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TOWN OF NORTH HAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
NORTH HAMPTON SELECT BOARD MEETING
JULY 27, 2021 7:00 PM
NORTH HAMPTON TOWN HALL
DRAFT MINUTES

SELECT BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Jim Maggiore, Vice Chairman James Sununu, Selectman Jonathan Pinette

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator Michael Tully, Police Chief Kathryn Mone, Fire Chief Jason Lajoie, John E. Ricci of Ricci Construction, John M. Tuttle of T|W Designs LLC

AGENDA

Chairman Jim Maggiore welcomed everyone to the July 27, 2021 North Hampton Select Board Meeting which was opened up and called to order at 6:00 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

3.1 Discussion and Public Comment of Town Facilities

Chairman Maggiore said the purpose of the meeting is to get ideas for our facilities: Police, Fire, and Town Administration, and to consider possibilities for renovation of these buildings. He said the meeting was preceded by a tour with the Chief of the Fire Department, the Chief of the Police Department, and our Town Administrator. Both chiefs will provide a summary then Contractor John Ricci of Ricci Construction and Architect John Tuttle of T|W Designs, will give their ideas followed by public input and ideas.

Fire Chief Jason Lajoie thanked everyone for their interest in being part of future solutions for Public Safety space needs. He said North Hampton Fire & Rescue is a fulltime Fire Department providing paramedic-level ambulance service to the town working a 24-hour shift. This is a full-service department responding to fire rescue and medical emergencies, as well as administrative tasks, and to perform effectively requires adequate workspace and living space.

Chief Lajoie listed current Fire Station deficiencies and said the facility was built in 1968 to house 1 fulltime firefighter with all other members on call. There are now 5 fulltime employees with 3 members on duty 24/7. The station was not designed with future needs in mind and did not anticipate paramedic-level EMS as well as fire apparatus changing size and design, or the changing dynamics of fire service and increase in calls; there are no accommodations for female firefighters or adequate space to meet today's clerical

37 needs. The current Chief and Deputy Chief's offices are located in an apparatus bay; administrative duties
38 are disrupted by noise pollution from running apparatus and limited space; one office is a converted tool
39 room and another a small kitchen converted to offices. There is no room for meeting space or additional
40 accommodations for off-duty firefighters during large-scale emergencies.

41
42 Chief Lajoie said there is no proper decontamination area for hazardous materials; one shower stall in an
43 open hallway, no gender separation or separate bunk space for female employees, no EMS storage room,
44 and supplies are kept in the kitchen; no SCBA workroom (air packs); no tool or maintenance area. There
45 is no conference area for staff to meet with public, no fitness room or equipment, insufficient bathroom
46 facilities, inadequate bay space for existing apparatus and equipment storage, no gear room (stored in
47 bay areas), no training area in apparatus bay for firefighters, and no room for needed equipment.

48
49 Chief Lajoie said the old floor to door height limits replacement needs, there is no space for IT equipment
50 which is stored in the attic with extreme temperature differences and perilous access for firefighters. The
51 front exterior wall of the station has shown evidence of separation from the building, and the existing
52 roof structure is not insurable due to weakened trusses which requires every 6 inches of snow on the roof
53 to be shoveled off.

54
55 **Police Chief Kathryn Mone** said the Police Department is looking to go into National Accreditation in the
56 future which is unattainable at present with deficiencies. She said they need sight and sound separation
57 for juveniles which is a New Hampshire State Law; the heating and cooling systems have significant issues
58 with significant septic and plumbing issues and inadequate file storage space; no room to move in file
59 room, lack of separate office space for workers, no space for private conversations. There are only 2
60 workstations with a file cabinet, a drawer, and a storage area; no kitchen or place to eat, no firearm
61 storage area with firearms stored in evidence area, evidence storage space is right off the booking room.

62
63 Chief Mone said they have male and female locker rooms of inadequate size; for females a storage closet
64 was turned into 2 lockers with 1 bathroom and shower stall; male space is also inadequate but has room
65 for 2 lockers and 2 shower stalls. Air circulation in the building is not good causing failure of breathalyzer
66 machine for DWI; no public restrooms off lobby, no fitness area for physical and emotional wellbeing of
67 employees. Have one sally port where officers bring in arrested individuals which is also used for bulk
68 evidence storage and taser training; need additional training and defensive tactics areas; there is one
69 interview room for suspects, witnesses, or crime victims not in an ideal location in the building; security
70 limitations with current building layout.

71
72 Chairman Maggiore explained that the Select Board went through a selection process interviewing
73 different firms for design/construction and chose Ricci Construction for construction management and
74 John Tuttle as architect.

