

Town of Northumberland Building Committee  
Draft Meeting Minutes  
December 22, 2020

Present: Bill Caron, Alan Rossetto, Gail Rossetto, Sam Oakes, Jim Gibson, Robin Irving, Allan Clark, Michelle Randall, Peter Pelletier, Roach Kennett, Sean Durkin, Mike Phillips

*(As per a conversation with Allan Clark, Allan will be referred to as "Clark" in the minutes to differentiate Allan Clark from Alan Rossetto)*

Alan Rossetto opened the meeting at 6:00PM.

Alan asked for a motion to accept the December 8, 2020 meeting minutes. Jim Gibson motioned to accept the minutes, Bill Caron seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Alan then turned the meeting over to Allan Clark from REI.

Clark passed out a packet of information including his agenda, committee roster, floor plan, site plan, and coordination notes. He will be finalizing and submitting the preliminary specifications tomorrow to three general contractors who are bondable. They will price it out so we can develop a budget. These will not be bids they are for Clark's use to put together a budget. Clark feels very good about where we are and will have most of the information in order for the next meeting. He will be waiting to confirm some portions of the actual construction cost but everything else should be in order. By January 15, 2021 we will have a complete budget.

Clark passed out the site plan and we have three of the boundaries for the site plan and we are pretty sure where the fourth one would be located. There will be enough distance from Main street so an ambulance could be parked out front on the apron if necessary. The sidewalk would be recreated. The parking for the police will be along Station Square as it is now and parking in the rear for the employees. The meeting room entrance will be in the rear of the building.

As of now, we have adequate details for Phase One to get good pricing. We know where the utilities are. Obviously, when we go to the next phase, we will need a little bit more engineering.

The schematic floor plan has been cleaned up a bit but this is the plan to be priced. We know there will be some changes in the next design phase, however, this plan will give us some good budget numbers.

Clark passed out a rendering of the building to show what it could look like. These are conceptual plans not building plans. Colors, lettering, and other items are for marketing purposes and can be changed. This rendering is not 100% but is fairly close to what you will see. Clark asked if there were any objections and if not, this is what will be used to go forward with our marketing. There were no objections voiced.

Robin has sent the first press release to the Democrat and it has been published. She has been talking with the Colebrook Chronicle and has submitted the floor plans to them. They will be calling Clark because they would like to expand the press release to include a personal interview.

The press release has also been put out on facebook, the town website, and other social media. Jim

said he has received some “likes” but no comments. Robin said she had not received any comments or phone calls yet. Clark said he would have a second press release to Robin next week with drawings.

We will create a campaign to slowly get all the information to the public before town meeting and not throw everything at them at once.

We will have a preliminary budget for the next building committee meeting and a complete budget by January 15, 2021.

Robin discussed the problems with a virtual public information meeting. She spoke with Nicole Canavan and found that the phone numbers used for a Zoom meeting and for freeconference.com are not free for everyone. If someone called in, they could be charged for that call. Alan Rossetto asked if Robin had heard from Sharon at AVRDD on the platform they use. She said yes, it is called freeconference.com and is limited to 100 people. She is not sure how it is paid for. Maybe AVRDD has a subscription.

Robin thinks we could probably have more than 100 people who would want to participate in a public safety building informational meeting and at town meeting and doesn't think virtual meetings would be appropriate for our residents. We are still looking for some kind of platform to get this information out.

Questions were asked about town meeting. Where is it going to be held and will it be virtual, hybrid, or physical. Robin advised that they had not approached the school yet, but based on the issues that they have with their own meetings and their concerns about Covid, they probably would not want to open themselves up for a big meeting.

Robin did speak with the catholic church about using St. Francis Hall. We could use St. Francis Hall as long as there is no conflict with anything that is going on with the Church. We would need to adhere to the Covid social distancing and other regulations. We would also need to take care of the set up, take down and all clean up.

Roach asked a question about the size of the meeting/training room in the new building. He asked where we would be having our meetings when we no longer have 10 Station Square. There was much discussion on the uses for the meeting/training room. As drawn, the meeting room is smaller than the one we are in now, however, it would be fine for select board meetings, planning board meetings, zoning board meetings, and EMS and Police training.

The apparatus bay in the new building is not just a garage. It is heated, climate controlled, dry, and accessible through one entrance. It could be used for Town meetings and for voting. The ambulances would be parked outside.

Bill said that there could be discussion on changes to the interior floor plans, but right now we need to get the budget numbers.

