

BOARD OF SELECTPERSONS BUILDING COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Wednesday, May 6, 2009/ 6:30 p.m./ North Belgrade Community Center

Meeting Convened 6:30 p.m./ Adjourned 8:50 P.M.

Officials in Attendance:

Dan Newman	Selectperson, Chair	William Pulsifer	Deputy Fire Chief, Lakes Fire Station
Chris Merrow	Selectperson, V. Chair	Jack Sutton	Budget Com. & Transfer St. Com
Bruce Plourd	Selectperson	Ed Salmon	Library Board of Trustees
Ricky Damren	Selectperson	Loyce Hayslett	Library Board of Trustees & Tree Com.
Melanie Jewell	Selectperson	Nancy Mairs	Town Historian
Dennis Keschl	Town Manager	Marcia Haigh	Librarian
Bruce Galouch	Trans. St. Com & Cem. Com.	Pat Pow	Library Board of Trustees
MacGregor Stocco, LRPC		Gordon Pow	Building Committee
Michael Barrett	Library Board of Trustees	Dan Pratt	Planning Board
Conrad Shaw	Building Committee		

Others in attendance: Polly Beatie, Mark Ostermann, Marie Pulsifer, Dave Drouin, Ernest Rice, Lenny Reich, Barbara Allen

Selectperson Chair, Dan Newman, opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.. He informed those present that the purpose of the meeting was to gain direction and to look to forming a new building committee.

Town manager, Dennis Keschl, provided an overview of the previous building committee's efforts. He made reference to the Comprehensive Plan of 1998 where it was identified that the Town needed to look at "a facility to for the next 25 to 50 years, in a central location exploring optional sites to consider a combination of town office, public safety facilities, community center and library". **(Please see the Comprehensive Plan, page 7, Action Recommendations & Schedule)**

In April of 2007 the Library Board of Trustees and Friends of the Library gave the Municipal Officers a briefing of their plans and asked the Board if there is any interest in a multipurpose facility. The Board agreed to pursue the idea.

An Ad-Hoc Committee was formed in 2007. The committee reviewed a number of pieces of property. The general concensus was to find a piece of property located with in a mile of central Belgrade. The Ad-Hoc Study reviewed the amount of space that would be needed to support a municipal office, library, the food pantry and space for a historical/cultural center. The concluded the amount of space needed would be 17,000 square feet. They then went to investors in town as well as the Fire Department. The Fire Department their preference was to not combine any new facility with the municipal office. **(Please see the attached Ad-Hoc Committee Report of November 28, 2007)**

Then an article went to the 2008 Town Meeting requesting funds be appropriated to raise \$20,000 for the purpose of hiring a professional architectural assistant to provide a conceptual design of a multi-purpose facility to meet the needs of the town for the next 25 years. The article was amended to authorize the Board of Selectpersons be in charge of the disbursement of the funds, with an amount of \$5,000 not to be exceeded prior to a specific site had been determined. **(Please see the attached article)**

A building committee was formed. They met diligently for eight months for the first three Wednesdays of the month. This is where article #20 at the 2009 Town Meeting was arrived at. There were a number of public education meetings as well as a pamphlet providing information to the public. Article # 20 failed, but the Town Meeting showed that there was interest in pursuing something further. The board recognized this and wanted to hold a meeting to re-group. All the members of the building committee

worked diligently to provide what would be in the best interest of the town and they developed a recommendation which they brought to town meeting.

Dan Newman thanked the town manager for the overview. He stated that the intention of the meeting was not to debate what will be done for a building, but the purpose was to reorganize the building committee, determine who would like to remain on the committee from the original committee and those who would like to join a new committee.

Dan asked for nominations. Ernie Rice, Ernie Merckens and MacGregor Stocco were names provided. Dan Newman stated he would like to remain on the committee as the Selectperson representative. Conrad Shaw said he was not sure if he was willing to remain on the committee he was not sure of what the town wants.

The Town manager stated that a way to find this out would be a survey. This was done for the Transfer Station Committee for a couple of months and more than 600 people participated. This would give the Board an idea of what the town is looking for.

Gordon Pow said he felt it is difficult to form a new committee if you do not know what the people want. Several options have been discussed and the building committee tried to hold meetings. He felt that it is not until you attach a \$ amount then you get people's interest. He said he felt it is up to the leadership of the Town to determine what the needs of the town is and what is in the best interest of the town. The building committee did what it was instructed to do and that was to look at a plan for 25 years. He reiterated that he felt the leadership needs to determine the need and the cost, before another committee is developed.

The Town Manager said that two committees reviewed the needs and both came back with nearly the same concepts and the Board has spoken favorably of what was proposed.

Dan Newman said that the plan that was put forward looked at five to six versions, their cost, expansion possibilities and the floor plan. This plan was not the largest plan proposed.

David Drouin stated that he felt that it makes sense for the town to look down the road twenty-five years, but the current economic status of the country is unstable and everyone is affected right now. He feels projecting twenty-five years is possibly looking too far and we would be much better off building a building that maybe would fit for the next ten to fifteen years, and then add on if necessary. He further stated that taxes would have to be considered that there was too much misinformation being passed around about what the increase in individual property taxes would be. He said that if the proper information was provided then perhaps this article would not have failed.

Gordon said yes, he felt that a building could be built that was expandable.

Jack Sutton said he feels the building project has been driven by special interest groups which has driven the concept of a multi purpose building. He feels the concept of the multi-purpose meeting came before the town had an opportunity to digest the concept. He referenced the Ad-Hoc Study page 9. He state this table shows that one third of the space being proposed for the municipal office is common area. The current Library space is 250 square feet and now this proposed is 5,437 square feet, this is 21 times the size of the current library. He believes the needs should be reviewed. Jack further stated based on this table preliminary costs should be able to be determined.

Mark Ostermann said he found out at town meeting what he was being asked to pay for and he was not sure this is what he wanted. If the town wanted to move forward it should have had different aspects available for residents to vote on.

The Town Manager stated that the research had been done and what was being asked for had been pre-determined by both the comprehensive plan and the Ad-Hoc Study. The Town felt they were moving forward on what the people wanted.

Mark Ostermann stated he did not feel the big picture got out to the public, but there was no chance to say if I wanted it, I just was asked to spend money on it. There were no plans made

Marcia Haigh said that the Library Board of Trustees conducted surveys and did focus groups; they heard overwhelmingly that everyone wanted a larger more centralized library. With this information the Friends of the Library hired a consultant. At the 2006 town meeting the town voted to raise an amount of \$2,000 for the Library Capital Reserve account to build a larger more centrally located library. At the 2007 town meeting the amount was increased to \$5,000. The town has approved this same amount for 2008 and 2009. The Library has issued over 1,420 cards through 2008. The current space used is 2,800 square feet. The Friends of the Library and volunteers have looked at a lot of property and jumped on the property adjacent to the Belgrade Central School, because it became available and it was centrally located. The Friends of the Library have now purchased the property and have offered the opportunity to the town to coordinate building efforts.

Gordon Pow stated the space for the municipal office, which is the footprint of the building, determined the space of the library. Gordon further stated that with a combined building there will be shared common space, shared parking, plowing, bathrooms, etc. Building up instead of building out makes sense and costs less. Building separate buildings would be encouraging sprawl.

Ernie Rice stated he feels the town should put this to a vote to determine if they want to build a multipurpose building or separate buildings. He feels the it should be brought to the taxpayers to let them make the decision.

Jack Sutton stated this would be a fair basis to asking the residents if they want to move forward on the based on the costs. Jack referenced the Ad-hoc building committee report, page 14.

Gordon said the Town is not being asked to fund the library for \$1,000,000. The Library committee intends to fundraise and apply for grants to help support the building of this facility. Gordon said they cannot affectively move forward with fundraising if you do not have a project.

Dan Pratt stated does it make sense to couple these two entities together if one is driving the other with the size of the Municipal Office footprint determining the size of the library. He feels we need to secure where the money is coming from. He stated he felt personally maybe such a large building is not appropriate to Belgrade, where smaller buildings are more in the line of the community.