75
76 **Mr. John E. Ricci** of Ricci Construction said he did a building assessment for the existing Library, Fire
77 Station, and Police Station, and Town offices. He said John Tuttle will talk about what exists today and
78 some of the code issues we see. He said the existing Library was built in 1970 and they walked through
79 for structural capacity, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical. The building itself is in very good shape for
80 its age; mechanical systems are original to building and have reached useful life and need replacement;
81 electrical was recently redone but electrical service also at its useful life.

82
83 Mr. Ricci said the scenario for all of these buildings is renovation of each existing, then comprehensive
84 demolition and construction of new. He felt the old Library would be great to repurpose for Town Offices

85 with no major modifications needed. The structure would be kept intact, replace mechanicals, add
86 ventilation, and rework the interior.

87
88 Mr. Ricci said the Fire Station was built in 1968; Foley Buhl Roberts did a report in 2014 which structurally
89 said trusses were not braced properly, the hose tower was framed from left over trusses cut to fit, the
90 block wall was not reinforced, and the building structure would not meet today's design codes. The
91 electrical service is undersized and needs upgrading; mechanical units providing heat in garage are
92 antiquated; only the new basement boiler is salvageable, but exhaust does not meet today's code; no CO
93 detectors there which is critical. The Police and Town Offices were built in 1990 and renovated in 1997;
94 have the original mechanical equipment which has reached its useful life and needs to be replaced.

95
96 Mr. Ricci said based on his assessment the existing Library lends itself nicely to be renovated for Town
97 Offices; Fire Station renovation would be a challenge as will the Police Station with some underground
98 sanitary issues. He said he did an exhaustive study of all buildings and will take public input and look at
99 cost to renovate versus cost to replace.

100
101 **Mr. John M. Tuttle** said he is Principal Architect at T|W Designs, started in 2001; the firm does everything
102 from single-family homes to multi-story mixed use buildings. He said he looked at the existing facilities
103 here and the old Library was a decent structure and structurally sound, lending itself easily to
104 modification. There is a large space in the structure with not too many bearing points to hinder reusing
105 the floorplan.

106
107 Mr. Tuttle said the existing Fire Station structurally has inadequate ceiling height, and the roof would have
108 to be raised. It was built in 1968 and there is already separation of masonry making it difficult to raise
109 those walls higher to an adequate height. There are also HVAC issues with lack of CO detection; offices off
110 apparatus bay is not good. None of the building met ADA standards and the structural instability in the
111 roof is alarming.

112
113 Mr. Tuttle said for both Police and Fire there is lack of gender separation in the facilities, lack of plumbing
114 fixture count to support both facilities appropriately, and additional discrepancies in the existing facilities
115 to be addressed. For Police there is lack of confidentiality and lack of separation between security and
116 custody of evidence, as well as no appropriate juvenile cell separation.

117
118 Chairman Maggiore said both firms have access to the different studies conducted over the years for these
119 buildings and the minor renovations.

120
121 **Public Input**

122
123 Frank Ferraro of Post Road asked Mr. Ricci and Mr. Tuttle if they would be looking outside the box for
124 solutions. He said current Town Offices are 2,000 sq ft and the old Library is 5,000 sq ft and it may not be
125 the best use; they might want to consider moving the Police Department there with a sally port where
126 the old storage locker is now. Fire could get the Police Department space with women's locker rooms and
127 rooms for offices. There would be room for some town offices in the old Library, keep some staff where
128 they are now, or move all office staff to a central but off-site location.

129
130 Chairman Maggiore gave out the telephone number for the public to call in: 603-758-1447.

131

Select Board Regular Meeting

July 26, 2021

132 Kirsten Larsen Schultz of Post Road said for transparency she would be interested in how much money
133 was spent to date on studies, where the money came from, and whether residents should expect a
134 Warrant Article in March. She said it sounds like the Fire Department is the biggest need.

135
136 Town Administrator Tully said he would have Ryan search the records. Chairman Maggiore said as far as
137 the warrant article they would ultimately like to be there but do not want to commit. He said it depends
138 on cost, viability, and timing and this is just the beginning of that process. Town Administrator Tully said
139 this is a chance for the public to let the Select Board know what they are thinking at this time.

140
141 Chairman Maggiore said Cynthia Swank sent an email asking if any of the functions could be moved to
142 Route 1. He said the commercial property there is valuable and he personally would love to move safety
143 to Route 1 if it were affordable. Town Administrator Tully said there would be a higher price to purchase
144 property there and it would take property taxes off the tax roll.

145
146 Vice-Chair Sununu said he has been involved with this for 7 years and the buildings are now 8 years older
147 than they were when the urgent need to replace them was discussed. He said the Town decided to commit
148 to a new Library and now we need to take a serious look at these buildings. He said he wants everything
149 to stay on this campus as the best solution and to make sure whatever is done will last 50+ years or they
150 will be right back where they started. He felt they should keep Town Administration, Town Clerk, and
151 Library traffic together, keep public safety and emergency traffic together, and separate the two as much
152 as possible.