Robin asked to get back to discussing the informational meeting. She doesn't think we will get the response we need by using a virtual platform and that trying to go that way will be a waste of time.

Min and Robin have spoken with the Secretary of State and they have strongly recommended that we consolidate our town meeting, school meeting, and precinct meeting into one single meeting. The

concern is that separate meetings can expose our residents multiple times to the risk of infection by Covid. Northumberland has two active cases at this time.

Mike said the budget work sessions and hearings will be held in the town meeting room at 10 Station Square. January 25<sup>th</sup> will be the budget work session and February 10<sup>th</sup> will be the public hearing.

Clark said we should have an informational meeting close to the public budget hearing. Somewhere between January 25 and February 10. By then we will have the impact on taxes, brochures, and other materials ready.

Discussion on whether it should be considered a Board of Selectman meeting or a building committee meeting. Clark would be giving a power point presentation and would have brochures, and other information.

Bill thinks St. Francis Hall would be the best place for the meeting at this time. Bill also advised that we should advise the public that all Covid protocols will be observed as per the Governor's order.

Alan Rossetto asked for a motion to have a physical informational meeting at St. Francis Hall with a date to be determined later. Bill made the motion, Peter seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

Police Department is all set on cell requirements and juvenile holding cell requirements.

Clark has the three fold brochures started and will have a draft of that for the next meeting.

Sam asked if the building committee could put a report in the Town Report. He knows there will be a slight change in the way the report is set up. The ambulance could forego their report if more room was needed. Robin advised that the Town Report this year will be less prose and more financial. She will be adhering to the DRA format this year. However, she could add a page back to back with the selectmen's report. She will need all information by February 15<sup>th</sup> in order to get it to the printer by February 17<sup>th</sup>.

Clark advised that the information distributed will be the brochures, and a list of frequently asked questions that will hopefully provide the answers for any resident questions. Part of the FAQ will address the needs of the departments for this new building.

We have the PD information and are waiting for the Ambulance. The ambulance is still compiling some information and will have it to us soon.

There had been discussion before about the possibility of combining the Fire and Ambulance but Jim advised us that that would probably not work in Northumberland. They had tried previously and there was no interest.

PD needs to show that without the new building, there is a liability to the town. There was an audit done by the state and there were some confidential information issues. We can easily make an argument for the police department's need for a new building.

We can also make a good argument for the needs of the ambulance department. The public needs to know that there has been a lot of thought put into this project. We need to be prepared to present the information concisely and have the answers to any questions that are put forward by the public.

The ambulance bay can be called a multi functional space because it is much more than just a garage. As we said before, it can be used for Town meetings, voting, and other large gatherings of residents.

We discussed the generator for the new building. Clark said that we can get a grant for the generator from the state. This will all be figured into the project budget. Clark also advised that by declaring the building an emergency operations center, we can also get some state grants.

Much discussion on town growth in the future. Robin advised that the police department is looking ahead and has hired two new officers. Based on their growth, it looks like they would be able to occupy their side of the new building. On the other hand, The ambulance is struggling to fill their department. They are in need of paramedics. It is very hard to run that department as it is now.

Alan asked Jim and Sam a question. If we build this building, do you think the ambulance will survive? Sam has spoken to some paramedics and basically, what he has heard is "If you build it, we will come". Jim advised us there are paramedics who would be wiling to work in Northumberland but will not come because there is no place to sleep, no place to take a morning shower, and we cannot house them for 24 hour coverage. It would be very possible that without this new building, the ambulance department will collapse. What happens if the ambulance cannot service the community? We need to let the public know that if we give the ambulance the tools to do their job, the ambulance will survive.

Bill said that we need the ambulance department. To wait 45 minutes for an ambulance from another town is not reasonable. There was much discussion on the cost of first response squads and having another town provide ambulance service.

Robin said she had been speaking with the people from Q Hydrogen and they would be willing to be present at town meeting to support the new building. He has said that it is critical to have ambulance and police service for his facility.

Clark again said we have to make sure we have the answers to all the questions. We need to make sure the voters are informed. We need to be positive and convince as many people as possible that this building is necessary to the growth of Northumberland. We need to have a 2/3 vote to pass the warrant article at town meeting.

Jim said we need to let the residents know how much money has been put into the 10 station square building that we don't even own. Clark advised that all that information will be in the information packets.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at 6:00 PM at 10 Station Square.

Alan asked for a motion to adjourn. Jim made a motion to adjourn. Michelle seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 7:30

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Rossetto, Secretary