

TOWN OF RYE
TOWN HALL SPACE NEEDS COMMITTEE
MEETING August 8, 2012

Chairman Ned Paul called the meeting to order at 630 p.m. He called for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Present at the meeting were members Peter White, Priscilla Jenness, Tom McCormick, Peter Kasnet, Ned Paul, Curtis Boivin, Beth Yeaton, Phil Winslow, Paula Merritt, Mel Low, Lucy Neiman, Kim Reed, Michael Magnant and Cyndi Gillespie.

Chairman Paul explained that he wanted to add Public Input as topic #5 on the agenda, thus making Adjournment #6.

He then called for a motion to approve the minutes of the July 25, 2012 meeting. Paula Merritt made the motion to approve the minutes; Phil Winslow seconded her motion. All voted to approve the minutes as written.

Next to be discussed were the key issues before the committee. Each member had been asked to prepare a list of five key issues to be considered in making a final recommendation to the Board of Selectmen.

Peter White stated his first issue was the use of the Great Hall. Next of concern to him was the use of the space over the bays at the Public Safety Building. He asked that the committee consider the entire configuration of that building. Because it is being used by both the fire and police departments and most of the building is secure, perhaps a different configuration could be used to incorporate the space in a more efficient way to better use a part of the building for town offices.

Priscilla Jenness expressed that one of the basic decisions should be the location of the town offices. Should the whole town be considered or should the offices continue to be at the center of town? The Master Plan states that town business should be conducted in the town center. When deliberations on the location of the public safety complex were being held, other locations in town were considered and dismissed. A central location was considered more desirable as it would be unfair to people at one end of the town if the building was located at the other end of town. Her next issue had to do with safety if the offices were located at the public safety building. She would like to somehow measure the traffic density in front of the public safety building. Is there more traffic in front of the Public Safety Building than there is going down over the hill in front of town hall? She often observes children walking in front of the Public Safety Building. In addition, many elderly citizens come to the Town Hall on business and she questioned how safe it would be with emergency vehicles coming and going. Next on her list of issues would be the Great Hall. Do we want to preserve the historical integrity of the Great Hall and front foyers or make use of the space for offices? Her last issue was how the committee would come to a consensus in making the final recommendation for the future of Town Hall.

Tom McCormick spoke next. His main concern is cost. He questioned why the Recreation Department couldn't be located at the Recreation Area? The old police department site has to be dealt with sooner or later. His next issue was of safety and compliance; the current building has neither. The building is not ADA compliant and, after taking the tour offered at the last meeting, he is surprised that the building is still standing. His last issue is that of historical preservation. After reading the results of the last survey, he feels that some people in town are not in favor of historical preservation of the building. Ned Paul replied that historical preservation is a key component that we need to rally the townspeople to consider.

Peter Kasnet said his main key issue is cost. He would like to see the offices remain at the current Town Hall. He has looked at the reports concerning space needs and they seem to be mostly in order. His only concern is the 1600 square feet in the Great Hall. That room could be historically preserved and also be used for meeting space. In his opinion rehabbing Town Hall would cost about the same as reconfiguring the space above the bays at the Public Safety Building. Peter White reminded the committee that the previous plans contained a 30% override of space for circulation and walls. He explained that while he is not an architect, that figure appears to be excessive. Ned Paul agreed that it was a big number.

Chairman Paul said communication with the people of the town is critical. He too has looked at the plans and studies and they seem to be OK to him. He is submitting an article to the newspaper describing the task of the committee and explaining that much information regarding previous studies, minutes and agendas are available on the town's website, at the library and at Town Hall. Costs are also a big concern of his. He would like the business center of Rye to remain at the current building.

