

**TOWN OF RYE
THE TOWN HALL SPACE NEEDS COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2012
RYE PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
6:30 P.M.**

Members Present: Chairman Ned Paul, Vice-Chair Curtis Boivin, Selectmen's Rep Priscilla Jenness, Peter White, Paula Merritt, Paul Goldman, Peter Kasnet, Beth Yeaton, Phil Winslow, Lucy Neimen, Gregg Mikolaities, Mel Low, Tom McCormick, Kimberly Reed, Cynthia Gillespie and Michael Magnant.

Purpose: Create an economically sound proposal to resolve the space needs of the town as an integral part of preservation/renovation of our historic Town Hall building.

I. Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Paul called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Review and acceptance of Meeting Minutes from August 22, 2012

Motion by Curtis Boivin to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 22, 2012 as presented. Seconded by Phil Winslow. Vote 6 – 0. Abstained: Peter Kasnet, Beth Yeaton, Phil Winslow, Lucy Niemen, Gregg Mikolaities, Mel Low and Tom McCormick.

III. Work Session

1. Presentation and results of the Town Hall Study:
 - Cyndi Gillespie, Assistant Town Administrator/Finance Director

Assistant Town Administrator/Finance Director Cynthia Gillespie gave a presentation comparing New Hampshire Town Halls. Thirty eight town halls were chosen based on the town population and proximity to the seacoast. The towns of Kittery and York Maine were also used because of their proximity to the seacoast. Surveys were sent to each of the towns chosen with fourteen completed surveys returned. A copy of the report and data presented may be viewed at the Rye Town Hall and Rye Public Library.

2. Review of Rye Town Hall Space Needs Analysis by department: See attachments
 1. Committee results after meeting with department heads
 2. Results from “Rye Concerned Citizens”
 3. Review of differences
3. Review recommended space needs for a typical office: See attachment
4. Review of square footage building and renovation costs: See attachment

Chairman Paul stated that at the previous meeting he had taken the Rye Town Hall Space Needs Analysis, which A.G. Architect had prepared by department, and compared the current square footage with the proposed square footage. The final column was for the Committee square footage. Since then, Town Administrator Magnant and Vice-Chair Boivin met with the department heads again and went through the open plans of the proposed building. They discussed space needs with each department independently and came up with a recommendation, which has been submitted to the Committee. He pointed out there is another one from the Rye Concerned Citizens, which has also been submitted. This did not come from the Committee. It came from a group of concerned Rye citizens who took it upon themselves to put their own analysis in.

Member Goldman clarified the Committee results are different from the Rye Concerned Citizens analysis.

Chairman Paul confirmed. He asked Vice-Chair Boivin to review the **Committee’s Space Needs Analysis**.

Vice-Chair Boivin explained the first thing listed on the list was the meeting chambers. If the great hall was to be restored a big square footage savings would be to eliminate the additional meeting chambers and use the great hall as meeting chambers. He pointed out this would save 500sf. The great hall would be able to be partitioned down the middle. This would make the space more usable, and if there are separate functions, this would make for more intimate space as in a Rye meeting. The A.G. proposal was going to take out one of the staircases and put a kitchen in. This is the 126sf that is listed. That has been eliminated. The Recreation Department has a kitchen in their facilities on Recreation Road. That can be used to run a cooking class. He continued they kept the 100sf of storage. The meeting chamber overall subtotal was reduced. The Selectmen’s Office was kept the same as the A.G. proposal. The Town Administrator’s office went from 275sf down to 200sf. He commented that he printed out a copy showing the difference between 200sf to 275sf. He sent this out the Members in an email. This is just so everyone can understand the change in space between the two of them. The Finance/Assistant Town Administrator’s office remained the same at 270sf. They felt the assistant work area could be incorporated into the 270sf. There could be an additional desk in that space. This eliminated 80sf from that number. He continued there was a general reduction in the square footage. The town clerk/tax collector is an office that has a lot of paperwork and storage needs. The square footage was kept the same and the meeting room was also kept.

Member White asked if the assumption is having paper storage as opposed to electronic storage.

Vice-Chair Boivin explained they have to meet the current needs and future needs for flexibility. If the Town goes to electronic storage, perhaps there would be more square footage in the building and more people may end up working in the building. However, the current needs must be addressed. Paper storage is not going to go away because it is required by State Law. He further explained he asked each department head what does the Town need to store and what is needed to store these things.

Chairman Paul commented he had asked if this could be documented. He asked if anyone had brought documentation on what is required by the State in terms of paper.

Town Clerk/Member Yeaton commented she was not aware that was a requirement for this meeting.

Chairman Paul asked Member Yeaton if she could provide this information for the report the Committee is putting together.

Town Clerk/Member Yeaton confirmed.

Speaking to Vice-Chair Boivin, Member Winslow asked if the department heads felt comfortable with the numbers that he was working on.

Vice-Chair Boivin explained what the departments have currently and what is proposed for square footage include a circulation space. For example, the office upstairs of 270sf includes a corridor that crosses the office. In saying that the departments will be getting usable space and in showing the diagram, most of the department heads said that they had acceptable numbers. The Recreation Department was the one department that felt they needed much more storage space than the Committee was recommending. Most changes came across in subtle reductions in space. He pointed out the Recreation Department storage went from 400sf down to 250sf.

Chairman Paul commented the Committee cut the department 25%.

Vice-Chair Boivin stated the Recreation Department has said that any new space is better than what they have in their divided space currently. He continued the Planning Department would have 200sf, which would be usable space. The current 128sf is hardly usable space. In talking to the Building Department, they said it was not necessary to have an assistant's office. The 240sf was eliminated and an assistant would work within the given office space. He pointed out the file storage, for the Building Department, went from 600sf down to 500sf. The Building Inspector was asked how often he accesses the files and if they can be stored remotely. He had replied that it is not feasible because there are a lot of times he needs to go back to the original plan. In regards to the Building Department's conference room, that is for the Building and Planning Departments. It can also be shared by other departments in the building.

Chairman Paul commented the Committee cut the Building Department square footage by 34%.

Vice-Chair Boivin stated the Sewer Department went from 250sf to 200sf. The Recreation Department was a 25% cut. The big cut was the supply closet. There is a Master Plan for the Recreation Department so perhaps there needs to be a Space Needs Assessment on their own.

Member White stated their needs to be a consensus on whether Recreation is better suited to stay at Town Hall, housed at the schools or in their own facilities. That is a whole decision that needs to be made.

Chairman Paul commented until a better plan comes around the Recreation Department has to be housed at the Town Hall.

Vice-Chair Boivin explained that square footage has to be found for them somewhere. Right now there is no other space for them.

Finance Director/Assistant Town Administrator Gillespie pointed out that there is a rental fee for the use of other facilities by the Recreation Department.

Vice-Chair Boivin continued the Treasure and Trust Funds could be combined into one office at a 200sf office. This would reduce the number of doors and would reduce the circulation. The storage for financials square footage was zeroed out. There is storage at the Public Safety Building and storage is not needed at Town Hall.

Chairman Paul stated in viewing the Public Safety Building it was noted that the building has storage space available for the business needs of the Town of Rye.

Vice-Chair Boivin stated the sit down eat-in kitchen area is not a function the hall needs to have. There can be a small galley kitchen area for the staff needs.

Member White asked if the committee work room is another conference room.

Planning Administrator/Member Kimberly Reed explained the committee work room was proposed for the different committees and subcommittees in Town. This room was going to be for the committees to be able to make copies, have files and work on paperwork. There would also be committee mailboxes in this room.

Vice-Chair Boivin pointed out the copy/mail room is an area to organize and stamp the outgoing mail. This would be reduced from 300sf to 200sf. The IT server room is also reduced by a small number.

Chairman Paul commented that is a 10x10 room.

Member McCormick stated if the Town is thinking of electronic document storage that room would have to triple, maybe quadruple in size.

Vice-Chair Boivin commented they could take square footage space out of the paper storage rooms. He reviewed that under miscellaneous, stair 1, this was reduced from 400sf down to 200sf. He was not sure if it was necessary to do a 400sf staircase in the building. The restrooms are basic ADA compliant sizes and the elevator stayed the same. He pointed out this plan does keep the spiral stairs. Stair 3 was taken out by A.G. Architect for a kitchen, at 126sf, and that number was added back in at 145sf for the stairs. He continued the mechanical systems were kept the same. This gave a net square footage, total interior space needed, of 9,525sf. A 30% circulation calculation was used by A.G. Architect. He pointed out that in researching the numbers he used a 10% circulation calculation, which is 952sf. This brings the total estimated gross square footage down to 10,478.

Member Winslow stated in looking at the total savings, with the exception of the circulation, it comes in at 2033sf. The most significant part is picking up 2500sf in the decision to go from 30% circulation down to 10%. He pointed out that has to be "dead" on. The Committee has to be sure of that because it is the most significant change.

Selectmen's Rep. Jenness asked if the Supervisor to the Checklist was consulted. They have materials stored in Town Hall. That would be necessary to have somewhere in the Town Hall. It needs to be a part of the final plan.

Chairman Paul stated in terms of a sub-total net square footage, 18% was saved; less than 20%. However, an additional 20% was saved on circulation. He thinks it was a good first move. It is a 30% savings overall.

Member Winslow reiterated that 30% versus 10% is very significant. It is important to be sure of that number.

Vice-Chair Boivin explained in looking at the circulation that is shown in the plans it seems to be an excessive amount. He will call A.G. Architects to see where they got the numbers that they used for their analysis.

There was discussion on the circulation within the building and the proposed square footage numbers.

Member Goldman asked what the great hall space was going to be used for. That is a big “driver”, as far as, space goes. What is the assumption on what that space will be used for?

Vice-Chair Boivin explained the space should be flexible enough so it can be available for elections or large public hearings where the entire space can be used. The space could also be divided to have a smaller room, so it becomes a more intimate space for meetings. The space will not be used for offices or any other use. He continued the reasons to get the offices out of the great room are for security and also privacy.

Member Goldman clarified the fundamental driver was to preserve the great room, as configurable space, for the analysis that was completed.

Chairman Paul confirmed. In every analysis he has seen the great hall is always in. He does not see a need to look at an option without the great hall; unless someone feels differently.

The Committee reanalyzed the numbers without the square footage of the great hall. They also reanalyzed the circulation percentage.

Member White stated the Committee really needs to talk about the Recreation Department and storage. Those are two major variables in this plan.

Member McCormick added they need to look at longevity too. How long is the Committee looking to do this “fix” for? If the Committee is looking at just fixing this for 15 years this is wasting time. This has to be looked at for 50 years.

Vice-Chair Boivin pointed out that was a question asked to each department head. They were to look at how much they expected their department to expand and how many employees would be added.

Member Neimen clarified the proposed square footages took into consideration any possible future employees.

Vice-Chair Boivin confirmed.

There was more discussion on the Committee’s proposed square footage numbers. There was also discussion on the staffing increases at Town Hall in the future.

Vice-Chair Boivin stated it comes down to working with a building that needs additional square footage. That is the bottom line. There is not enough square footage within the building and it needs to be renovated. There is no question that the building has to be renovated. The Town needs addition square footage for office space.

Chairman Paul commented and the building needs to be ADA compliant. That is going to put additional pressure on increasing the space.

Vice-Chair Boivin pointed out it now comes down to how big it is going to be. That is the real charge here. He does feel the 9525 square foot number is a minimum number for a town to operate effectively.

Member McCormick asked if they are going with the assumption that the building will be renovated. Is that in the opinion of the Committee at this point?

Vice-Chair Boivin pointed out if they use all the square footage in the building that leaves 3500 to 4000 square feet of additional square footage that is needed somewhere else; whether that is added onto the building or the Committee discusses other options. That is what the Committee needs to look at next. The square footage cost. It needs to be debated on whether there should be a remote location and the cost effect of that needs to be reviewed.

