

Senior Center Building Committee Meeting Minutes
June 12, 2023

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

The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:02AM.

Minutes from 5/22/23. Don Collins motion to approve. Bobbi Grant seconded. All in favor.

Duane read the charge of the Building Committee from the Board of Selectmen and distributed a copy for those that did not have one.

Duane referred to a comment made by John Matthews at a previous meeting regarding the town population. John Matthews read his statement from the previous meeting. "John Matthews: "do we agree with the priorities as presented. Is the 40 hour per week schedule a moot point because it is a decision of the COA Board? Looking at the town statistics, 86% of the population is the target group for the study."

Duane is trying to understand the population that will be here for the next 25-50 years and pulled together a document based on the 2020 census and presented a handout to the committee. What can we expect for growth or if there will be a maintenance of the same number of individuals eligible for the senior center. Discussion of the census data as written on the handout and noted that the town population has been diminishing since 2000. Duane, when discussing the older adult population, is using age 65 and older. Duane commented that 36% of the town population is utilizing the senior center. Duane stated that the senior center is providing a lot of services to out-of-town residents and thinks the charge should be to provide to Hampden residents. We need to know what the population is and what to expect for growth and decline. Duane thinks the older adult population will diminish and referenced the births and deaths within the town.

Bobbi referenced several deaths within her church parish over the last 5 years (Federated Church).

Duane's purpose in providing these numbers is to continue to focus on the 25-50 year target.

Duane brought this information forward to address something that was seen in the previous minutes.

Priority list analysis

Gary provided the chair with an updated priority list including all committee members as it was not complete at the last meeting. Handout distributed.

Bobbi asked about the staff priorities and Gary provided a handout with staff results.

Don commented on the staff sheet where program areas are number one, then offices, storage, washer/dryer, computer and finally 40-hour work week. The staff results are not terribly different to those of this committee.

Gary wonders if the washer dryer could be done with the bathroom renovation.

Becky stated that when the washer/dryer was addressed early it was a \$7,000-\$10,000 quote. Other discussion about placement of the washer/dryer perhaps in the custodial closet, but that would result in the loss of storage space for the custodian.

Duane asked about the bathroom renovation (including privacy panels) and stated that it should be kept on the active renovation list for this committee. Bobbi mentioned auto flush for the toilets.

Carol asked if we are drawing a line between renovation and expansion and if this committee oversees fixing the toilets. Duane stated that both areas need to be addressed renovation and expansion.

John Matthews talked about renovations and that someone coming in to work on building design (a consultant) would target certain things like auto flush toilets, different lighting, etc., due to codes that could be involved, energy codes, ADA compliance.

Duane wants to continue to identify what the committee addresses as needs and not hire a consultant every time something is broken. Duane does not want to pay someone to come in to tell us what is wrong.

Duane handed out a document with regards to what edm presented when they met with us and what the costs were (\$4-\$7 million dollars). Duane knows that we have local people who can come in and identify needs and discuss what the current building issues are.

Duane wants to slow down the project to wait and, when it comes to the addition, wait and see what will happen when a neighboring building opens 4 miles down the road (in reference to the Wilbraham Senior Center).

John Matthews asked Duane about his wanting to slow the project down and talked about wanting to go to the fall town meeting with a number and move forward with the project. John disagrees that the project should be slowed down. Duane wants to spend the money wisely.

Duane referenced an article in the Hampden Times about projects that are currently on the table within the town (fire station, town house, water district) referencing the town struggle. Duane quoted the article and Selectman Flynn.

Gary commented that this is the senior center committee, and the town has several issues that are recognized. The town has several individuals in the town with talents that could be utilized (electricians, plumbers, HVAC, etc.) Gary commented that having someone who can oversee an entire project (consultant) is beneficial. Edm (Gary's opinion) did a decent job at reviewing renovation and expansion needs. Gary feels that we need a group or a person, not this group, that has expertise and under a scope of services can address all the issues (bathrooms, washer dryers, etc). The scope of services that was talked about at the last meeting would be a 2-phase process. One person, consultant, helps the group come to a decision.

Duane asked Gary if he is looking to bring in someone like the person who worked with the fire department project to provide alternatives? Gary said yes, a group that would review and offer alternatives. Gary discussed the population trends and stated that we do not know what the population will look like as we get 5-10-20 years down the road. No one knows what the next generation of people will be looking for. Gary does not think the project should slow down based on other town projects/issues.

