of the project. Darcy said no. Rosemary suggested looking at the \$250k in the budget for furniture as a potential item that could be removed and satisfied by keeping the old furniture. John concurred and suggested it could be considered as a potential contingency and also mentioned the IT component could be similarly viewed.

Darcy suggested that we factor in fundraising of the type mentioned at the last meeting by David Wanger. i.e., the use of selling fundraising bricks. David commented on the use of public funding or fundraising by pointing out that it needed much thought and structure by those who had expertise. And he readily admitted that he was not one of those persons. Kirsten said that she could help with fundraising but wondered if it would be done via Town Hall or through a Friends Group. She wondered about the tax considerations for donations. She also commented on an example mentioned at the last meeting by John who said that a person who contributed \$75k to a library had a room named after them. She felt that \$75k was a low number to get such recognition, but John noted that it was due to where it was. She suggested a plaque was a better way to go for donor recognition, and said we should use using fundraising only if we identified a gap in funding. Mike, Jack and Rosemary agreed, suggesting we kick it down the road for the present.

Kirsten suggested that since we are still considering a range of options, that she could explain the cost of the project in terms of a range of numbers noting the costs associated with escalation, potential rebids, all of which suggest that waiting to approve the project will cost more money. This could show transparency in our efforts as well. Darcy suggested confirming a Not To Exceed (NTE) number. Jack commented that reducing the scope of the project is not possible due to all of the interconnecting pieces. He was also concerned over escalation noting that he has heard of future growth rates of 4, 5, and or 6% and was particularly concerned with Kirsten having to work with rising numbers. Rosemary commented that the BOS wants this project on the ATM warrant on May 1<sup>st</sup> as it has been established that there will be no budget overrides on the warrant for Town meeting due to the school budget. John noted that with the GC, Castagna Construction, holding their bid with the exception of a \$60k increase, and all of the FSB's holding their bids that we do not need to consider any escalation costs resulting in a huge win for us. We do not need to rebid and we do not have to address any escalation costs. Darcy supported this noting that it was fiscally responsible. Mike summarized the \$300k reductions mentioned last meeting, the \$60k escalation for Metal Fabrication, and the CPC \$1M addition, and possibly some donations, the final number is looking very good. John said that he would have a new number to consider by the end of the day.

Kirsten asked if the bond rates were fixed for the amounts that would require bonding and Jay pointed out that they were not and would not be established until the project was approved and the Finance Dept. went to set up the bond. He also mentioned the obvious concern of bond rates going up.

Darcy reminded all that some years ago that the state had ordered Town hall vacated due to lack of ADA access. In response we had built a ramp for disability access, but had not done anything else. She felt that the state could act in a similar manner anytime in the future and thus we are gambling they do not.

### **Project Promotion Update**

Kirsten reported that she had been working on the survey and now needed to coordinate with Pat Shannon or Tim to get access to Survey Monkey. She reported that she had spent some time talking with Town Clerk, Carin Kale, and had learned more about the December 3<sup>rd</sup> election loss where 451 persons voted for the project and 669 voted against it. Carin had some good insight over the results noting that she felt several voters were confused over what they were voting for including some who thought they were voting for the Total Project Budget of \$8.87M. Carin also provided some insight of who uses Town Hall, e.g., many seniors who come in to pay water bills, vs. others who never visit Town Hall and do everything online. She felt some education was needed about the need for Town Hall. She also said that the language of the ballot question needs to be reviewed given some voters were confused given the fact that the wording is written by lawyers. Jack wanted input on this facet. Carin also commented on Mail-in Voting and told Kirsten that this type of voting will expire at the end of this month in MA unless extended by the MA legislature. The bill to extend was passed in the House and was now in the Senate. She explained that Absentee Balloting was still allowed but you had to have a valid reason, but Mail-in Voting could be used for almost any reason, including concerns over the pandemic. Jack suggested someone contact Bruce Tarr to check on the status of the bill.

Jay asked Kirsten if she was still collecting inputs for the FAQ list. She indicated that she had quite a bit of input. He also asked if she were planning to send out information on her list of proposed short videos that she mentioned at the last meeting – she will do so. He then asked if she was all set for comments on the survey. Responding to Mike, Kirsten said that she would present her survey at the next meeting. She did mention that at some point she needed an update to the list of various Boards and Committees that approved and supported the project.

### **Miscellaneous**

Mike reminded committee members that that the signed forms for MA State Ethics compliance and Conflict of Interest are due to the Town Clerk.

Jay asked David and Nick about their proposal to send the committee the FINCOM review paper for the project that was circulated before the Fall 2020 Town Meeting. Nick reported that he had sent the document to Mike.

John asked if he could contact Castagna Construction and tell them that we will not be rebidding the project and will accept their offer to hold their bid (with the Metal Fabrication escalation) for our Annual Town Meeting and subsequent vote at the polls on the project. Mike suggested a vote on the matter, so **Jack made a motion to “Authorize John Sayre-Scibona to commit to Castagna Construction that Hamilton will accept their offer to hold their GC bid for our project, including the price differential for the Metals Fabrication escalation, and that we will not pursue a project rebid.” The Vote was unanimous by roll call, 6-0.** Kirsten then

asked if she could publicize Castagna Construction as the GC and was told she could by John and Mike.

**Next Meeting**

Mike set the next meeting for Friday, March 12, 2021 at 1:00 PM via Zoom.

**Adjournment**

**Darcy made a motion to adjourn at 1:43 PM that was seconded, and then voted by roll call vote 6 - 0.**

A True Record,

Jay Butler, Secretary