

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY COMMITTEE
VIA ZOOM
MARCH 18, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Chair R. Weatherall called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. with the following members present: R. Donahue, H. Schwartz, L. Alexson, T. Jones, Chief Nikas, P. Polonsky, J. Fay, K. Carlson, and J. Emerson. Absent were C. Surpitski, P. Dziadose, and Chief Theriault.

CITIZEN QUERIES

None.

REPORT RE MEETING WITH THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Jamie Fay, Fin Com member, reported on his Public Safety agenda item at the recent Finance Committee meeting. While there were a lot of questions, the bottom line, he said, is that at least two members think this public safety project does not provide very many benefits to the town with the number of people it serves. M. Schaff and R. White were making the argument that it didn't rank as high as some of the other needs in the town and there is not enough money to pay for everything. While there wasn't a vote, six of the eight members present were ready to support the project.

Schaaf had commented that we have a public safety function in town now and what benefit will there be by spending \$25 million? Jamie opined that they were critical thinkers, but at some point, people do expect you to exercise some leadership and do something beyond being critical. Bob was struck by their claim that the Public Safety project doesn't apply to many people and expressed the need to find a way to get voters thinking about "public safety", pointing out that our present facilities are in a precarious position. Tammy agreed, saying that we service 14,000 people in Ipswich, and it is because of the good work of the two professional departments that we haven't had a disaster. Harvey commented that with all of the natural disasters we are seeing, we are bound to have something happen. Tammy added that with the two departments dealing with social services more than ever, we need to procure the best personnel when future retirement/replacement positions present themselves, and it may be harder if our facilities are in poor condition.

The Finance Committee did vote to approve the Strategic Plan for the town and advocates for the elementary school. There is discussion in regard to the reuse of the existing police and fire stations. Linda, as Select Board Chair, spoke about working on the issue of reuse of Fire and Police buildings as well and will present the matter to the Board. The School Committee might be interested in the Fire building to add to the Winthrop site. Bob suggested that this subject is a good topic for another meeting.

EDITING OF THE HKT REPORT

Several of the group found more errors in the HKT document than were shown in the corrected document--so much so, that the decision was made to allow PSFC members to review

the document again and send edits to Bob. The document will be presented to the Select Board on March 30 rather than the original schedule on March 22.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Linda moved, seconded by Paul N., to approve February 23, 2021, Minutes. Roll call IN FAVOR- Linda, Bob, Rob, Jamie, Harvey, Paul N., Paul P., and Jean; Tammy abstaining.

NEXT MEETING

PSFC will meet on April 13, 2021, to discuss marketing strategies and carbon neutrality.

ADJOURNMENT

Jamie moved, seconded by Tammy, to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. Roll call IN FAVOR- Linda, Bob, Rob, Jamie, Tammy, Harvey, Chief Paul, Paul P., Jean.