Duane thinks that the opening of the Wilbraham Senior Center will significantly impact the usage of the Hampden Senior Center. Duane thinks Hampden will be a much different senior center a year from now.

John Matthews asked Becky if there was a change in population of Hampden Senior Center when Longmeadow and Ludlow opened. Becky responded that Hampden did not see a change. John thinks the committee needs to move forward using the priority list that has been set forth. John thinks it is wrong to slow the process down.

Don thinks that the work that has been done over the last 5 months needs to be handed over to an architect/consultant and tell them that we are not looking for a \$7 million project. Don thinks the committee should move forward.

Gary: the building committee has the final decision. Gary again made the point that we do not know how the population will age. Gary is compiling a list of architects who participated in the Wilbraham Scope of Services. He is working to get Longmeadow and Ludlow architects as well. Gary will also have a Scope of Services for the committee to review. Gary does not think that experts in the community should be asked to piece meal this project.

Don thinks we should proceed and conclude. Don stated that the committee agreed that the decision will be made by the town.

Duane stated that this is the first time he has heard sensible language coming from some committee members. His opinion is that there has been no sense of restraint and he wants to see the group have control. Duane felt like the group wanted to go out and spend a lot of money with no restraint. Duane referenced the closing of the senior center in 2005 due to a failed override. Duane is seeing reduced financial availability and he does not want to see the senior center close again because a mistake was made.

Bobbi questioned if and when we get someone to come in as a consultant, can they be encouraged to use local contractors? Duane responded that the contractors go out to bid for workers and the committee has no control over that. Gary responded that going out to bid is down the road in what would be phase 2 of the scope of services. Gary explained some of the bid processes to educate the committee and what can and cannot be written into the scope of services.

Gary readdressed the timeline that was discussed at the last meeting regarding trying to get a Scope of Services out in July to give the committee time to review bids and prepare for the fall town meeting.

Don provided a handout regarding the priority needs ranking of each category. Don reviewed his handout and asked Becky some scheduling questions regarding some of the program areas (i.e. personal grooming space). Don explained his rationale for which offices can be shared. Perhaps the current large office can be divided into two offices if a conference room is available in another part of the building. Further discussion about other areas and what space is needed.

Rita provided a handout with her priority list. Explained her breakdown. Storage for the food pantry and furniture are on the priority list as well as the bathrooms. Restore the health room and consolidate the non-full time activities.

Duane asked questions about both handouts and what the additional space includes. Rita explained that on her list an additional office would be added and a possible larger room for a conference room up to 16 people. On Don's list he added 2 offices, but one would come from dividing the current large office, so the addition is only 1 office.

Bobbi asked about storage and square footage. Bobbi measured the great room closet is 16'x20'. 320 square feet. Bobbi thinks that room should be limited to items needed to put on a meal. There are items in the great room closet that are not relevant to food prep/kitchen. Can gaming items be put into a separate space?

Don commented on the issues with existing storage issues and looking at what needs to be added and discussed cabinetry. There needs to be a breakdown, current square footage available for storage and what is needed moving forward.

Becky asked about a potential area for a gift shop. The Ludlow Senior Center raised \$10,600 last year by having a gift shop space in the center. Having a gift shop in the Hampden Senior Center could be a significant revenue generator to off set costs of programs and services.

Becky also addressed that the 40-hour work week getting the lowest ranking from the staff was not because they do not wish to work more hours. The staff will work additional hours if it is beneficial to do so.

Gary does not want to work on the scope of services if the committee feels it should be slowed down. Gary needs direction as to whether to proceed.

Rita: stated that at the start of this committee, it was discussed that it would be a 2 year project and we are not in that place yet. would like things to slow down to wait and see what the impact of Wilbraham will be on this committee. Rita does not want to take major expenses to the fall town meeting. Her personal preference is to bring larger ticket items to the spring town meeting. Rita understands that we need outside help and that we are the senior center committee.

Other Business:

Gary would like a consensus as to what the committee is looking to do. He does not want to waste time on a Scope of Services if the committee wants to wait or move forward.

Rita commented that in the beginning of the process everyone stated that this would be a long process. Rita does feel that she would like to see things slow down because she does think there will be an impact of the new Wilbraham Senior Center. Rita, personally, does not like to see large expenses requested at the fall town meeting, but rather take it to the Annual Town Meeting in the Spring. Rita agrees that this committee does need outside help.