Curtis Boivin said the main decision is to renovate or relocate Town Hall. The current building is not usable in its current state and is not legal for use in regards to the Americans with Disabilities Act. The town has been in deficit concerning ADA for the last 20 years. There are space and safety issues. With regards to moving some departments to other buildings, he hasn't heard any proposals for a better site other than the current one. Town Hall, located in the center of town, for historic reasons, functional reasons and economic reasons makes the best sense. Every other space being considered would have to be renovated to be readily usable. The current site is the premier location.

Beth Yeaton said she agreed with many of the points that were already made at the meeting. She stated her concerns for the existing building in the areas of electrical safety and ADA compliance. She feels the committee's first decision should be whether or not to use the space above the Public Safety Building. Of great concern to her is the historical preservation of the Great Hall. Her next issue was whether the members are going to keep the departments together

or separate them into one or more venues. She feels it is in the best interest of the town to keep the departments currently at Town Hall together. If the Recreation Department is considering moving all of their activities to the Recreation Area at some time in the future, that would be fine. The rest of the departments are interrelated and interact with each another on a daily basis and, as such, proximity is important. She related how often she goes up and down the stairs each day to communicate with other departments and to distribute reports to the Treasurer and Finance Director. She asked if anyone had ever considered using the current attic space for offices. Not being an architect or a structural engineer, she is uncertain if this would be feasible. Since an elevator would have to be installed to continue using the current building, getting to that upper level would not be a problem. Would the building support another floor? She expects some sort of reinforcement would be needed. Because the structure is already in existence, it seems to her that the costs would be significantly less to add offices above than to start from scratch on a new building or addition. She asked if the addition of the dormers to allow for natural light to the upper spaces would interfere with the historical integrity of the building. If additional storage space is still needed, a much smaller addition could be added to the back of the building. She envisions this addition to be slightly narrower than the existing building of the sort described by Peter Michaud when he spoke to the town early this summer. That smaller addition would have a far less visual impact than the earlier model shown last year. She asked if the previous committee had given any thought to using the upper spaces. Paula Merritt answered they had not considered the idea. Peter White questioned the amount of space available up above and how those dormers would fit into that space. Curtis Boivin explained that the roof and trusses would have to be reengineered to be able to use that space. Although the space is there, there is no flow through it without the reengineering. Ned Paul said this alternative is worth considering and asked Curtis Boivin to look into it.

Phil Winslow stated that all communications with the people should be based on facts and not opinions. All recommendations should be driven by a cost based analysis. He is in favor of keeping the Town Hall where it is but the committee needs to prove why this should be so. Ned Paul said that Article 27 requires us to compare Rye's space needs to that of other towns of comparable size. Phil Winslow agreed with Chairman Paul in that we need to do those comparisons. He questioned if best practices for office layouts exist? Peter Kasnet assured him that they do exist. Ned Paul related that his office is in a brand new building built in 2012. He will be happy to measure the square footage of the offices and bring the figure back to the group. Phil Winslow continued that we need to validate the square footage needs of town hall. Ned Paul asked him if he was asking for a critique of the data prepared by A G Architects. He answered in the affirmative, saying we have to know, if the 15,000 square feet mentioned in the previous study, is the correct figure. He noted in the previous study that several meeting rooms were included. Some of them were small rooms with a table, a few chairs and a telephone that could be used for small private meetings or where privacy was important. If more than one department could use a small room like this it would cut down on the number of meeting rooms required.

Ned Paul asked how the committee could validate the square footage needs. Curtis Boivin gave