Member Low commented in looking at building something new it would be hard to find a space. The current Town Hall building will still be left. What would be done with the building? With the land and the costs of building new it would bring it right back to the current building.

Chairman Paul stated the space above the Public Safety Building is 7000sf. A 3500sf addition is being looked at for the current Town Hall. He thinks an addition would come out less expensive from this perspective as well.

Vice-Chair Boivin pointed out that A.G. Architect included the financial cost of renovating the Public Safety Building in their survey. The estimate was 1.1 to 1.3 million dollars to renovate the space above the garage. This is already over 1 million. In using the most conservative number, of 3750 additional square feet, it would be \$875,750 based on the \$250 per square foot that was given in the survey.

Member White stated the estimate of cost for the space over the fire truck bay was for independent access, with an elevator. It had specific Town government use associated with it, as opposed to, potentially redeploying the firemen to be above that space, which would be a much lower cost.

Vice-Chair Boivin pointed out the additional septic and pumps for the water would still be needed. There are additional costs to it. Even if the cost of the elevator was taken off that number, and that is debatable whether it would not be needed, it would still be less.

Chairman Paul stated he would like the Members to review the Public Safety Building and come up with any costs that may be associated with utilizing that space.

Vice-Chair Boivin stated he would like to get the idea of using the Public Safety Building “off the table”.

Chairman Paul agreed. He would like to put some numbers to it.

Vice-Chair Boivin commented they are looking at numbers that are more expensive right now. If it can be argued down slightly less, is it a better idea to have two locations for Town Hall?

Chairman Paul asked how can you substantiate having Town Hall in one building, where it is now, without numbers.

Member Neimen explained there are numbers. There is a number of 1 million to renovate the Public Safety Building. That is not enough space so the Town Hall still needs to be renovated.

Member Goldman pointed out there are interoperability studies that have already been done that show a lot of things about Town Hall that are already in place in terms of efficiency and work environment and ease of use for the public.

Chairman Paul asked Selectmen's Rep Jenness her thoughts.

Selectmen's Rep Jenness stated it has to be remembered that the Public Safety Building is a secured building. She is not sure how it would even be figured if part of the building had to be cut into.

Chairman Paul stated Article 27, which is what the Committee is charged with, is a pro and con analysis. He thinks they should do a pro and con analysis, the best they can, for each option. He thinks there will be a lot of pros for this building the voters will support.

Selectmen's Rep Jenness agreed. All the bases need to be covered.

Chairman Paul asked the Members to research for the next meeting;

- **Pros and cons plus cost of renovation of the Public Safety Building;**
- **Cost of purchasing new land and building a new complex, with the proposed square footage minus the great hall; and**
- **Cost of renovating the current Town Hall with the addition.**

Public Input:

Chairman Paul opened to the public for comments or questions at 8:15 p.m.

Peter Crawford, 171 Brackett Road, explained he worked with others on the spread sheet from the Rye Concerned Citizens. He continued that Alex Herlihy's basic comment from the previous meeting was that he believes a 2400sq addition, with the 6000sf building that is already here, should accommodate the needs of the Town; including renovating the great hall and saving the spiral staircases.

Chairman Paul pointed out that Mr. Herlihy worked with Mr. Crawford to put together the Rye Concerned Citizen's Analysis based on the 2400sf addition to the building that already exists.

Member Mikolaities stated Mrs. Gillespie did a great job. She drove 800 miles and put together this survey. He thinks at some point the Committee needs to take a vote and validate her numbers. He pointed out her survey states 750sf, per subject town. Rye is currently at 537sf. In looking at another number, it is 633sf. In taking 13 employees at 633sf it is approximately 8200sf. Thirteen employees at 750sf each is 9700sf. It is not 6000sf, as it is now. The Town Hall is undersized. In going to 16 employees, at 633sf, that would be approximately 10,000sf. In taking the highest number, that would be approximately 12,000sf. This is good data. He does not think they have taken a vote or concluded that the Committee is on the right track. He thinks they are concluding the number is not 15,000sf. He thinks they are concluding the number is somewhere between 10,000 to 12,000sf. That is as good as it is going to be.