Gary asked if the group could provide a consensus as to whether to move forward with the scope of services.

Duane says that by rushing the process we will not gain anything. Issues need to be identified. Duane wants to see more development of the needs; he does not think the list is at all comprehensive. It does not look at renovation ideas. Thinks the scope of services would come up after the fall town meeting. There should not be a rush to get it to the fall town meeting.

Gary stated that the impact of the Wilbraham Senior Center is more like 2-3 years out, not just one year. Gary does not want to write the scope of services if it is not the intention of the committee to move forward.

Don asked if this discussion can be brought up at the next meeting because some members are not in attendance.

Duane and Rita will not be at the next two, possibly three meetings and is concerned about other committee members also being away causing difficulty in getting the entire group together. Duane proposed potentially not having 2 meetings per month over the summer.

Bobbi talked about her process for getting a contractor at her house and thinks that Gary's scope is not a waste of time to go out and get a ballpark figure for the work.

Gary is asking whether to pursue a Scope of Services now that would ask architects or engineers to provide the committee with their list of qualifications. Hopefully more than three will respond. They will not be able to talk about finances until after the first phase, which is listening to the committee as to what the issues are. Gary's scope would be detailing what we are looking for as far as qualifications.

Duane is looking at the agreement that was made with edm and asked Gary how different his first phase would be. Gary stated that the first phase would be like what went out previously. The Scope of Services would keep momentum having a Phase 2. Discussion about the second phase and how things tie together. Duane commented that the edm study was done when the building was closed during COVID.

Gary stated the study does not give a futuristic look at the committee, no review of demographics, which has to come into play. Gary still wonders about program areas and what groups will be looking for in the future.

Duane commented on the potential for TWB to be turned over to the town. Also, shopping malls are closing. Stores are diminishing. The senior center that we see today doesn't mean that in 5-10 years all features have to be under one roof. Some services might have to be done in another building. Perhaps there will be more of a town center as opposed to a senior center. Duane is expecting to see a lot of change.

Don thinks the committee should go to a once-a-month meeting for the summer and possibly delay the scope of services and not take the request to the fall town meeting, but rather the spring meeting.

Duane thinks the committee should skip July meetings and early August meeting. Duane does not want to rush out and sign contracts and then in 6-8 months the issues are no longer there, and he doesn't want to build a building that sits partially empty.

Gary is concerned about losing momentum if we take several weeks off from meetings. Gary does feel that we need a group to come in and tell us what we need or make recommendations and that this group will not get too far on our own without bringing someone in. Gary does not want to slow the process down and thinks a request at the fall town meeting should happen to get things started.

Rita asked if the request at the fall town meeting be less than \$100,000-\$200,000? Gary responded that yes, it would be, and it would be phase 1 only.

Gary discussed the process that was discussed at the last meeting. In early July the Scope of Services would go out "on the street". People need at least 30-45 days to respond. Responses come back with a number. The committee would then meet and review what came back and then decide to go to the town meeting with a number.

Rita asked Duane if he objects to Phase 1. Duane responded that he is taking a neutral position. He already stated that he would like the project to slow down.

Duane took a phase 1 poll around the room. All in the room are in favor of moving forward with phase 1.

Rita asked about the timing of getting the Phase 1 paperwork ready. Gary responded that in the worst case scenario we miss the town meeting because there were no responses to the Scope. Gary would like to be able to send out the draft form of the Scope of Services by early July to be ready for the last meeting in July where the committee will review and vote on the document.

Don will be acting chair in Duane's absence.

Becky will email the group and ask about vacation scheduling.

Discussion about next meetings. The committee would like to keep the June 26th meeting as scheduled to discuss the blue survey results and other topics.

Meeting adjourned at 12:36 PM Rita motion to approve. Bobbi seconded. All in favor.

Next Meeting Next

Meetings:

June 26 (Duane and Rita away)

July 10 (Gary, Duane and Rita away)

July 24

August 14 (Gary and Becky Away)

August 28

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

ZOOM Recording: https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/grpsRlvNKSYHu7FYIO7QmAgJWM7nP7-gvmgag_g8Klu_uyOttlR9lCUBJG5Hx9J.lBhWvpvWV8KJin-o Passcode:
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