a range of commonly accepted sizes of offices used by executives down to supervisors. Beth Yeaton expressed her concern about using the "square foot per employee" figure. It might work if all the employee does is sit at their desk doing the task at hand. However, it does not take into consideration the supplies and equipment needed to do all aspects of their job. In her position she requires a large amount of storage to accommodate large boxes of envelopes, tax bills, election equipment, license plates and motor vehicle forms, bound books of tax warrants, minutes, appointments, annual town reports and priceless town records beginning in 1726. Every department has a different requirement for space. Ned Paul said there will be back and forth discussions on this point. Phil Winslow said that Beth made a good point and this needs to be communicated to the citizenry so that they will understand how this committee arrives at the square footage required. Ned Paul suggested that the AG Architects 'square footage needs be listed next to those of this committee for comparison purposes. This comparison should be available for the citizens to study and make comments back to the committee. He would like to see this comparison be completed during the next two weeks and added to the information available at the sites mentioned earlier. Tom McCormick agreed with these points. He also works for a municipality and is aware of the requirements contained in the RSA's regarding preservation of documents in their original form. It's tough, especially in the finance area, to gauge the square foot requirement per employee. Ned Paul questioned whether we use best practices for square footage or recommend additional space and include our rationale for doing so. Peter White said we have to look at other comparable towns to make a decision. Tom McCormick stated that when looking at other municipalities you also have to consider whether their functionality is good or bad. Ned Paul said we would have to have this information by the next meeting. Each town from which we get information must be listed and commented upon regarding their functionality. Perhaps we will find a specific town that we want to model ourselves by. Tom McCormick said in North Hampton the Town Clerk-Tax Collector's office is located in a different building than the rest of the offices. He feels this configuration doesn't work well. Ned Paul called for show of hands of everyone who thinks that the offices should be located in one building with perhaps the exception of the Recreation Department. Peter White said he couldn't answer that question. He asked Beth Yeaton if any other department, besides the the Recreation Department, could easily be located to a different building. Beth asked him if he meant another department that didn't interrelate. He replied that he is looking for another department that would interrelate less than some others. Ned Paul stated this could be an action item. In the short term most committee members agreed that the offices should remain co-located. Perhaps over time the Recreation Department may build a new facility. Priscilla Jenness said we should plan to keep the Recreation Department at Town Hall for now and if they move at a later date it would free up space to accommodate future needs. Curtis Boivin said that from a cost perspective it makes sense to keep the offices in one building. Why pay for maintenance, heating and air conditioning in multiple locations? Ned Paul related in his previous town there were two buildings in which to conduct town business. On more than one occasion he went to the wrong building and found it frustrating that everything wasn't in one place.

Phil Winslow completed his list of key issues by stating the committee must look at the other

town owned sites and give their rationale as to why each may or may not be favorable to use for our purposes. We must offer options to the public regarding costs and functionality studies to identify the best site for Town Hall based on facts and analysis. He needed confirmation that the deliverables do not include an architectural study. He received that confirmation from Priscilla Jenness. Ned Paul asked her if the committee was responsible for preparing a warrant article for next year's vote. Priscilla answered that the Selectmen will take the committee's recommendation and they will prepare the warrant article.

Paula Merritt read her prepared statement of her key issues. In it she writes that Rye Town Hall is the iconic historic building in town. It is the perfect location for residents to conduct town business in one place conveniently. When you build a new house the first rendition from the architect contains all of your wants as well as your needs. Each subsequent rendition brings you closer to reality, and so it should be with Town Hall. The following are the issues connected to the project. Should the Great Hall and/or the front stairwells be eliminated to get more space? Consider an appropriate addition on the north side by the hillside of this building which would accommodate access to the second floor and offer compliance with ADA at the same time. That was actually done in the previous design, maybe not in the way that people agreed with, but it certainly could be modified in some way. Incorporate the town land near the church for parking. Consider making meeting spaces in some of the other town buildings. Consider using another existing town building for records storage as necessary. Request the architect to reconfigure the space needs all based on the above points and then obtain a new cost estimate to rehab the town hall with the new configuration. Earlier in the meeting when square feet per employee was mentioned she wrote down that we should call it functional square feet as opposed to staff member square feet. She totally agreed with Beth Yeaton that every department is different. We're not running an executive branch here with the president and vice president, etc, etc. A successful rehab of Town Hall will surely make most town offices more cost efficient and more convenient for town residents than bringing the other town buildings up to code and reconfigured for offices. The cost of saving the Town Hall for another purpose as well as rehabbing other town buildings at the same time will be far greater, not to mention the time it will take to do so. As Lucy Neiman previously stated, Town Hall is an accident waiting to happen and it demands our attention.