Polly Beatie said she was shocked to see 300 people at the town meeting, and it was these 300 people making the decision for the town. She feels that the town needs to get more people in town to the town meeting and if need be the issues need to be brought to the doors of people.

Pat Pow said that she felt like the people did not understand what went into the work that was done by the building committee and that the town needs to take every effort to make sure the town's historical records are preserved. She said it is up to the leaders of this town to determine how to move forward.

The Town Manager agreed that the leaders do have some responsibility, but the town is a legislative form of government and ultimately they make the decisions.

David Drouin stated whatever is done that the emphasis needs to be on taxes because people felt like they were going to be paying \$500 each towards a property tax increase.

Lenny Reich said he heard the building was going to be a grandiose, and maybe going back to the drawing board and coming back with another building that is 10 to 20 percent smaller in size would be more acceptable to residents, whereas he feels that coming back with the same amount and the same size building the same thing will happen.

Bruce Galouch stated that he feels it would be prudent to show a cost savings in a shared space of plumbing, heating, cooling, sprinkler and electrical system for the building.

Peter Doran stated that he felt his interpretation of the voters was that they were looking for something smaller, but the general sentiment was a multipurpose building. He has been involved in three major projects, the Health Center building, nine years as School Board and instrumental in the change of Belgrade to SAD #47. He feels the town should present a well designed building that could be added to. In the Recreation Building we settled for less, but still have a lot. He feels that education is what is needed. We need to find out who is willing to participate and determine what we need and attach a dollar amount to it.

Mike Barrett stated that he would like to see the building committee re-founded and then together with the board come up with what needs to be presented. He further stated that education of the project is an important key.

Jack Sutton stated that what is being proposed will impact more than just the debt service. This will impact operating costs on an annual basis and none of this was presented as part of the package.

Melanie Jewell said she felt like the town can't go back now and charge for only a ten year plan, that this would be a disservice to the town if we did not look at the needs for 25 years.

Gordon Pow said the town could look at a less extensive plan for 10 years that would be expandable for a 25 year plan. The town can build on what we have, if we feel it is the right thing. He is not interested if the building committee has to have the same discussion all over again.

Dan Pratt stated that possibly building the same project and bringing it back, it may fail, but reducing the size may sell it.

Conrad Shaw said he was not sure how the building committee could move forward to sell the project if there is no money available for promoting it.

The Town Manager said that he did not believe that we should try to "sell" the public on anything. What we should be doing is providing the public with the information and educating them about the facts, in order to allow them to make an informed decision. Melanie Jewell said it was originally the Library that drove the project because they were moving forward and the board agreed because they felt it was the right thing to do.

Loyce Hayslett stated that the Library wants to launch a new capital campaign, but it is difficult to move forward if they do not have a building to put forth.

Bill Pulsifer stated there was a lot of misinformation on the tax figures that hurt the project.

Gordon said they could regroup the building committee and slim down the project, with updated cost figures and put forth the engineering costs to the town.

Ricky Damren stated that he likes the idea of down sizing the project. He said he really was not sure that the location of the proposed building was best for the town, but after speaking with Gordon about the heating and having been told that the building would cost 40% less to heat than in the sandpit location he changed his mind on his hesitation with the location.

Jack Sutton stated that the committee needs to process the funding and focus on a timeline.

Gordon Pow stated that they will have a timeline, information on private funding and information on grants that are based on the building. He feels it will take 3-4 months of real public education.

Ricky Damren made a motion to regroup the building committee and to include some additional members with a limit of the committee size of 8 to 10 members; and to charge the committee to look at a revised scaled down complex on that site, and to bring it back to the board with a ball park estimate of the

cost. The committee will be appointed at the next regularly scheduled board meeting on May 19th. The Town manager will develop a statement of purpose and develop a timeframe to guide the committee. Melanie Jewell seconded the motion. **CLOSED 5/0**

Respectfully Submitted,
Mary Vogel, Executive Secretary to the Board