

Municipal Building Committee Meeting Notes

Wednesday, May 13, 2015, Center School, 10:00 am

Present were Chair Paul Newlin, Virginia Allis, and Judy Markland. Also attending were Richard Katsanos and Brenna Weisslender of HAI Architecture, George Dole of Jones Whitsett, Mark Pruhenski, Zack Smith of SCEMS, Quint Dawson, Dan Denehy, Gary Stone, and John Wroblewski.

Rick Katsanos indicated that they could provide conceptual designs and cost estimates several days ahead of the forum planned for June 5. Estimates for town offices and SCEMS would be presented separately. In each case, the plan is to present plans for two stages of work: Phase 1 would be the basics of what needs to be done before the town can occupy the building and Phase 2, a list of work that might be done later, such as a large meeting room.

There was discussion about the existing structure, which walls are masonry and difficult to move (most) and which easily changed (that dividing the original small conference room in the northwest corner of the building into two offices). There are currently four heating zones: one for the offices and conference rooms, one along the windows where WRMLS had office cubicles, one for the stack area, and one for the garage area. It would be possible to create smaller zones within these, at a cost.

The group discussed the possibility of cubicle type offices and the need for privacy, with John noting that medical offices often use background sound machines to ensure privacy with open-area offices. Judy noted that for boards like the planning board, assessors, ZBA and conservation commission, it would be helpful to have a meeting area close to their files.

Dan wondered if it might make sense for the Historical Society to be in the building temporarily until town hall is restored, so that the Center School could be closed to save operating costs. Judy noted that the Historical Society is not anxious to move twice and that insurance and packing to move the pottery would be expensive.

There was a great deal of discussion about SCEMS' needs. Zack asked if it was possible to remove the loading bay, because there is not currently enough depth in the garage for the ambulances to remove a stretcher. He also noted that only two of the bays are wide enough for ambulances and wondered if the bay sizes could be changed. Rick said both would be expensive because of the building's structure.

John commented that it would be helpful if the architects included separate meters for all the utilities for SCEMS and said that Berkshire Gas might put in a separate meter since it would reduce overall gas usage.

The discussion turned to the designs for Town Hall. George Dole will also present cost estimates for several phases of work. He noted that the primary need is for accessibility. It would make sense for a lift to go at the rear of the building along with a staircase, since a rear exit will be required for the auditorium, the staircase needs to be rebuilt in any event, and the terrain is more level to the rear for handicap parking spaces. All the rest rooms may be on the first floor. Accessible rest rooms will take about twice the area of the existing ones.

He noted that he had seen the Historical Society's current spaces and had talked to them about their needs. A primary concern is security for the pottery collection, since the windows in town hall seem very easy to break into.

Paul asked about the requirement for sprinklers. George explained that sprinklers are not required by the Fire Code for buildings not exceeding 7500 square feet. The building code – which is enforced by the building inspector rather than the fire chief - requires sprinklers in a 5B type building with second floor assembly rooms. However for the previous design, the inspector had approved use of fire retardant materials, effectively converting the building to a 5A type construction.

George confirmed that no basement would be required if mini-split type heating/cooling units were used. These would be the most efficient for creating separate heat zones. He thinks that the existing foundation is probably adequate with a little work for most of the building, the exception being the eastern-most section which was added on after the original. Reinforcing work will need to be done there.

George will research whether there is adequate space on the lot for a new septic system, or whether the septic will have to be behind the library.

The group discussed a possible design for the first floor. It seemed to make sense to have the collector/treasurer office space used as a decent sized meeting room for the Grange and others, place the rest rooms at their current site and running further back in the building, and back them up with a small kitchen area in an open space accessing the rear entry and lift. This would leave the full south side of the building as one large space for the Historical Society once the vault is removed.

John asked what portion of the proposed expenses would be eligible for CPA funding. Judy said that all the expenses discussed would be eligible, but that she didn't know how much the CPC would be willing to commit.¹

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 27th at 10pm at WRMLS. HAI will discuss their progress starting at 10 and Jones Whitsett will begin their presentation at 11.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Markland

¹ The CPC met on the evening of the 13th and expressed their support for restoring the town hall as a community center, but did not discuss funding amounts.