Ned Paul felt her statement was very well written and wanted to obtain a copy of it. Paula declined stating it would end up in the Portsmouth Herald and "no thank you!" Beth Yeaton explained that the minutes would reflect almost word for word her statement. Paula advised her to do "your thing" but she still prefers not to give out a copy of her statement. Ned Paul agreed with her, that when you remodel your own home, you start with the things you want but each rendition changes the design. Paula concluded that the committee needs to put previous designs behind them and start fresh. The budget will dictate the final result.

Peter White reiterated that we must consider the Public Safety Building. That is the huge space that we could be putting to better use. Paula said it wasn't on her list.

Mel Low said that the original committee looked at AG Architects design and went with his recommendations. Art had met with each department head and added space according to their needs. When the public saw the design, they were unhappy at the redundant space included in the study. Most people did not approve of the design plans, especially the brick facade. The previous committee was ready to reduce the size of the project, but the drawings had already been released to the public and those plans put a stop to the whole project. In his mind the Great Hall should be used for meeting space. The last committee had visited all the other suggested sites and had discounted them. He doesn't feel the need to revisit them. Other committee members said that looking at each site was in the charge given to them. Mel then suggested that a subcommittee be formed to look at each site and report back to the whole committee. Other members replied that subcommittees were not allowed. In regards to the old police station it would be easy to get the cost associated with a storage building at that site. In the end Mel feels that we will be driven back to the current Town Hall building because it would best suit our needs. He worries that there is no fire suppression system now in the building and some night there could be a fire. Ned Paul said people would point a finger at the committee for not moving fast enough if a fire does happen. He then asked Peter White to come up with the facts and figures to reconfigure the space above the Public Safety Building and have them available for the next meeting. Peter replied that he is neither a structural engineer nor an architect and does not have their skill sets. He stressed he will need help to complete this project. Victor Azzi, an audience member and engineer who oversaw the building of the Public Safety Building, agreed to work with Peter on this project. Mel Low expressed that it would be a good idea to get the public involvement on the project.

Lucy Neiman said she agreed with most of the topics already discussed at the meeting. Her general impression is that Peter White was the only member who wanted to push for the use of the Public Safety Building. The rest of the committee is pretty much focused on rehabbing Town Hall. She feels that Town Hall is a hub and a focus for the town and she would like to see it function as a central gathering place. From an energy standpoint, it would be nice to have a central location where one could park and do business at Town Hall, walk across the street to the Library and perhaps visit a future coffee shop or other retail space in the area. She would like to see the Great Hall used for a gathering space for both business and social purposes. The previous committee had done a good job of looking at the alternatives and she doesn't feel the need to redo their efforts. We need to get out the old study, mark it up and explain it to the people. The architect had begun this process at the public meeting in January. But those pictures of the design concept just turned people off. Her last issue is to make this building a model for restoration and energy use. This Town has made significant strides in the area of energy conservation and this building could become a showplace as an effective way to restore an old building. Ned Paul referred to the new geothermal system as a great first step toward that end. Lucy Neiman remembered that one of the architect's first steps was to have all department heads complete a survey of exactly what they do in their job and what work space they require. These surveys are still around and could be useful in figuring the square footage needs for this building. Beth Yeaton said she would try to round up all the surveys and have them available for the next meeting even though she will be away for that meeting.

Peter White said cost is a big issue in this project and he needs to know with the cost would be to use the area over the Public Safety Building. Again Ned Paul asked him to come up with these costs because he himself is too busy with his job, his work on the CIP and the Budget Committee to become involved in this aspect of the project. Tom McCormick thought the tour of the Public Safety Building was incomplete and he would like to take a look at the total building.

Perhaps the Fire Department could move to the space above the apparatus bays, the Police Department could move to the Fire side of the building and the Police Department space could be used for town offices. He asked if it would be possible for some members of the committee to take a more a more comprehensive tour of the building to study the functionality of the Fire and Police Departments. Mike Magnant said of course this could be arranged for any committee member who wishes to take a more in depth tour. The group decided that a task force within the committee could be formed to look more in depth at the Public Safety Building. Chairman Paul said it sounded like putting some offices of the Public Safety Building would split up the departments and he thought the goal was to keep them together. Tom McCormick replied that there are already some thoughts of relocating the Recreation Department to a different location. Currently Lee Arthur is renting space at the church for her senior group meetings. Priscilla Jenness said we must still consider the costs to restore Town Hall even if most offices are moved out. Work needs to be done at Town Hall whether or not the offices remain there. Martin Klenke said the committee must convince the residents on whether the Public Safety Building may or may not be feasible for the needs of a town hall. Peter White asked how many meetings are conducted at Town Hall including public meetings, smaller meetings and the number of boards and committees the town has. Beth Yeaton advised that the old courtroom is often used during the day for smaller meetings and agendas are not posted for those meetings. For example, the Building Inspector Peter Rowell and Kim Reed will meet with clients in the old court room so they can spread large plans out on the long tables. The Town Clerk/Tax Collector's office uses the room to allow couples applying for their marriage license to sit down to complete the forms. The room is also used when a sensitive issue needs to be discussed in private. Regularly scheduled Department Head meetings are conducted in that room

Peter Kasnet thought that grant money had been used at the Public Safety Building to construct the Emergency Operations Center so that part of the building would have to remain as it is. Mel Low stated that the EOC is the best meeting room in town. Beth Yeaton pointed out that, because of the security at the Public Safety Building, it is difficult to hold meetings at the EOC. Someone needs to remain at the front door to let people in. Martin Klenke thinks the general public believes the room over the apparatus bays is already completed and all you have to do is roll out the carpet and move in. They feel that this huge space was promised for the future use of the town. It remains the responsibility of the committee to educate the people on the existing condition of the space and how much it would cost to make it usable as offices.

Ned Paul asked if the meeting room at the Town Hall is so busy that it would be difficult to reserve it. Curtis Boivin stated that the conference room is often needed by more than one

department. If a couple comes in to apply for their marriage license and the meeting room was in use, there is no other good space where they could sit down and complete the forms. Ned Paul asked Priscilla Jenness to have available for the next meeting a list of all the boards and commissions within the town and how often they need the meeting room. Curtis Boivin wondered how often the town would need a conference room for meetings requiring seating for 125 or more people. Would a room of that size meet all the needs for large gatherings? It was mentioned that the Great Hall could have temporary dividers to break the room into two separate areas to accommodate multiple meetings. Beth Yeaton expressed concern about the noise from one meeting interfering with the other meeting. Because of the very high tin ceiling, sound tends to echo in that room. The divide would somehow have to go all the way up to the ceiling. Curtis Boivin stated that a drop down could be installed and faced with tin to match the ceiling. This would solve the noise problem. Mike Magnant expressed the Selectmen's concern about holding their regular every other week meetings in such a vast open hall. These meetings tend to be smaller and more intimate so a divided space would suit their needs

Ned Paul said that, even though this would be unpopular, they need to discuss not keeping the Great Hall in its current configuration but divide the space into two floors so that offices could be added on one of the levels. This configuration would be similar to what Beth suggested earlier in the meeting but without having to reconstruct the roof. Curtis Boivin questioned the ceiling height in the Great Hall. Priscilla Jenness asked what would happen to the arch above the stage. She believes it would have to be destroyed to accommodate a second floor. Having two floors would mean we would also have to split the windows. We either save the Great Hall in its entirety or don't save it at all. The idea of having two floors in the space just wouldn't work. Priscilla said it all goes back to the town's original vision. That vision dates back to about 1945. It was just after World War II and the townspeople wanted a space to honor the returning veterans. They wanted to add on to Town Hall and the idea grew and grew to include a tennis court and swimming pool. The idea finally sank under its own weight. At that time the offices were scattered around town. For instance, the Town Clerk operated out of her home on Cable Road, the Treasurer was located on Central Road and the Tax Collector's office was located in the building which is now Sotheby's (formerly Tate and Foss) Real Estate Office. The townspeople knew the value of consolidating most of the town offices into one building. In a matter of a few years Town Hall was renovated and offices were constructed within the building. Her vision for the future, if we stay in the existing building, would be to construct a white clapboard structure at the rear of the building, similar in style to the old carriage houses attached to churches in the 1800s. It would be the perfect location to make use of solar energy. She doesn't believe there are any other locations on the list to be considered which have the south facing walls needed for solar panels. Ned Paul asked her what would become of the Great Hall if this addition is constructed. She replied it would be saved. Ned asked her for what purpose the Great Hall would be used. She answered it would be used for meetings, presentations or any other purpose the town needs. She related that once a year the auditors are in the building and completely tie up the meeting room for a whole week meaning no one else has access to it during that time. She passed around an old picture that showed a carriage shed attached to the old church which was located right above Town Hall.

Beth Yeaton said she too can see an addition constructed behind the existing building that would be slightly narrower and thus less visible from the street. She did not care for the previous drawings that showed the addition going off to the side. Lucy Neiman said there was a good reason for having it go off at an angle. It would have had access to the building from the upper parking lot since parking can sometimes be a problem in the existing, lower lot. Perhaps the previous design was too big or had too much meeting space, but the concept was a good idea.

Beth Yeaton suggested that maybe we could lower the upper parking lot to make access to the second story of an addition going straight back attainable. The consensus of the group was that it could be done but would be expensive and not within the scope of the committee's charge. Chairman Paul said the committee should concentrate on the Great Hall and he is having a problem with the stage. The stage contains a great many square feet of usable space. He questioned how the stage would be used in the future. Lucy Neiman suggested using it for meetings and performances. Ned Paul disagreed saying Town Hall should not be used for performances. Lucy asked why not. Ned replied that the space is needed for offices and if you start using the Great Hall for social purposes you'll end up splitting the locations for town offices. Peter Kasnet said that, even if you preserve the Great Hall, you are still going to need more space for offices. Discussion ensued on whether or not there would be room in the Great Hall for more than 125 people and would it be large enough to support holding the deliberative session and elections there. Curtis Boivin asked how often we would need that big a meeting space. Beth offered to go to her office and get her list of Town Officials which include Boards and Commission members so the group could get a rough estimate of the number of meetings held in the building. Phil Winslow suggested offering the public two options, one with preserving the Great Hall and another using that space for other purposes. Each option should be presented with the facts and figures supporting each use. Paula Merritt suggested including the addition out back to pick up the slack for needed office and storage space. Peter Kasnet said that space could include the elevator and could be made into three stories making it more accessible from the upper parking lot. Peter White asked if two options were allowed in the charge given to the committee. Beth Yeaton said she liked the idea of two options to be presented to the people. They can compare the two, would know exactly what they'd be getting and how much each option would cost. She remembered that last year, when the Selectmen sent out a survey about Town Hall, the replies showed many people didn't care about saving the Great Hall. Paula Merritt said some people didn't even know the Great Hall existed. Ned Paul said a lot would depend on how the project is presented to the people. If you emphasize the historic nature of the space and the townspeople's continued use of its iconic meeting place well into the future, it could work. Phil Winslow speculated that perhaps other groups in town would rally around the continued use of the Great Hall and actively seek support from the residents.

