

Town of Northumberland Building Committee  
Draft Meeting Minutes  
January 18, 2021

Present: Bill Caron, Alan Rossetto, Gail Rossetto, Sam Oakes, Jim Gibson, Allan Clark, Michelle Randall, Sean Durkin, Nicole Canavan, Ryan Shannon, Jodi Paradis, Lise Howson, Peter Pelletier, Jim Weagle

*(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 January 8, 2021 meeting minutes. Bill Caron motioned to accept the minutes, Sam Oakes seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

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

Clark passed out the agenda and his coordination notes. He advised us that Phase One goals have been completed at this time. Now we need to get the approval.

The last two weeks Clark has been concentrating on narrowing down the hard costs. We have elevations, floor plans, outline specs, and project budget.

Clark has had conversations with two construction companies. These are not bids, just information. We won't be going out for bids until we get an okay at town meeting.

We are in good shape to meet our schedule. The next press release will deal with the needs of the police department and why they need a new place. We will keep following up prior to the public hearing.

Clark will draft something for the selectmen that will define the construction costs. Everyone is concerned on those costs. He passed out a budget summary and a full summary. The summary is what we would typically recommend to be shown to the public unless there was a need to see all the details.

Clark went through the full budget line by line and explained all the cost numbers. One issue that is still up in the air is what we can do with the coal ash on the site. There is a variety of ways for us to deal with it but worst case scenario is that it would cost approx \$50,000 to deal with the coal ash.

Prices for materials are skyrocketing and increasing all the time. Some materials are difficult to purchase at all. Subs are busy right now and some have openings just because of the uncertainty of Covid.

Sean asked questions about construction costs. He asked what gmp stood for. It is guaranteed maximum price.

Clark said that the key to when you are working under a contract like that is to get the contractors to identify what their general conditions are going to be because typically you would not have an invoice. On a job like this we should be able to get them to give us a price. We have already done test pits, so

we know what is there on site.

Sam advised that the radios for the ambulance department are no longer serviceable and they will have to be changed. They don't make them anymore. They tried to go for a grant last year and the cost was \$3000 to \$5000 for a base and \$2500 for each radio. Peter said that he might be able to have some radios for the ambulance as the PD will be changing theirs.

Clark discussed the financing. The municipal bond rate is at 1.58% for a 20 year loan. We had a 3% loan cost figured into the budget just to be on the safe side. Clark asked if anyone knew if we go through the municipal bond bank, do we need a construction loan? Jim Weagle said he didn't think so and would look into it.

Under the miscellaneous section of the budget, there is a line for video cameras. Clark advised that we like to put up video cameras on site so that we can see what is happening at the site without Clark having to be there. If concrete is supposed to be poured at a certain date and there are no concrete trucks on site, he will know there is an issue.

Sean asked about the contingency amount in the budget. Clark advised that there is always a percentage of the construction cost put in as a contingency. It hopefully will not be used. If not needed, it just does not get spent. The grand total for the project is \$2,306,666.25.

Lise Howson asked about what grants we were considering now. Clark advised there are three grants that we would be eligible for at this time. The Eversource rebate of approximately \$15,000.00, Homeland Security in the \$75,000.00 range because we will be an emergency operations center, and a USDA equipment grant for approx \$25,000 to \$30,000. Lise asked if there were any other grants we had looked into?

Much discussion on what types of grants are out there such as Northern Borders. Clark advised that he had gotten a Northern Borders grant for the town of Carroll. He had to be pretty creative in how he went forward with that. Lise advised that CDBG did grants for municipal buildings and we could possibly do that. Timing is critical. In the Town of Carroll first vote for new building was no. When they voted again and the vote was yes, it cost them an additional half a million dollars.

Michelle asked about the York foundation grants, but Jim advised her that those grants were educational only. Lise said maybe look at a Tillotson grant. Clark said that we could look into that but we have a very short time frame. We will continue to explore all available grants.

Clark advised that the Public Informational Meeting will be held on Monday, February 8, 2021 at St. Francis Hall from 6:00pm to 9:00 pm. He would like everyone on the committee to be there. Clark will put on a power point presentation to show what the building will look like with the floor plans. Both chiefs need to speak about their needs and why this is important to the town. We will have the budget and the tax impact.

Al asked if we could put up some information or a short video of the situation both departments are in right now. Clark will have talking points ready for our next meeting.

Sometime in February after the informational meeting and before the Town Meeting, Jim Weagle and Al Rossetto will meet with the major businesses in town and discuss the reasons we need this new building and why it will be good for the town. We don't want them to get their information from

rumors. We need their support.

Clark is finishing up the brochure and filling in the blanks. He will distribute each page of the draft brochure for the committee to review and give suggestions for changes or corrections. The brochure will be ready for the public informational meeting on February 8.

Clark will be giving information to Robin for insertion into the town website.

Clark distributed the beginnings of the needs statements that the Chief and Michelle have put together for the PD. Michelle brought up the fact that there is no back up generator and the building is not wired for one. This is a major issue. Michelle discussed latest power outage. The PD's battery backups are only good for 90 minutes and the power was out for about 6 hours. So when the switches came back on downstairs there was a glitch in their phone system switch which caused a problem with the firewall and it took out all of the phones and the internet in the building until the power came back on. With no power to the building, if they have someone in the booking area where there are no windows, there is no light. You are in complete darkness and things can go bad very quickly. Clark advised that we would add a generator to the needs list.

In the packages, there is a partial list of the ambulance needs. The current space has numerous Life Safety Code infractions, no decontamination facilities, and no ability to staff for 24 hours because there are no sleeping facilities. Plus, it is not ADA compliant. The current space at the Fire station is inadequate for their operational needs.

Alan Rossetto asked the ambulance about how long does it take for the personnel to get to the ambulance when a call comes in. Jim advised that it really depends on the day. There are a lot of variables. In the middle of the afternoon, when school is getting out and NSA employees are leaving, it is almost impossible to get through that intersection. If it is 9:00 in the morning, not such a big problem but it depends on whether the personnel are in the office when a call comes in or if they are at home. Sam advised us that if personnel are in the office, it can take 5 to 6 minutes. If they are at home, it should be no more than 10 minutes.

Clark asked if there had been any try at adding to the fire station instead of a new building. The parking lot next to the fire station is their property. Jim advised that the parking lot is used for the teachers parking and overflow from the garage. The plan they had tried before really didn't improve anything. The Ambulance Department would have received a couple of bays at the side and the offices and everything else would have been upstairs and again would not have been ADA compliant. This idea was discussed previously and was not pursued.

Sam discussed photos he had sent to Gail showing the problems and hazards with the ambulances at the fire station as well as the problems and hazards with the ambulance offices at 10 Station Square. Gail sent the photos to Clark. The Ambulance pays rent to the Fire station. Sean asked how much the rent was and who was it paid to. Sam advised that the rent was \$2500 annually and is paid to the Precinct. There is no written rental agreement. Jim Weagle advised that the rent was now \$3000 annually. Jim Gibson said that the third ambulance, which is at the moment out of service, is stored at the Stark Fire station, however, that space will not longer be available as Stark is purchasing a new vehicle. Plus the Groveton Fire Department is planning on purchasing a new tanker soon so there will be less space at the Fire station for the ambulances. Jim Weagle advised that the fire station has already purchased the new tanker.

Sean asked if we could get the information on what it has cost the town for rent, utilities, water and sewer, fuel, maintenance, and repairs to be in the 10 Station Square building since we started leasing it? He also asked about the tax impact. Clark advised that tax impact would be 94 cents per thousand.

Clark discussed some of the problems and hazards that the first responders in this town have to deal with. The space they are in now is inadequate for their operational needs. They do not meet the Life Safety Code. They have no decontamination for the ambulance department or the police. The hazards are more than just Covid related.

The list of department needs proves the need for this building. Both departments have major issues. Because of all the inadequacies and code infractions, it makes it harder to recruit quality people.

Jim Weagle advised that with the new building, the Town would now own all the buildings that employ our people. Much discussion on what has been spent on buildings the town doesn't own. Michelle and Sam will get the numbers on the cost of the rented buildings, what it has cost to retrofit them to our needs, and quantify what we would have paid in taxes to ourselves and water/sewer to ourselves over the past decade that we have been in these buildings. Clark advised that that information would be used as a talking point at the informational meeting.

Lise advised that maybe it would be better not to come up with a dollar amount of what we have spent in the past, but what we are going to have to spend in the future if we stay in an inefficient building that we don't own. It was agreed that was a good idea.

Nicole discussed major problems in doing nothing at this time. Other towns have older facilities that can be brought up to code. This town does not have a functional facility and the situation is becoming dire. We discussed previously the possibility of lawsuits. Lawsuits would increase our tax rate. We need to build this building to avoid future problems and before it becomes astronomically more expensive. Interest rates are low now and it is a really good time to borrow. She thinks there is a huge cost of not building the new building now. A new building will be as maintenance free as possible. Building this building will make a statement that the community is investing in itself.

Marketing plan is to use town website, social media, power point presentation, brochures, and talking points for frequently asked questions.

Everyone needs to talk one on one to anyone they can to get the facts out and not let people hear just rumors.

According to Becky, the town's assessed value is about 130 million. It is interesting that my town, Sugar Hill, has a population of 600 and has an assessed value of 163 million. That gives you a good idea of why our tax rate is so high. Northumberland is at a bit of a disadvantage.

Clark has not been able to contact the fire department but he will.

The Town meeting will be held March 13 at the high school. It will be both town and school.

Lise will contact organizations that she knows of to see if there are other grants available.

Our next meeting will be Monday, February 2, 2021 at 6:00 PM at 10 Station Square.

Alan asked for a motion to adjourn. Michelle made a motion to adjourn. Sam seconded. All in favor.  
Meeting adjourned at 7:20

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Rossetto, Secretary