153
154 Dan Derby of Mill Road said he reviewed Select Board meetings and could not find a problem statement
155 and felt the Select Board needed to clearly define what the objective is here and what they are trying to
156 accomplish with a written public statement. He also encouraged them to use the lists of deficiencies
157 provided by Police, Fire, and the Town Administrator and make the lists available to the public for
158 comment. He said this is the 3rd time the town has tried to bring something like this forward and asked
159 what strategies we have this time to make it successful.

160
161 Selectman Pinette said as far as having an exact game plan from the Select Board and how we would like
162 to move forward on this, we are not reinventing the wheel here, this has been ongoing for years and each
163 time it comes up the issues in the buildings keep escalating. He said they are bringing this up again and
164 trying to get public input in order to have a game plan without the Select Board dictating what they will
165 be doing. He said we are trying to get everyone involved, have a list of suggestions, and do it right so we
166 can actually get something done to make sure we have safe facilities to operate from.

167
168 Scott Baker of Squire Drive said everyone understands this plan has been attempted a number of times
169 and it would be helpful for the public and the town to come up with a list of assumptions on what the
170 Select Board feels the needs will be for the future: assumptions based on a percent of population growth
171 and assumptions on trends in fire and ambulance calls in the past extrapolated forward to come up with
172 assumptions everyone is comfortable with to determine how much facility we will need in the future.

173
174 Vice-Chair Sununu said to that point he felt it was fair to say that Mr. Ricci and Mr. Tuttle, in their
175 assessments with the Chiefs and the Town Administrator, have taken into account where they are today,
176 where they might be down the road, and what other similar-sized towns have done to meet their needs.
177 This has been discussed and will be informing them in terms of design choices and options they would
178 bring forward and be able to speak to why, and this is ongoing.

179

Select Board Regular Meeting

July 26, 2021

180 Mr. Tuttle said we understand our goal is to make sure we are planning for expansion in the future, but
181 today we are here on fact-finding, trying to determine what we have, what we need to address instantly,
182 and where the Town wants it in future. We are here for your input tonight about what you envision and
183 to take that back and reassess it and figure out what it would take to renovate what we have, rebuild, or
184 do partial renovation. No preconceived design has been done and we are just starting the process.
185

186 Valarie Gamache of Atlantic Avenue said this has come up many times and said she is appalled to know
187 that people there for our own safety have an unsafe roof over their heads and barely enough clearance
188 for vehicles and said some things obviously need to be figured out and architects are the ones to do that.
189

190 Chairman Maggiore stated that nothing would be changing with Town Hall or the Stone Building. Town
191 Administrator Tully said this does not end tonight with public's ability to bring ideas forward and said we
192 want an open line of communication and asked that emails be sent to him to forward to the Select Board.
193

194 Steve Robie of Exeter Road thanked everyone for the work done so far and said it is obvious those
195 buildings need to be replaced rather than renovated, as renovations usually cost more in the end. He said
196 he knew Mr. Ricci and asked about other projects like this he has done in the past, where the process is
197 right now, and what they are going to do differently this time. He said we did the Library and now it is
198 time to do the next phase to bring Police, Fire, and Town Administration buildings into the 21st century.
199

200 Town Administrator Tully said they are now in the beginning stages of the process and are not doing
201 designs yet, but the chiefs have been studying this for a long time and have put forward some ideas and
202 a list of spatial needs, and we have looked at general ideas that the Select Board includes in any design
203 with needs as well as legally required spaces.
204

205 Mr. Tuttle listed a number of safety complexes he was part of and designed, mixed-use buildings,
206 warehouses, office buildings, and many other types of structures with his company averaging 40
207 projects/year and close to \$125 Mil of construction. He said he definitely has the experience and ability
208 and hopes they can work with residents to come up with a great solution, and he has personally been part
209 of 3 of those for this Town.
210

211 Mr. Robie said there have been lots of lists and needs over the years and he hoped they would use all of
212 that plus the studies. Vice-Chair Sununu said their first assignment was to read all of the past studies and
213 said a lot of different suggestions and proposals have been made but not approved by voters. He said the
214 Select Board does not have a design yet, and cannot guarantee anything, but their *goal* is to have a design
215 and cost estimate by fall to put forward for the March Ballot.
216

217 **Any Other Item that may legally come before the Board**

218
219 Chairman Maggiore said the Board accomplished their plan for this evening and asked that the public
220 continue to send comments, thoughts, and questions to the Town Administrator to funnel to the Select
221 Board.
222

223 **Adjournment**

224
225 Chairman Maggiore adjourned the meeting at 8:15 pm.
226

227 Respectfully submitted,

228
229 Patricia Denmark, Recording Secretary
230

DRAFT