Lucy Neiman knows that the Heritage Commission is actively seeking having the Town Hall added to the State's Registry of Historic Places and questioned if that would come with restrictions on what we could do with the building. Mae Bradshaw, chairperson of the Heritage Commission, replied that no restrictions would be imposed by the State Registry. Ned Paul said

this committee would be a winner if it can bring down the size of this project and give it more focus.

Chairman Paul stated that even more beautiful than the Great Hall are the two front staircases. Many in the room would like to see them preserved. Priscilla Jenness agreed that they are beautiful but are unusable because they do not come up to code. Curtis Boivin said there are ways, like adding hand railings on each side, to make them legal. In addition, larger meeting spaces require more than one means of egress and these staircases could be used as such. Paula Merritt recalled the architect using one of those staircases as a means of egress. In his plan, he had removed one of the staircases to use the space for other purposes. Priscilla Jenness said that had totally destroyed the symmetry of both staircases. Ned Paul said we have to consider the space needs and may need to give up one of them.

Chairman Paul said the group needs to move forward and begin looking at the other town spaces included in the committee's charge. They need to come up with factual reasons whether to recommend their use or not. He called for the committee to list the pros and cons for each site.

Rye Recycling Center:

Pros - None found.

Cons - no existing facility, no parking, traffic flow problems, the land is reserved for recycling, no additional land available, problems with the traffic in the area and not being able to find an alternative site for the recycling facility (State of New Hampshire has previously denied any alternative sites), not near center of town.

Peter White inquired how much space exists at the old landfill site and if this space is available. Priscilla Jenness explained that land has been capped and is no longer available as a building site.

Vacant Land:

Pros - Recreation Land, Carpenter's land at the corner of Washington Road and Route 1.

Cons - restrictions over the use of lands associated with Parsons Woods, no vacant land located at the center of town, cost of purchasing the land, costs of constructing a new building from scratch.

Rye Recreation Area:

Pros - lots of land.

Cons - restrictions on land use, question if some of this land belongs to the Conservation Commission, need to research deeds, 1964 Annual Town Meeting voted to reserve area for recreational purposes, not near center of town.

Old Police Department:

Pros - close to the center of town, could be used for storage, somewhat historic in nature.

Cons - only .28 of an acre, no parking, no heat, failed septic system, mold mitigation.

Discussion followed regarding cleanup of the site sooner or later. Some members felt this should be completed as part of the committee's project. Paula Merritt reminded the group that its name is the Town Hall Space Needs Assessment Committee and not the Town Space Needs Assessment Committee and to focus on the task at hand. Some members agreed that a recommendation on a site cleanup could be accomplished. On a lighter note, Phil Winslow suggested the Town clean up the site and sell it to Lucy for use as a coffee shop.

Public Safety Building:

Pros - newer building, adequate square footage, adequate parking, recently painted, located in center of town.

Cons - million dollar hurdle, safety of the site with emergency vehicles coming and going, conversion of the space will cost \$1 to \$1.2 million, will require offices to be located in more than one building, noise level and vibration of garage doors opening and closing, noise level of emergency vehicles leaving the building, traffic and entry problems, will still have the cost of rehabbing Town Hall

Discussion continued regarding another tour of the Public Safety Building for those members interested in one. Priscilla Jenness suggested holding it just prior to the next committee meeting on August 22nd. Victor Azzi will bring the blueprints used in the construction of that building to the next meeting. Phil Winslow said that Mel Low has a problem with meeting on Wednesday nights because of his involvement with the Farmer's Market. Phil suggested Thursday night would be a better meeting night. Chairman Paul said Thursday was not good for him because of the CIP meetings. Beth Yeaton pointed out it took Nancy Weiland, the Selectmen's secretary, and Ned almost 2 days to come up with the existing schedule of meetings. Ned said the problem

was the lack of meeting spaces in town. Even the Library rooms were fully booked. Victor Azzi, who is a Library Trustee, related that the Library has expanded its evening hours to accommodate more meetings. This reiterated how desperate the town is for more meeting space. It was agreed to leave the committee meetings as scheduled.

