

PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY COMMITTEE MEETING

December 12, 2017

Town Hall Room B2

CALL TO ORDER

Robert Weatherall, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. with the following members present: P. Polonsky, L. Alexson, P. Nikas, C. Surpitski, A. Theriault, H. Schwartz, T. Howe, K. Buhl, R. McShera, P. Dziadose, and J. Emerson.

CITIZENS QUERIES

REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

Visual. Ryan presented a sizable graphic, the hub being the shared Police and Fire insignias, and Accessibility, Modernization, Civic pride, Communication, Sustainability, and two open bubbles as the hub's extensions. Harvey suggested "saving money on facilities" as one of the bubbles. A second graphic showed, in a representation of the timeline, the process for a facility: needs assessment, design/engineering, cost estimating, permitting for building, and construction. He is hoping for feedback and participation from citizens, the more involvement, the better. He said a logo element is needed for the repetitive image for people to recognize the PSFC project. He envisioned his graphic to be upscaled or down-sized for convenience of distribution. Tammy has left a message at the High School to have students propose a good logo.

Ryan commented that we are now at a point where we could continue the bell curve upward with expenses on old facilities compared to the big expense of a new facility and expenses dropping; others agreed. The group discussed another McShera visual as a physical image of the parts of the plant, and Charlie suggested that this facility will be the only 24/7, 365/day/year connection to Ipswich government, a building for "we the people" (commented Tammy), not "them."

R. Donahue entered the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Charlie Surpitski reported on discussions with representatives from other towns who have successfully built new public safety facilities, saying that no town was successful on the first shot, some taking two or three to build a building. The videos of the old buildings led by the Chiefs were critical. Hamilton did a lot of community outreach with neighborhood coffees; most did lawn signs. They went to every service club (Rotary, etc.), and presented the financial picture in talking to the schools to make sure they weren't conflicted (Holden and Hamilton). The Chief in Holden went to their Congressman and got a \$500,000 grant for communications (a point commented on later as a talking point for Rep Brad Hill, Sen. Bruce Tarr, and Rep. Seth Moulton.)

While they were all uphill battles, Rowley focused on valuable equipment subjected to harsh weather outside or within poor structures (a common problem in Ipswich for housing emergency equipment). In discussion, the conclusion was drawn that it needs to be citizen driven, and the people are really the eyes of the Town.

Fiscal expenses to old facilities. Tammy had spoken with Sarah Johnson, Town Accountant: FY17: Police, \$41,000, Linebrook, 10,000; and Fire, \$62,000 and been given numbers from 2009 to the present, a non-inclusive number of \$612,000 for three stations (police, fire, and Linebrook) for new windows and boilers, fixing roofs and emergency repairs to generators and boilers, bricks falling down. Mold remediation was in another list—the Town’s insurance contributed \$25,000 and the Town paid \$64,000. Acting Chief Andy commented that the renovations to the Fire Station after that aren’t included. Others contributed slate problems, leaking drain pipes, new insulated overhead doors (Fire), emergency electric pump, extra costs for apparatus to be able to fit through the Fire’s doors—all of these expenses for unforeseen repairs with a “bandaid approach” versus efficient systems in a new building. Andy added \$4,000 for apparatus floor repairs and extension for a new truck and a new storage facility outside to house displaced storage. Chief Nikas spoke of a \$65,000 amount for the police—losing a cell and adding an interview room (coming under Capital Improvement funding within the Town). New technology mandates for the police are coming as well.

The group discussed the theme “wasted rather than invested” because townspeople are unaware of the expenses to keep two poor facilities functional. An example would be the high efficiency windows installed with a leaky roof above! Another is the replacement of copper with fiber by Verizon in the old buildings.

The Town insurance for public safety building is low, but it was surmised that because the buildings are small and old, the property values are low.

Tax impact projections were at \$2 for public safety buildings in FY 2020, peaking @\$250 in FY26. Bob suggested that a visual by Ryan would be helpful with the projections as we move along.

Video/website. Linda contacted ICAM which is willing to produce videos of the current fire and police facilities following a pre-production meeting with the two chiefs. The search for a designer for a PSFC website was launched.

Fire Insurance Ratings. Acting Chief Theriault spoke of three ratings for fire insurance—Ipswich is currently at 4, 9 being the highest without a fire department, and 1 being the lowest (Cambridge is at Class 1). Response time, water pressure, and water flow are examples that influence ratings.

Charlie mentioned another “bubble”—the public’s expectation for response to an emergency. Currently, certain equipment for rescues is unavailable during the winter months because of outside storage. Fire and police boats should be in climate-controlled environment. Visitors often can’t find the Police Station nor a place to park when they do find it. Emergency Management (shelter in place) is not available to Ipswich currently.

Grants. To the question of grant money availability, Peter reported that Jon Hubbard, Emergency Management Director, gets grants through military surplus, but money is only available for retrofitting and not anything new. Paul Polonsky, Communications, received a

grant for climate control for sensitive electronics that can't overheat. Again, the comment was made that resources are being misused and wasting money instead of investing money.

Bob commented on Harvey's links on the computer regarding other towns' building projects. Harvey would like a way to generate discussion and hear from dissenters. Charlie, once again, spoke of political will with the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee in favor of the project.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Harvey moved, seconded by Rob, to approve 11/21/17 Minutes. UNANIMOUS.

NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNMENT

The next meeting was set for January 9, 2018, at Town Hall Room B2.

Harvey moved, seconded by Tammy, to adjourn at 8:48 p.m. UNANIMOUS.