

Minutes of the Municipal Building Committee

Western Mass. Regional Library Building, July 14, 2015 1:00pm

Present were Chair Paul Newlin, Adelia Bardwell, Jonathan Edwards, Anita Husted, Judy Markland, Fred Orloski, Ed Sklepowicz, and John Wroblewski. Also present were Mark Pruhenski, Randy Sibley and Gary Stone (both SCEMS), Paul Fleuriel, and Dan Denehy from Whately and Brenna Weissiender and Rick Katsanos of HAI Architects; as well as Whately town employees: Maryellen Cranston, Nancy Grossman, and Cynthia Herber. Attending from Deerfield were: Jack Davey and Tom Clark of the CIPC: Kayce Warren, town administrator; Skip Olmstead and John Paciorek, Finance Committee; Mark Gilmore, Board of Selectmen and SCEMS; and resident Bruce Hunnen.

Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and give their town and affiliation and did so.

Town employees were asked to commend on their space, furniture and equipment needs;

Cynthia Herbert, assessor, said that she needs a dedicated space with privacy, including walls as high as possible so visitors feel comfortable talking. A window is critical; she can't imagine working without one. The size of her current office is fine for her and the Board of Assessors meetings. She currently has four 4-drawer file cabinets, and the additional documents now stored in the old safe and the vault would probably fill two more. She will need room for more files before long.

Maryellen Cranston, municipal secretary, indicated that the basic town employee needs are secure storage space, decent furniture, and an internal mailbox in a central location where mail may be left and retrieved. Additionally, the town needs meeting space sufficient to schedule a minimum of three meetings simultaneously.

Nancy Grossman, treasurer, said that she needs more office space than she currently has and desk space – a run-back or equivalent. There should be secure storage for the protected information that she must maintain. Tall walls are important for privacy as well as her concentration. She needs a small safe in which to keep cash and it would be helpful to have a lock box of some sort where people could leave tax payments when her office is not open. A counter with cubbyholes would be helpful and improve efficiency.

Mark Pruhenski, town administrator, noted that he needs privacy (tall walls) and that the office space designated for him in the current plans would be adequate.

Town employees were asked their preference about moving into the WRMLS building before the rehab work is done. Mark indicated that he had no strong opinion but that it is important to him to avoid a move during budget season. Cynthia, Maryellen and Nancy each expressed a strong preference for moving once, citing disruption, loss of work time, and a desire to avoid working in a windowless temporary office. Nancy suggested that the select board consider getting some form of administrative assistance to help offset the time taken by a move.

Ed Sklepowicz commented that it was important to move in immediately after the purchase is finalized, so that the town can avoid the expense of heating an empty building. Paul asked Rick to comment on the pros and cons of moving in before construction or afterwards. He said that, if at all possible, the town should delay the move until after construction is completed. Even when the work is in a separate area, there is a huge amount of disruption from things like power outages,

need to shut off water, and noise. There will also be a lot of construction equipment in the parking lot. Fred noted that every move gives a person the chance to re-evaluate what's necessary to keep and what can be thrown away and that moving in would allow a break-in period to get more familiar with the building, its advantages and disadvantages. Jonathan noted that the move timing decision is under the select board's purview, not the building committee.

The discussion turned to SCEMS. Rick described the layout for the Deerfield people who weren't familiar with it. Mark distributed a summary of comments from Zach reflecting the Board of Oversight's thoughts. Mark Gilmore commented that the basic footprint and space allowance seem fine, but that the Board feels that there should be windows for its employees and would like the plan swiveled so that SCEMS space runs along the back wall of the building. This would also help reduce plumbing expenses. He also advocates reducing corridor space within the design as much as possible. Gary noted that it would be helpful to have some sort of entry area inside the door so that any visitors wouldn't be walking right into the SCEMS living space.

The Deerfield people asked about the timeline for the process and more clarity about the way in which decisions would be made. Jonathan commented that the SCEMS project timeline depends in part on the financing method, since it would be cheaper to do the borrowing for both SCEMS and town offices together if Whately would be doing the borrowing. Mark Gilmore noted that it's Whately's building and that, if Whately told them the amount of space available and where it was to be located, SCEMS could work out a construction schedule using tech schools and the like.

Rick agreed to provide several prototype designs showing SCEMS offices on the rear wall for review by the building committee and SCEMS.

Judy asked if HAI knows of a building with 8' office wall panels, such as those proposed for one of the town office options so the building committee and perhaps one or more of the town employees could see them. Rick said that the Sisters of Mercy billing unit has them and he'll try to arrange a visit. John distributed a photo he found on line with 8' walls and another with modular office walls.

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, July 28th at 4pm at town hall. HAI will have the prototype plans available before then.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Markland

documents distributed at the meeting:

- undated memo from Lynn Sibley outlining the Town Clerk's office and storage space and furniture needs
- HAI plan of town offices with comments by Maryellen Cranston
- South Country EMS General Facility Concerns, undated memo.
- Web photos of 8' office walls with taller ceiling and modular office walls from John Wroblewski.