Chairman Paul pointed out that Mrs. Gillespie did do a lot of work and it has to be validated.

Mr. Crawford stated the Town Hall, according to the A.G. report, is 6072sf. The spread sheet the Committee did was 6975sf. He believes the difference is the storage at the Public Safety Building. The question is can that stay there? They are looking at 6072sf today and 8200sf in the future, which is basically a 2300sf addition. Then there is the great hall which is basically 1700sf. He continued that the plan excludes Recreation, which is approximately 600sf. Every plan that he has looked at starts with demolishing the porches on the end of the building and starting the addition from that point. There will be a problem with Recreation no matter what is done. They will not be able to move elsewhere in the building as there is not enough room. They will have to move somewhere short term. If they do that, why not find someplace semi-permanent until they get their own facility? He thinks that is a problem that needs to be addressed. He continued the issue of electronic storage is covered under RSA 33:A. It is fairly specific. It lists how long each type of record is needed to be kept. It states there is no prohibition on discarded originals and having documents on microfilm. If the Town is going to digitize a document to be stored on a computer, if the retention period needs to be longer than 10 years, then there is an issue and it must also be microfilmed. He pointed out that paper is always acceptable. Computer storage is acceptable always if the retention period is less than 10 years. Microfilming is always an option and can dramatically decrease the amount of square footage. If this process is started now these records could be microfilmed or scanned and all that storage space would not be needed. In looking at the numbers that is where the major differences are. He does not think the two groups are that far off from each other.

Chairman Paul agreed. He thanked the Rye Concerned Citizens for bringing that to the table.

Member Neimen stated there are costs associated with electronic storage and moving the recreation department. They need to look at the whole picture. The costs need to be shown in the presentation to the Town.

Member McCormick agreed. That will dramatically increase the IT Budget every year. Storage is being paid for once, versus a new server at \$25,000, and additional IT people that will have to back up the data. North Hampton did the analysis on the costs for converting the records to digital. He will research that information for the Committee. He pointed out that there are grants out there to help with the costs, but North Hampton did not think it was feasible. They had even looked at off-site servers and that could not be done because of security and the Right-to-Know Law. North Hampton has stayed with paper storage.

Town Administrator Michael Magnant explained records management is one of the long term goals. He had put this out to other towns about a year ago. Not one of the towns responded that they had decided to go this route because it is complicated, expensive and man-power intensive.

Regarding the Recreation Department, Member Mikolaities pointed out that regardless of where they go the costs have to be carried through. That cost is not going to be zeroed out.

Member Yeaton commented that during construction a modular could be rented and put at the back of the property for the Recreation Department. That will be the least expensive way to accommodate recreation during construction.

Member McCormick pointed out the revenue the Recreation Department generates is incredible and they need to be accommodated.

Member Goldman commented the Committee needs to conclude on the Recreation Department. That is a big part of it.

Vice-Chair Boivin stated it is part of Town Hall and they have to decide what to do with it.

Chairman Paul stated from what he has seen there is no room for Recreation anywhere else. The Master Plan says, “manufacturer them their own building”, which is not currently in the budget. The plans in the CIP are out a number of years. They need to be housed at the Town Hall. If the Town is going to invest in this building there should be room for Recreation so someday, when they are moved out, that room will handle future growth for the Town that has not been foreseen.

Member Neimen stated the Committee needs to make the same decision on the electronic storage space. That decision is beyond the scope of this Committee. It would be great if the Town could do that in the future as technology changes. However, the Committee needs to make a decision to house the records with the situation existing now.

Chairman Paul pointed out the Committee’s decision will need to be supported with facts and figures.

Vice-Chair Boivin recommended discussing storage and the Recreation Department at the next meeting.

- **Next Meeting to be held September 26th, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall**

IV. Adjournment

Motion by Mel Low to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. Seconded by Tom McCormick. All in favor.

Note: Any of the above percentages and numbers discussed at the meeting by the Space Needs Committee are preliminary numbers. It has not yet been determined that these numbers will be presented in the final Committee Report. The Committee shall not be held responsible for any mistakes, errors or omissions.

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger