

Town of Hope
Budget Committee
Minutes of Meeting
Wednesday 2 March 2011

Chair Jill Lang called the meeting to order at the Town Office at 6:38 PM. Other committee members present were: Joe Berry, Jean Ettlinger, John Jensen, Bill Jones, Terry Miller, Bill Pearse Jr. and Brian Powers Jr. Dana Daniels was absent. This was a joint meeting with the Select Board. Also present were Selectmen Mike Ames, Barbara Bentley (Chair), Eric Campbell and Tim Pearse (Kit Hastings was absent) and Administrator Jon Duke, as well as presenters Brian & Amanda Austin of 2A Architects.

Approval of the 26 January minutes was postponed until the next meeting because several committee members did not recall receiving the draft minutes e-mailed to them on 31 January (also copied to Select and School Board members with paper copies to Joe Berry and posted at the Town Office). The Secretary will re-send the 26 January minutes and will copy them (again) to Select Board members.

Jill reminded members to be on time and to inform her beforehand if they couldn't be.

New Business

The joint meeting heard a presentation by 2A architects, hired to draft plans to deal with deferred maintenance to the Town Office and to make it compliant with Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and state codes.

Background: In February 2007, the Select Board received a report from architect Richard Higgins to deal with deferred maintenance to the Town Office and to make it compliant with ADA & codes, as well as comparing the cost of doing so with the cost of adding Town Office facilities to the new Hope Corner firehouse and selling the Town Office. In February 2008, as part of its review of possible Town capital projects, the Capital Planning Committee recommended, with respect to the Town Office, among others, a) that whether it be decided to keep or sell the building, maintenance and repairs not be deferred, the definition of works and contracting to start immediately; and b) that Hope move towards ADA and code compliance with "all deliberate speed," making sure that we have a plan to get to compliance and taking the initial steps, but avoiding measures that might be rendered redundant by future decisions about use of the building or that might be deferred for other reasons. Since then, the Select Board has completed the first steps to become ADA compliant, has generally deferred repair & maintenance pending decisions about building use, and, by hiring 2A Architects, is obtaining the plan recommended by the Capital Planning Committee to achieve full ADA and code compliance. As pointed out by the Capital Planning Committee, these measures should shield the Town from possibly greater costs of non-compliance.

Select Board Chair Barbara emphasized that putting the 2A plan out to bid is not a commitment to implement it but an exploratory measure to find out what full compliance (and full repair & maintenance) would cost. This should facilitate rational decisions about what

course to take and which measures have priority so that they ought to be taken up sooner rather than later.

The Austins presented their draft plan, which includes possible variants.

The preferred variant envisages raising the front of the building to make it level with the back in order to avoid elevators and lifts. Basement would be limited to storage. The community room with library space around it would be preserved. Town offices would expand into space now rented to School Union 69. Changes could be accomplished without having to move the town office into swing space.

The Austins expect to call for bids shortly, in which case bids should be received by mid-April, whereupon the Select Board would evaluate the options. In view of the complicated decisions involved, there was consensus that no works would be ready for approval in time for the 2011 Town Meeting.

The plans were discussed. No action was taken.

It was agreed that the next joint meeting (Wednesday March 9th @ 6:30 PM) would begin with review of the Cemetery, Administration & General Administration budgets and would cover as many other small departments as were ready and as time permitted.* The following meeting (Wednesday March 16th @ 6:30 PM) would review Roads and Fire and whatever other departments were not covered on the 9th. The Wednesday March 23rd meeting would begin review of the school budget. Chair Lang indicated her intention that meetings not last past 9 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:32.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Jones, Secretary

* Following the meeting, the agenda was changed to Cemeteries, Roads, Administration and, time permitting, General Administration, Ambulance, Streetlights & Professional Services.