

Senior Center Building Committee Meeting Minutes
May 22, 2023

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

Don Collins, vice-chair, called the meeting to order at 11:03AM.

Minutes from 5/8/23. Cliff Bombard motion to approve. John Matthews seconded. All in favor.

Building Needs Priority Survey Results

- Gary distributed the results of the committee survey regarding building priority needs. Gary explained the results as printed and distributed. Gary provided a file copy of all survey results to the chair via Don. Gary explained that he did not receive the second sheet of this survey by all members. Gary requested that everyone send their sheets to be tallied. Looking at the totals, storage was the top need identified by the group followed by program space, office space, 40-hour center opening, washer/dryer and computers.
- John Matthews asked how the committee is going to get the townwide survey results to coincide with the priority list.
- Becky distributed the results from the first 100 surveys that were returned.
- Becky read aloud the totals row from the staff priority needs list page 1. Six staff members completed the priority needs chart.
- Carol asked Rita why she did not complete the full chart. Rita explained that she feels the computer space does not need to be addressed because the bank of computers is not necessary in its own space. As far as the program areas are concerned, Rita explained that she is pushing for the 40 hour per week scheduling because with a 40 hour per week schedule she feels that the senior center has all the room necessary for program needs. Rita used a school scheduling example where classes are put in at a definitive time and if it doesn't work for the student, they must wait for the following year to take the class. Creative scheduling fits every single program that the senior center has. Rita feels the 40 hour per week schedule absolutely satisfies all of the program needs.
- Carol surveyed random 20 people who were in the senior center about extended hours. People shared that they need to get home for dinner, they don't want to be here in the early morning hours. Carol doesn't agree with the school analogy because they are mandated. Isn't the COA Board in charge of extending the hours?
- Becky provided input as to the program needs of the senior center around extended hours. Programs are still cancelled when there is a large event happening in the great room. Exercise classes and pitch are cancelled when there is a large event. If there was additional program space, those activities could be relocated instead of cancelled. Becky explained that instructors teach at different facilities so scheduling classes can be difficult based on the instructor's already set schedule. Becky explained that new programs could be brought in, but changing the current schedule could be difficult. In addition, there are still personal needs programs happening in the custodial closet. Those are things that would not be solved with additional hours.
- John Flynn said the customers' needs and desires should be surveyed and presented to them.
- Don Collins feels it isn't an either/or. Properly utilizing the current building could cut down on an addition. Concerning program space Don said the group is charged to look at the next 25 years and look at what program needs would be in the future.

- Carol commented on the future needs and programs of the building and comments on the townwide survey. There was a comment on the survey “be careful not to over expand and have an underutilized facility”. Carol asked what the police department building is used for now that dispatch is gone.
- John Flynn addressed what they are doing at the police station with the building and noted that there are still staff using the building.
- Becky pointed out that on page 2 of the priority needs list that many of the items on the list could be accomplished in one multi-purpose room. And Tax Prep is a program and should be moved into that category.
- Bobbi addressed a need for a “quiet” space for certain programs. For example, a tai chi class happening while lunch is being prepared can be quite loud for the class.
- Rita talked about personal needs (RN, massage, foot care, etc). The outreach office was built as the health room when the building was built. That office has a water supply already in it. Perhaps that room could be repurposed and then an office built for the outreach coordinator.
- Don talked about moving forward and how we combine programs and spaces to best meet the needs.
- Carol clarified the ranking in each group on page 2 of the committee priority list.
- Gary talked about page 2 being farther down the road. Clearly in terms of the numbers, the committee feels that storage is a primary need. The needs list defined that to move forward we will have two choices: an addition or a renovation. We either believe that the senior center needs more space, or we believe the senior center can meet the needs of the seniors for the next 20 years as it is. Gary’s opinion is that the needs list points to an addition. The next step moving forward if the committee feels an addition is needed, a professional need to come in and work with the committee about renovation/addition and define the areas. If the committee doesn’t conclude as a group, there will be time wasted and the group will not be ready to go before the town meeting in the fall. To move forward and bring in a professional we need to get out into the community with a Scope of Services. Gary does not feel the townwide survey results will change what the committee is seeing on the priority needs list. Reviewed potential timeline of events.
- John Flynn thanked Don for his presentation at the town meeting. The town is already planning for the Fall Town Meeting. The Selectmen need a timetable from the committee with regards to an article at the fall town meeting. Hopefully from free cash. Charge of the committee is to look at future expansion and the committee should not get caught up in issues that are not relevant to renovation/expansion.
- Don feels that great progress has been made now that we have the priority needs chart and now look at what programs can be combined into what rooms and what storage areas we truly need, etc.
- Carol asked who will combine the offices and program spaces on the page 2 chart. Perhaps this task is not necessary currently.
- Bobbi noted the survey was included in the June issue of the Scribe that will go out this week.
- Cliff: the senior center board had an accepting and cooperative meeting earlier in the month. No decision has been made as to extended hours.
- John Matthews – is there agreement within the committee regarding 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 (the 18 year and over age group). Doing a 25-50 year study, the 18+ age group is the target. Is there data that would show how that population will age and if they will trend toward a senior center.

