

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
February 28, 2017  
Town Manager's Conference Room

Present: Selectman Charles Surpitski, Chief Paul Nikas, Peter Dziados, Paul Polonsky, Kendall Buhl, Ryan McShera, Robert Donahue, Robert Weatherall, and Jean Emerson.  
Absent were Fire Chief Gagnon and Harvey Schwartz.

INTRODUCTION

Temporary Chairman Charles Surpitski called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. He gave a brief history of his career with the Police Department and Board of Selectmen, reviewed the history of studies for improved facilities for nearly 75 years (which now gather dust), and hopes that this time it will be a worthwhile experience. Each person present was asked to give a brief introduction and involvement.

Three (Chief Nikas, Detective Dziados, and Dispatcher Polonsky) are members of the Police Department, two (Firefighter Buhl and Jean Emerson) are affiliated with the Fire Department, and the others (Mr. Weatherall, Mr. McShera, and Mr. Donahue) have architectural/design experience.

Police Chief Nikas feels that the need to prove that Ipswich needs new facilities has finally passed and most people are with us.

CITIZEN QUERIES - None.

CHARGE TO THE COMMITTEE

The Board of Selectmen voted on December 19, 2016, to create the Public Safety Facility Committee and charged them to identify and evaluate suitable locations(s) for a combined public safety facility and make recommendations to the Selectmen; to recommend an appropriate sum to conduct a feasibility study to work with the Town Manager and town staff to obtain OPM and Architectural services; and to design, construct, and commission a facility suitable to present and future public safety needs of Ipswich.

ORGANIZATION

Citing the need for a Chair and a Secretary, Mr. Surpitski asked for a motion, which was made and seconded, to nominate Jean Emerson as Secretary.

UNANIMOUS.

Mr. Surpitski wants only to be the Board of Selectmen's liaison and agreed to hold off appointing a Chair until the next meeting when two missing members are present.

He referred to a handbook which outlines duties and obligations of a Town committee member, also mentioning the Ethics Course, and the Roberts Rules of running a meeting. He proposed that meeting discussion stay on target, beginning at 7 p.m. and ending by 9 p.m.

Chief Nikas, with accompanying handout, reviewed the two facilities (Fire building built in 1907 for horse-drawn fire apparatus) and Police station built in 1930s as a storage facility and renovated in 1986 as a Police Station). In 1953, there was a plan to add on to the Central Street Fire Station for a police station and courtroom, which was not approved. Studies for a new fire facility took place in the 1960s through the 1980s. In 2001 an architect studied emergency response times (8 minutes) determining that the focus area (hub of the Town) serving the largest number of homes and businesses lies between Lord Square and the Old Town Hall on S. Main Street. Town-owned and privately-owned properties were reviewed—most are not available today. In 2010, the Long Range Planning Committee and the Selectmen unanimously voted to pursue a single police/fire facility. In 2012 a Task Force began to study the site on Elm Street and found that a 40,000 sq. ft. combined facility could be accommodated there, and went to the Spring 2014 Annual Town Meeting asking for a Feasibility Study for a complex, but the voters defeated the Article.

Mr. Weatherall asked what dynamic is driving the combined facility. Chief Nikas replied that it is the standard now, with separated areas but with shared locations for training/workout facilities. Chief Nikas and Firefighter Buhl see it as a positive, almost entirely as an economic advantage for utilities, communication, etc. The Task Force reviewed everything in the design which had been drawn by an architect (gratis). Nikas mentioned several surrounding towns which have replaced/are replacing existing facilities that are younger than Ipswich's by 50 years. Mr. Surpitski said that manpower hasn't changed in Ipswich either, especially with the decrease in call-force availability during daytime hours.

When asked about Bialek availability, Mr. Surpitski felt that it shouldn't necessarily be discounted. The Board of Selectmen has formed a committee to study access for that park which will be done soon. The ballpark figure for a combined facility is 36,-40,000 square feet. There was discussion of the Holden, MA, facility built in 2012 which matches Ipswich in population and size of police and fire departments. Costs in 2013 were at \$350/sq.ft.

#### ASSIGNMENTS AND NEXT MEETING

The thinking is that for vitality, civic pride, dignity and character the site selected should be downtown. Research by members of the Committee will be done with driving around Town and getting numbers from a traffic study conducted by the School Building Committee. The group decided that the next meeting should begin with a tour of the current fire and police facilities and an Executive Session to follow in a few weeks.

#### ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Buhl moved, seconded by Mr. Dziadose, to adjourn at 8:10 p.m.

