

TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
EMERGENCY SERVICES FACILITY BUILDING COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023, AT 4:00PM
VIRTUAL HYBRID (ON-LINE) MEETING

MINUTES

1. Call To Order

- a. S. Dunnell called the meeting to order at 4:16PM
- b. **Committee attendance:** Chief Skip Dunnell, Stephen Seredynski, Bernie Porada, Chief Mark Fortier, Chief Jon Hall, Andrea Llamas, Heath Cummings.
- c. **Consultants:** Anthony DiLuzio, Colliers; Matthew Sturz, Colliers
- d. **Public Attendance:** Robin vs Maat, Sarah Kerns, Jean Hastings, Brian [surname not recorded], Joan Valva, Joanne McGee, Tanner Field.

2. Previous Meeting Minutes

- i. Previous Meeting Minutes were discussed – after discussion, the Committee determined that these would be voted on at the next Building Committee meeting.

3. Discussion of Upcoming Special Town Meeting on 6/28/2023 / Updates, Interspersed with Public Comment

- a. The Motion Warrant was presented and reviewed by A. Llamas, who indicated that the goal was to have it posted to the Town website for public review if acceptable to the Committee. The Articles were summarized as follows:
 - i. *Article 1:* Would move the remaining balance from Cell Towers fund (approximately \$312,000) and another \$450,000 from the Town's Capital Stabilization account, into the Emergency Services Building account to enable the project to continue to move forward.
 - 1. M. Fortier asked to clarify his understanding that the aforementioned amounts are not tied to anything specific, but spelled out what was intended to happen at the 4/19 Special Town Meeting as Article 2 (did not occur because it was contingent on Article 1, which did not pass). A. Llamas indicated that this understanding was accurate and that these funds could be used for any potential project-related purpose.
 - ii. *Article 2:* Requests that \$500,000 be added on to the FY '24 Tax Rate to continue the process.
 - 1. A. Llamas advised that the purpose of this would be to spread out the financial impact of a project, and perhaps avoid borrowing to fund a potential project altogether.
 - iii. *Article 3:* Purchase of 168 Main St. property (\$550,000 for the main building, plus \$125,000 for the smaller building, for a total of \$675,000)

1. A. Llamas advised that this would include both buildings/parcels, and because it is a purchase of real estate it would require a 2/3 majority vote.
 2. A. Llamas further clarified that this Vote would allow the Select Board to enter into negotiations, and did not mean that the property would be purchased immediately. A potential purchase would be subject to conditions in the Purchase and Sale agreement to ensure there is a viable project at that location before the Select Board makes a final purchase decision.
- b. Discussion ensued, including public comment clarifying the details and intent of the Articles. B. Porada advised that the Finance Committee would also be reviewing and making a recommendation regarding all three Articles.
 - c. The question was raised if Article 2 was contingent on Article 3. A. Llamas advised that it was not written as a contingent Article. A follow-up question was asked regarding where the \$675,000 to purchase the property would come from in the event that Article 2 did not pass. A. Llamas advised that the funding would come from the ~\$200,000 currently remaining in the Emergency Services Facility project account, and the funds that would be appropriated under Article 1.
 - d. A question from J. Hastings asked whether there had been any sort of down payment made on the 168 Main St. parcel to date. S. Dunnell and A. Llamas advised that no money had yet been exchanged.
 - e. A question from the Public asked for clarification on why Article 2 was placed before Article 3. A. Llamas advised that the thinking was to group the Articles related to funding for the project. It was also noted that it might be difficult to move forward with Article 3 without Articles 1 and 2, as there would be little money left over to continue the design and engineering efforts on the property without first appropriating additional funding. In the ensuing discussion, the order of Articles were discussed further.
 - f. Discussion ensued over whether citizens are able to modify Articles or Motions on the floor at a Special Town Meeting. A. Llamas advised that it was not possible to modify an Article to make it contingent on another as it would change the scope of the vote being taken, without the approval of the Town Meeting's Moderator. A. Llamas further advised that numbers may generally be revised downward, but not upward.
 - g. J. Hall opined that, from the Police perspective, the 168 Main St. property would work well for a Police Station. Needed upgrades might include new partitions, electrical, IT, new ceiling tiles, and painting. J. Hall acknowledged that the EMS needs at the property are more challenging to accommodate, but expressed confidence that a creative solution might be possible. He asked to clarify if there would be a mortgage on the property if purchased. A. Llamas advised that the Town would look to fund it over perhaps 3 years via short term borrowing.
 - h. In the ensuing discussion, J. Hall expressed a hesitation to introduce engineering and cost where a simple, inexpensive solution would suffice. Colliers advised that the Code Review is being completed and will identify anything that must be addressed with a "Change of Use" from a commercial/residential to a Public Safety use.