- Don Collins asked about the current town older adult population numbers.
- Cliff thinks we should not get into an either/or discussion with regards to the 40 hour per week schedule. More space and more hours could go hand in hand.
- Gary asked if the COA Board discussed the 40 hour per work week. Cliff explained that the COA did discuss it at the last meeting, but a decision has not yet been made.
- Claudia asked about the hours of operation for other senior centers in the area. Becky provided a handout explaining the hours of operation of other local senior centers. Discussion about extending the hours at the senior center and what other centers offer.
- John Matthews is frustrated and feels that we are going around in circles and wants to move the committee ahead and not have further discussion about the extended hours discussion and focus on what the committee prioritized as the top needs.
- Gary stated the 40-hour week is not the decision of this group. Perhaps the committee should vote to recommend the 40-hour work schedule to the COA Board.
- Bobbi asked that there be wiggle room in the schedule. Extended hours instead of a set number of hours.
- Cliff discussed the COA board flexibility and will take his direction from the people that work here and use the building.
- Gary made a motion that the building committee pass on to the COA Board asking them to consider extended hours for the senior center for the future if necessary. Bobbi seconded. All in favor. Motion passes.
- John Flynn asked if there would be timelines created for moving forward. Discussion of target dates for the fall town meeting. The committee's work needs to be wrapped up in September, preferably by August. Review of future meeting dates.
- Carol – should there be a storage assessment done? Does the stage have a home? Everything in the outreach office?
- Don looking at subcategories on page 2 of the priority needs lists. Come up with square footage needs. What can be combined for program space and office space. To give something to an architect.
- Cliff said there needs to be a look at the renovations of the building at the same time. Don asked if there are things that are considered “normal” maintenance and could be done prior to any renovation/expansion?
- Bobbi asked for elevated toilets and auto flush again.
- Don asked to analyze the priority list at the next meeting.
- Gary asked that the committee should plan to talk about the defined needs within office and program space at the June 12th meeting. Townwide surveys are due back on June 15th. At the June 26th meeting the survey results will be finalized. By that date, the committee needs to be able to vote to move forward to an RFP. Gary started working on an RFP and can try to have it available for the June 26th meeting. The Committee and the BOS need to look at the RFP, is there anyone else that needs to look at the RFP? Phase 1: Review of what has been accomplished and what the committee feels the needs really are. Conceptual idea of what needs to be done. Phase 2: prior to phase 2 the committee would need to accept the recommendations of an architect and move forward into design. A dollar amount would come back from architect/engineer companies and that would go to the town meeting. At the July 10th meeting, if the committee agrees that the RFP is ready to go, that gives about 2 months for architects to respond. Drop dead date the 1st week of September. Have discussion about the proposals at the first September meeting (9/11/2023). It is an extensive amount of work.

- Gary is looking more toward the future when looking at program space and what more could be provided if additional space is made available. Also mentioned that the senior center is a warming/cooling center, and it has been utilized in the past.
- Next meeting: look at storage, offices and program and what consolidations can be made in those areas to determine square footage needs.

Meeting adjourned at 12:08PM Rita motion to approve. Gary seconded. All in favor.

Next Meeting

Next Meetings:

June 12th (Cliff away)

June 26th

July 10th

July 24th

August 14

August 28

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

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