Peter White pointed out that the schools were not on our list of site to be considered. They are, after all, Town owned properties. There was discussion as to why these would not be appropriate sites. Beth Yeaton said there was no additional land at Junior High School. As far as the Elementary School is concerned, the land behind the school is wet and not well suited for construction purposes. She reminded everyone of the traffic and parking nightmares when big elections are held at that site. We stress the Elementary School tremendously whenever elections are held there. Even if another building for town offices is constructed on the site, traffic will always be an issue.

Lucy Neiman inquired if there is enough room in the Great Hall to hold elections there. Beth Yeaton said she will look at the total space up there and determine if there is adequate space to conduct elections there. She asked Curtis Boivin to meet with her to go over the space issues in the Great Hall as well as the possibility of adding another floor in the attic space or in the hall itself. He agreed to meet with her the next day.

Public input was accepted next. Victor Azzi said the committee has covered a lot of ground and he commended them for doing so. He hopes they can retain their focus because they have to accomplish much in such a short time. He wanted to point out that the minutes from the previous meeting are incomplete. During the tour of the Public Safety Building, Fire Chief Sullivan said he didn't feel there would be a safety or traffic problem with the public using the driveway to access the building. Victor suggested that the minutes be corrected. On a more substantive issue, the design of a building is the fun part. However, much hard work needs to be accomplished before the design phase begins. A space needs analysis needs to be done to consider the both present and future needs. The previous space needs study contained redundancies that must be omitted in the new study. He agreed that offering two proposals, one with the preservation of the Great Hall and one without it, is a good idea.

Steve Borne stated that the Town Hall space needs is the next major investment for the town. We need to look down the road to future needs and investments. He agreed with Peter White that a comparison of the costs to use or clean up each site is necessary. Regardless of the conclusions reached by this committee, the townspeople still need to know what they will be facing financially in the near future to order to deal with all of these sites. Ned Paul replied most of this information will be available at the next meeting. He inquired how the Selectmen use the information contained in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Priscilla Jenness replied that the Budget Committee uses the information to make recommendations to the Selectmen.

Jo Ann Price said there is a need for the average citizen to understand the public need and to see the costs for any projected projects and associated bonds. Beth Yeaton thought that a few bond

August 8, 2012

issues were coming to term soon so this might be a good time to tackle a large project. She asked Cyndi Gillespie to verify this. Cyndi produced a Schedule of Long Term Indebtedness through 2020 to distribute to each member. She stated the Sewer Project bond was paid off in January of this year. The schedule showed three bonds coming to term in 2014. She stated the Town is in excellent shape financially with literally no debt. We are far below the 3% of total valuation of all land and buildings within the town which is currently allowed by the State to determine how much money a town can borrow. Currently, our indebtedness is at 6% of our allowed debt. Ned Paul referred to the “Cranky Yankee” story and said we all enjoy our low tax rate and want to keep it that way.

Martin Klenke said that the future advances in technology may reduce the need for the space we need now. He questioned, with the increase in electronic reading, whether the Library will be useful in the future. Might that space be available for other purposes in the future? Peter White said we may be doing all sorts of things electronically in the future, even voting and paying taxes could be accomplished this way.

Victor Azzi said the Library is the social center of the town and not just a book warehouse. People come to the Library for many purposes other than books. They come for presentations, movies, meetings, Senior Citizen activities, use of the internet, classes and social interactions. The Library recently completed a Strategic Planning Report that projects its use for years to come. Because of increased use of the Library and the need for meeting space, they have had to increase their hours and may do so again in the near future. He doesn't see the Library becoming obsolete any time soon. Beth Yeaton said the fact that the Library had to increase their hours to accommodate more meetings reiterates the need for more meeting space in town.

Chairman Paul called for a motion to adjourn. It was moved by Mel Low, seconded by Curtis Boivin, to adjourn the meeting. All voted in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth M. Yeaton