- i. M. Fortier advised that, if the Ambulance garaging can be accommodated, the 168 Main St. property seemed like it could work for an EMS facility, though he expressed concern about the location as the vast majority of calls would be initiated from the Station and there are concerns surrounding that level of ambulance response/traffic on Main St.
- j. J. McGee asked what type of Conditions the Select Board might apply to the Purchase and Sale Agreement if Article 3 were to be approved. A. Llamas advised that these might include the building being able to be brought to Code without undue expense, receipt of favorable Estimates for the actual project cost, receipt of any required Variances, and project funding approval at Town Meeting.
- k. The question was raised whether the EMS Enterprise Fund would fund all or some portion of the project. M. Fortier responded that it is unknown until the completion of a Study being completed by the Collins Center, which will determine whether EMS services continue to be in Northfield or move to a regional service. This will be also be influenced by whether the Town of Northfield elects to join such a service, and what the Northfield assessment for that might be to other member Towns. It is not known when the Study might be completed.
- l. T. Field asked how the other Towns that are currently served by the Northfield EMS service would feel about the EMS potentially moving North on Main Street, closer to the NH border. M. Fortier responded that these communities will continue to receive the services that Northfield EMS provides.
- m. Motion was made by M. Fortier, Seconded by B. Porada, that the Emergency Services Building Committee support Article 1 as presented at the Special Town Meeting on June 28, 2023.
 - i. Motion PASSES, unanimously by roll call Vote.
- n. Motion was made by M. Fortier, Seconded by B. Porada, that the Emergency Services Building Committee support Article 2 as presented at the Special Town Meeting on June 28, 2023.
 - i. Motion PASSES, unanimously by roll call Vote.
- o. Motion was made by M. Fortier, Seconded by B. Porada, that the Emergency Services Building Committee support Article 3 as presented at the Special Town Meeting on June 28, 2023.
 - i. Discussion: J. Hall clarified that the Committee is voting on whether to support presenting Article 3 at Special Town Meeting for voter approval. J. Hall and M. Fortier asked that the Select Board consider any further input from the Emergency Services Building Committee prior to establishing Conditions for the Purchase and Sale Agreement.
 - ii. Motion PASSES, unanimously by roll call Vote.
- p. A. Llamas shared a list of questions that had been received about the proposed purchase of/ project at 168 Main Street. All questions related to the 168 Main Street project had been previously answered in the course of Committee and Public questions and comments. A. Llamas further advised that the Fire Station portion of the project was being revisited by both the Committee and consultants to identify potential solutions for study.

- q. *Conservation Commission:* S. Dunnell advised that he had spoken with Conservation Commission Chair Bill Llewelyn, and the NOI for the previous proposed project at 121 Main Street is being deleted.
- r. S. Dunnell asked to confirm that others from the Committee would be present for the Special Town Meeting.

4. Permitting and Local Boards Status

- a. *MassDOT:* CBA advised that the MassDOT permitting had completed a 25% Review. PLACES received this review from MassDOT on 5/9/2023 and advised that there were no comments perceived to be difficult to address. CBA further advised that, in the event that work was stopped on this process, there would likely be some unbilled effort that may come back to the Town as a small credit in the event that work were to be stopped.
 - i. Motion made by B. Porada to formally hold in abeyance all work pertaining to the MassDOT Permitting process, Seconded by H. Cummings.
 - ii. Motion PASSES, unanimously by roll call vote.
- b. *Conservation Commission:* S. Dunnell advised that he had spoken with Conservation Commission Chair Bill Llewelyn, and the two of them agreed that, not knowing what will happen or change, the Conservation Commission process should be put on hold. Furthermore, B. Llewelyn advised that formally retaining the peer reviewer to continue the process might cost thousands of dollars.
 - i. Motion made by B. Porada to formally hold in abeyance all work pertaining to the Conservation Commission Permitting process, Seconded by S. Seredynski.
 - ii. Motion PASSES, unanimously by roll call vote.
- c. *Historical Commission:* It was discussed among the Committee that the Historical Commission would likely recommend an archaeological study anticipating that MassDOT would likely trigger one as a part of their process anyway.
 - i. B. Porada Motioned to hold this process in abeyance until further notice, Seconded by S. Seredynski.
 - ii. Motion PASSES unanimously by roll call vote.

5. Next Meeting / Adjournment

- a. The next Meeting will be scheduled at the appropriate time, TBD.
- b. Motion to adjourn made by H. Cummings and seconded by B. Porada, PASSED by unanimous roll call vote at 5:40pm.

AGENDA ITEMS LISTED ARE THOSE REASONABLY ANTICIPATED BY THE CHAIR TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING. NOT ALL ITEMS MAYBE DISCUSSED AND OTHER ITEMS NOT LISTED MAY BE BROUGHT UP FOR DISCUSSION TO THE EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW.