

Senior Center Building Committee Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2024

In Attendance: Don Collins, Bobbi Grant, Rita Vail, Gary Weiner, Carol Keeney, John Matthews, Mike Doran, Mike Fedora, Cliff Bombard, Becky Moriarty (ex-officio), John Flynn via ZOOM

Don Collins called the meeting to order at 11:03 AM.

Minutes from 2/12/24. Carol asked for the adjournment time to be added to the last set of minutes. Last page change to third paragraph: Rita asked... change the next sentence to: "Cliff, COA Board member, said he had not yet seen the budget. Becky said the budget had not yet been finalized". Bobbi asked for clarification about the paragraph in the minutes that references the "Specialties" line. Clarification provided.

Don motion to approve. Bobbi seconded. All in favor.

Edm invoices: distributed to the committee. Discussion that edm did not have to do the well water review, but they did do the structural design and fire protection design.

After reviewing, Don feels that there is still plenty of room left in the budget.

Gary looking at the invoice labeled Task 3 which is for working and public meetings. Gary notes that as of the third billing, that line has not been billed yet. Gary spoke with Chris about having Doug be present at the town meeting. This is not a cost that was in the original budget and would be approximately \$1,000 to have Doug fly in to attend the town meeting. Gary would like confirmation from Chris that flying Doug in would still be within the budget. Rita asked if Doug could attend the meeting via ZOOM. John M. feels that it would be better if Doug was in person to make the presentation. Don agrees that Doug should be at the town meeting. Gary also agrees that Doug should be at the meeting. Gary recommends asking Chris what he anticipates his costs will be between now and the town meeting. Becky will reach out to Chris and ask for an estimate of costs going forward.

Gary moved to approve three outstanding invoices from edm to be paid. John M seconded. All in favor.

Discussion on Grants, publicity, etc.

Don would like to make a list of committee meetings that need to be held going forward.

Don recommends going to the COA Board to fill them in on where the committee stands. Their next meeting is March 12, 2024.

Conservation Commission

Government Study Committee – John M is a member and will talk with the committee tonight at their meeting.

Master Planning Committee - Gary hopes the BOS would move forward with bringing together the master plan, conservation, and government study committees for a coordinated meeting. Perhaps this committee can send a written request to the Selectmen for a combined meeting.

Becky explained that Rita was at the last COA Board meeting and Cliff Bombard has been giving updates to the board throughout the building committee process.

Rita doesn't think the pitch needs to go to the COA Board, but rather it should include the COA if there is a general meeting. Rita does not think there is a need to convince the COA.

Rita thinks that any meeting called by the Board of Selectmen should be a Public Forum and a robo call should go out to everyone.

Gary asked Rita about the Council on Aging meeting and if they could assist with the publicity campaign. Rita doesn't see the COA Board as being a group that would spearhead the publicity campaign. Becky explained that the COA Board was supportive of the project and said they would help with publicity but might not take the initiative on their own.

John M asked if there were any questions from the COA Board. Rita stated the COA Board questioned the number of restrooms, the position of the library, the craft room blocking a wall of the great room with no windows, questioned the amount of space in the immediate lobby... there were a lot of questions from the COA Board. John M suggested answering their questions, but Rita feels that these questions should all be answered at the Public Forum instead of going to different committees and boards numerous times.

There should be an FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) sheet as recommended by Chris Wante to have things documented before the meeting, so people won't continue to ask the same questions.

Rita will make a list of the questions that came from the COA Board and will circulate to the Building Committee.

Request that the BOS set up a meeting with all groups, a forum, including the COA. One in March and one in April. Invite the townspeople and the Boards so there is input from all. I.e. conservation, planning board, and townspeople, etc.

Comments made about posting FAQ and any other pertinent information on the town website.

Fundraising: Don mentioned exploring any state grants that might be available. He will talk to Bob Markel and the state rep and senator to be on the lookout for grants.

Carol asked about fundraising now as compared to fundraising when the senior center was originally built. For example, when Carol was assisting with fundraising for the original senior center building, she had a "book" of senior friendly organizations that might be willing to contribute. Carol asked where is the book now?

Gary mentioned a training he was at concerning municipal vulnerability and potential grant funds that could be available. Perhaps the speaker could be invited to the forum. Gary could not think of her name at the time of this meeting. Gary stated that the speaker talked about several different areas of the government that have monies available.

John F. explained that Bob Markel's last week is this week. There is a presentation for Bob on March 4th at the senator and state rep will be at the meeting. Perhaps the Building Committee can be on the agenda to lobby support from the Legislature.

Becky mentioned that State Rep and Senators aides will be at the senior center this Wednesday 2/28/24.

Don asked Bobbi about fundraising through the Friends of Hampden Seniors. Bobbi talked about fundraisers that have been done and what is happening moving forward. Talked about upcoming pie sale.

Rita mentioned the amount of money that is in the Friends general fund but does not have a specific number.

Don mentioned the Wilbraham Senior Center Fundraising Committee and flyers they distributed asking for donations.

Carol mentioned that she spoke with Wendy who said there are fundraising people waiting in the wings to help.

Design Review:

Mike Doran: comment about no windows in the great room as mentioned previously by Rita. Mike referenced a vaulted ceiling and said there are opportunities for light.

John Matthews: Comment about multipurpose room 1&2. John M. would like the name of Multipurpose 2 to go back to conference room/multipurpose room for clarification.

Rita is still questioning adding 2 multipurpose rooms. The craft room up until now has been utilized as a conference room and a craft room. Rita does not think multipurpose room 2 is needed. She thinks that one room from the design could be eliminated.

Carol asked how much money could be saved by cutting out one of the rooms. Roughly 1,000 square feet in multipurpose 2. Discussion of what the rough savings cost could be.

John M mentioned that in the past there was a comment that the need for a quieter space was requested. Perhaps the multipurpose 1 & 2 could provide that kind of quiet. The additional space offers flexibility and the opportunity to bring in more programs.

Carol talked about “selling” people on a 20–50-year plan and what is important down the road, not necessarily what is happening right now today. Carol states it is a good investment for the town.

Becky explained some of the things that could take place in multipurpose 2. All the programs that are currently taking place in the library i.e. Bridge, bunco, canasta, mah jong, movies, etc.

Bobbi is still questioning the personal service 1 & 2 spaces. Bobbi is asking why there are 2 of them.

Discussion of the use of personal services and what those rooms can be used for. Eliminating one personal service room would not save a lot of money and the architectural footprint could be impacted.

John F. is concerned that there is a relook at the floor plan. The highest priority should be looking to see if a date for the first public forum can be set for early March. There shouldn't be any doubt when going forward into public forums when it comes to what the design looks like.

Don met with the Town Clerk to get a population analysis. Town population is back down to 4,900.

Looking for trends in each category. Trends in the school are down. Population of older adults is growing. Don is waiting to get numbers from the town clerk.

Mike F. is wondering about the restroom in the lobby and thinks that could be made into a storage closet with access from the great room. This was discussed at the last meeting and was a huge consideration.

Rita would like the boutique to be named the “gift shop” on the plan.

John M. doesn't feel that the committee needs to go over the floor plan at every meeting. This group needs to agree as we move into the Town Meeting. John M would like to come up with a date to move forward with for a public forum and put out a notification to the town and all departments and a robocall. John M recommends mid-March and mid-April dates.

Public forum meeting needs to be a stand-alone meeting. BOS would (hopefully) notify all town boards and townspeople. Thursday evening meeting on March 14th. Becky would like to see the meeting held at the senior center so people can see the current building. Gary asked if the senior center is big enough. Discussion. Thursday, March 21st as an alternative date. Start time of 6:30 or 7:00 PM. Don will be away March 1-15th. Becky will ask Chris for his availability.

Updates on EV Charging stations:

Four stakes are marking where the transformer pad will go for the charging stations. There is no additional cost to the grant for the change of location of the pad. Gary would like to see an enterprise fund set up for the dollars that are earned from the EV stations and designate those funds to the senior center. Becky stated that Bob had mentioned this idea to her as well.

Rita would like to discuss the hours of the building. Becky mentioned that the COA Board is going to pilot opening the building at 8:30 and closing at 3:30 starting in April. There will be tracking of how many people come in and what they are coming in for. Rita doesn't feel that this is adequate because it does not deal with scheduling and opening earlier, and scheduling must work together to make it beneficial. Rita does not feel that it will show anything because nothing is scheduled during the earlier and later hours. Rita has a hard time adding onto the senior center when it is being used at 75% capacity. She understands that scheduling is not easy, but it can be done.

Becky explained that some of the instructors have been asked about scheduling and there will be some things scheduled in the morning hours to see what brings people in. For example, a change in start time for the YMCA weights class could bring people in before 9:00.

Rita asked if the budget reflects the change. Becky stated that there was an increase in the building maintenance and utility line items (up 5%) but there doesn't need to be a change to staffing as three staff members are full time and can accommodate the additional building hours.

John M. understands what the Rita is saying about the scheduling of the building. John M. thinks how the building is scheduled should not impact the design of the floor plan. Rita feels that this meeting is the place where issues like this should be raised and discussed.

Gary appreciates Rita's bringing up the hours of the senior center. Gary knows that people will ask the question about the hours of the senior center. Moving the question forward allows us to tell people that the hours and the schedule is being looked at with a pilot program. Moving the question forward allows us the ability to say it's been looked at and we can focus on the future needs.

Next meeting dates March 11th and March 25th both at 11:00AM. Becky will confirm the use of the meeting room with the Police Department.

March 4th meeting with the Board of Selectmen to discuss the public forum and asking the BOS to notify all town departments and request a robo call from the Town Administrator.

Rita motion to adjourn. Bobbi seconded. All in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 12:22 PM.

Next meeting:

Meeting 3/11/2024 at 11:00 AM at the Hampden Police Department

Respectfully Submitted for the Secretary: Rebecca C. Moriarty, Executive Director (Ex-Officio)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/OCpR4PxaopZuweNoBxwJN1RRJC0jVicQrVejDEyjsBIWclgu72Z7BhkHnGdr5w2c.JlOrWs-lyKdf4lc> Passcode: =YGt8EK9