

Senior Center Building Committee Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2023

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

Duane called the meeting to order at 11:13AM

Duane distributed the Town of Hampden Boards, Committees and Commissions Handbook dated 12/27/2021. Refer to Pages 7-8 for duties of elected officers and Robert's Rules of Order.

Chairman Duane Mosier requested that John Flynn, BOS Chair & Building Committee Liaison, step away from the table and attend the meeting as a member of the public. Duane went on to say that technically John Flynn is not a member of the committee and serves as appointing authority to the members of the group. Duane feels that the last meeting was taken over by the BOS liaison. Discussion followed.

- Gary Weiner feels that John Flynn's input was to provide information and did not see it as taking over the meeting.

- Duane pointed out that the BOS chair and COA Director's role on this committee are the same. To address questions from the committee.

- Cliff Bombard stated that he does not remember the last meeting happening the way it is being described but feels that John Flynn's input is important.

- Rita Vail feels that the BOS Liaison provides too much information at the meeting including information that is not relevant and unnecessary side bar conversations are taking place during the meeting. Rita feels he should only be asked to speak when there is a pertinent question. The Liaison should take information back to the Board of Selectmen. Rita feels that at the last meeting John Flynn directed the COA Director to forward information that was not the direction of the committee.

- John Flynn thanked the committee members for serving and explained how he sees his comments as being input to the board and feels that his comments are helpful. John would like to stay as a participant as liaison as appointed by the BOS.

- Bobbi Grant shared that she agrees with both Gary and Rita and feels the comments regarding procedures as provided by John Flynn were helpful, but that he does tend to go on and on. Thinks he should be allowed to participate and share information.

- John Matthews shared comments. Stated he was not at the previous meeting but thinks everyone is passionate about the town and the senior center project. We all need to respect each other.

- Committee Discussion regarding being recognized by the Chair prior to allowing people to speak.

- Carol Keeney understands the procedure but relies on the input from the BOS Liaison.

- Mike Fedora stated that procedural issues need to be addressed and once determined, that is should be followed. Mike respects the opinions of everyone at the table.

- Don Collins doesn't feel that sitting at the table makes a difference, but the BOS Liaison should be tasked with dealing only with the issues as they relate back to the BOS.

- Cliff Bombard doesn't agree that the Liaison should be treated like a member of the public but does think there should be a modification how the meetings are run with courtesy and kindness. Cliff does feel that the BOS Liaison should stay at the table.

- Duane is not happy with the group consensus and is totally opposed to what the majority of the group is saying. Duane is considering stepping down from his role as the Chair.

- John Flynn offered his sincerest apologies to the Chairman if his comments and participation at the last meeting were upsetting to the Chair.
- Carol asked Duane if he still wishes to be the chair. Carol is concerned about how the Chair is feeling going forward. Duane explained that his feelings are not related to the project, but rather how the meeting proceeded. The group should be transparent, and everyone should be entitled to their opinions and have the ability to express them. Duane pointed out that the ZOOM meeting link and password from the last meeting is included on the memo that the Chair distributed at the beginning of the meeting. Wants these meetings to run using Robert's Rules of Order.
- Duane is opposed to the wording of the question from the motion that was read from the previous meeting minutes. Taken from 3/13/23 minutes: Motion made by Don Collins "after a review of feasibility study and review of future needs of the senior center that we proceed into the second phase of the Scope of Services for a more detailed analysis of the wants and needs of the senior center". Duane feels the only discussion has been expansion, expansion, expansion, and he is against that mentality.
- John Matthews addressed that during a meeting there are often other "meetings" going on in the room. The Chair needs to be able to stop sidebar conversations from happening.
- BOS Liaison addressed the Chair and feels that they should have had a conversation outside of this meeting.
- Chairman went to the Town Administrator for fair and unbiased counsel and Duane stated he will no longer serve as chair if the group does not agree with how he is requesting to run the meetings and move forward.
- Cliff would like to move the meeting forward but doesn't feel the BOS Liaison should be treated as a guest. Cliff feels decorum and process need to be in clear focus moving forward.
- Gary Weiner offered his comments. Respects the Chair and feels that the BOS Liaison is not a member of the public. Gary expressed that he does not want the Chair to resign.
- Don Collins feels the result of having this discussion should clear things up moving forward as far as not speaking in the meeting until recognized by the chair and operate more formally.
- Bobbi Grant offered comments that she agrees with Don and Gary and feels that the members have been taking advantage of the relaxed atmosphere of the group and be more cognizant of the rules.
- John Matthews does not want the chair to resign but wants the group to better understand the feelings of the Chair. John Matthews suggests the meeting move forward.
- Rita Vail would like to see John as a true liaison when the committee asks for input from the liaison. Not to enter discussion of the committee.
- Chair would like to see a compromise that BOS Liaison and COA liaison (ex-officio members) would be seated together at meetings. BOS Liaison was asked to only take information back to the BOS after it has been discussed, approved, and outlined by the committee.

Duane distributed a letter from the Senior Center Building Committee Chair to the Hampden Board of Selectmen as a follow up from the last meeting.

Minutes from 3/13/23. Gary Weiner motion to approve. Bobbi Grant second. One spelling error corrected. Eight in favor. One Abstention. Chair asked that the ZOOM recording link for all meetings be included on all minutes going forward.

Discussion about the motion made by Cliff at the end of the minutes from the last meeting. The Chair does not feel that the motion follows the MGL for procurement and no activity can be taken on that motion. MGL requires that there needs to be advertising and procurement. The committee does not have the authority to award and there is no money right now that can be expended by the committee.

Gary Weiner commented thinking the last meeting discussion was for a public participation. The thought was to put together a format for public participation. Edm was discussed because they had done the previous study and there was a question as to whether or not they would be willing to put a public participation program forward. Gary was not saying the committee would be awarding anything, but rather going through the BOS Liaison to ask for money to put together something for public participation.

The Chair explained that the discussion was good up until an architect was mentioned by name. It does not follow proper protocol and was reviewed with the Town Administrator.

John Matthews commented on procurement thresholds.

Question to BOS Liaison: does the BOS want this committee to move forward and is there any money set aside for a public participation discussion about this project. BOS Liaison explained that up to \$10,000 from BOS expenses be used and the BOS was in favor (\$5,000 had been flagged for wetland flagging that was never used.). The BOS approved the Senior Center Building Committee moving forward. Discussion about 30B.

Review the needs of the building and prioritize the list. The Chair would like input from all committee members.

Don Collins: referenced minutes from 1/23 as well as the edm report page 4 and the goals and objectives provided by edm in the feasibility study. Don feels these lists must be combined in order to move forward with expansion/renovation.

Rita Vail: feels the COA Board and the town have missed a great need getting the building back to an 8-hour day rather than a 6-hour day. Scheduling could be far greater. Go through the COA to the Advisory Board asking for 10 additional hours of clerical time per week. The town and the COA have been remiss at not putting the hours back to 8 hours per day. It would take very little money and can be accomplished by July 1st. Cabinets in the craft room, at the end of the main hall, and other areas. These things can be accomplished without a huge effort. All items stored in the hallway and in the Outreach Office could be taken care of with adding cabinets. The bathrooms haven't been addressed; the toilets need to be higher. Rusty spots need to be replaced or re-painted.

Carol Keeney: agrees with Rita's list of items. Carol brought the same ideas forward to the COA Director. Carol would like to have a more specific list of items that are needed.

Rita Vail: perhaps some of these small items could be done and then we can see what the impact the Wilbraham Senior Center will do to participation here in Hampden. There is a need for a couple of additional rooms for certain activities for privacy, etc. Can look at small items and make progress on that before we take a million-dollar project to the town.

Rita Vail: an 8-hour day frees up more space as well as activities. Two four-hour classes can be scheduled in the same space.

Carol Keeney: in the exercise room is the giving tree and the bottom half is blocked because there is a chair rack there. All exercise classes require chairs. Carol feels that a fitness room should be created.

Gary Weiner: agrees that in normal times, adding hours, frees up space. If the 8 hours would be productive, then yes, they should be utilized. Question of the Director: If there are longer hours, will people come?

Rita Vail: Participates in the AARP tax program and sees people at other centers arriving early in the morning. All senior centers that she is aware of are starting at 8:00AM. "If you have it, they will come."

Bobbi Grant: Likes the idea of more hours at the senior center. Consider leaving the 9:00AM open time and opening later in the day.

Rita Vail: Moves that through the COA Board go to the Advisory board to request more funds for an 8-hour day.

John Matthews: Many of these items could be addressed immediately i.e., cabinets, files, bathrooms, but did not wish to add that to the motion.

Cliff Bombard: Comments that the school assessment came in and there is a difficult year ahead financially within the town. Not seeing Free Cash levels like they have been before.

Don Collins: Would like to hear from the COA Director.

COA Director addressed the daily schedule and how a pilot program could be explored to work at opening at 8:00 in the morning by moving staff around rather than requesting money in a difficult financial time, but explained that later in the day is not as popular a time for people to come in.

Don Collins made an amendment to increase the hours to 7 hours per day. Gary seconded the amendment. All in favor.

Mike Fedora: Stresses that there should always be at least 2 staff people in the building.

Cliff Bombard will bring the idea of additional funds for more hours to the Advisory committee tonight at their meeting in a very informal way.

Point of Order: As appointing authority, John Flynn, spoke to the charge/mission statement for the Senior Center Building Committee. The charge from the BOS to the committee was read aloud. Questioning if the discussion for additional hours is out of the scope of the charge of this meeting. Should this be presented to the Advisory Committee without a vote of the COA Board first?

Don Collins: Sees exploring this to maximize the use of the building by expanding the hours prior to moving forward with any construction.

Rita Vail: Would like Cliff to bring the idea to the Advisory Committee this evening at 6:00 PM and Rita will attend the meeting.

Cliff Bombard: Items like the bathrooms, etc. could be addressed at a special town meeting in the fall. This project should continue to be a renovation/expansion project. Cliff still does not think the building has enough room.

Mike Fedora: Define the needs and yes, the building needs to be upgraded. Needs to be prioritized before moving forward with any expansion.

Carol Keeney: There are rooms on the plan that she sees as a need. Carol has talked to people who use the building currently and many have expressed their needs and wants. Carol passed her statements along to the COA Director.

Rita Vail: Needs assessment survey can be completed in the meantime. Get input from the participants. Accomplish some of the smaller items and then bring in someone complete drawings for additional space.

John Matthews: Nail down the wants and needs. Focus on the needs and for the next meeting put the list together. Poll the senior center staff again for clarification of needs.

Bobbi Grant: Computers and tables in the craft room, how often are those being utilized? Can storage cabinets be put in the craft room as a place to start? Storage is such a big need on the list.

Gary Weiner: Needs: immediate needs storage and bathrooms. When looking at future operations additional programs can be offered with additional space. Focus on the immediate needs and the future potential programs that may drive some square footage additions in the future. Let's not lose sight of the program needs that might require additional square footage.

Don Collins: Make a master list of needs and then use that as a check list when items are completed. Then look at what is left on the list for discussion about future space needs.

Cliff Bombard: Great to think about the immediate renovation needs. Expansion needs are in the health area and what we may be asked to provide in the future as the population ages. Not currently seen in this building.

Public Comment:

John Flynn: Warrant article: use as a public forum for discussion of any article that may come to the fall town meeting. Who would speak to the article at the advisory hearing on April 10th?

Committee needs to see the draft of the article before approving. Motion will be forwarded to the COA Director, and she will forward to the rest of the committee.

Other Business: Public Participation on the agenda for the next meeting and discussion of surveys and how that will be accomplished.

Request for Building needs on the next agenda and a rough draft of needs assessment survey.

Comment: Make information more accessible to more people. Many people complained they did not receive a public announcement about other town meetings. i.e., robocalls.

Discussion about the PVPC survey that is now available at the senior center and online.

Next Meeting April 10th.

Next Meetings:

April 10th (Advisory Hearing)

April 24th

May 8th (Town Meeting)

May 22nd

Motion adjourned at 1:00PM Motion made by John Matthews and seconded by Rita Vail. All in favor.
Respectfully Submitted for the Secretary: Rebecca C. Moriarty, Executive Director (Ex-Officio)

ZOOM Meeting Recording:

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/K00xFI-JU7OfvO-3akTxZ9T7ztAezzmm4zGRh7ENSVZVH2nIvyrFojENRzZv3k1.IIWtelVkfT_RPWZg

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