

**MINUTES – SPECIAL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING  
TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT  
TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2018**

**Meeting convened at 6:50 p.m. in the conference room of the Town Clerk's Office.**

**Committee members present:** Chair William Graves, Dylan Ford, Benjamin Heisholt, Dennis McLam, Norman Stevenson, David Warden, and Dana Young.

**Others present:** Wayne Berge, Shawn Hilliker, Frank Jannarone, Tom Lanza (Lyndon State College News 7), and Matt Seaver (Lyndon State College News 7).

The convening of this meeting, which was warned for 6:30 p.m., was delayed due to lack of a quorum of the Building Committee. At 6:50 p.m. a quorum of the Committee was present.

**1. Consideration of approval of prior meeting minutes**

Mr. McLam moved to approve as presented the minutes of the special meeting held February 20, 2018. Seconded by Mr. Stevenson and approved by voice vote.

**2. Report concerning US Post Office use of space at McIndoe Falls Academy, and take action as needed**

Mr. Graves discussed the Committee's prior discussion of the proposed plans for the renovated McIndoe Falls Academy building, as it regarded the lobby of the present post office space. The Committee had proposed to use this lobby space as a corridor for the building, which would eliminate the need to build a separate corridor within the municipal office space. This would result in a space savings. Ms. Ford reported on her meeting at the Academy building with Chris Madden of the United States Postal Service to discuss the possibility of this use of the post office space. Mr. Madden indicated that he believed this change is feasible. Also discussed with Mr. Madden was the possibility of an adjustment in the monthly rental fee on the basis of this proposed change. Mr. Madden sent Ms. Ford a letter accurately memorializing their meeting. Ms. Ford indicated that she had discussed this development with Rebecca Arnold of Arnold & Scangas, who indicated that she would produce a proposed plan that incorporates the proposed use of the post office lobby as a corridor, including an attempt to maintain a counter between the corridor and the municipal offices.

- The Committee agreed to approve the report of Ms. Ford.

**3. Report concerning various conversations and interests about current publicly owned Barnet land and its access and use, and act if necessary**

Mr. Graves discussed recent conversations about a proposed transfer of a portion of lands owned by the Barnet School District to the Town of Barnet. Mr. Graves reported that there is a 4.5-acre portion of the school property, situated along West Barnet Road, that may be suitable for building upon. There is no suitable access to this portion of the property other than by Kid Row. Mr. Graves indicated that this issue has been discussed by the Selectboard and the School Board recently, and that the Selectboard has expressed interest in obtaining for the Town some portion of the school property, but not for any particular immediate purpose.

Mr. Graves reported on his recent communications with Barnet resident Shawn Hilliker. Mr. Hilliker, who was present at this meeting, has expressed interest in use or ownership of the Town Hall property. Mr. Graves indicated that he believed that the Committee could listen to Mr. Hilliker's comments and proposals and could recommend a course of action to the Selectboard but should not take direct action on Mr. Hilliker's communications. Mr. Hilliker appeared at this meeting and asked about the status of the Town Hall. He suggested that it could be used as a community or youth group space, indicating that he may be interested in either owning the building or taking an active role in managing the

property. Mr. Graves discussed the Building Committee's recent actions with regard to the Town Hall, including recommending to the Selectboard specific annual investments in maintenance. The Selectboard agreed to install a new roof; this project is scheduled for this spring. Mr. Graves suggested that prior to any use of the building by a party external to the municipality, whether by sale or property management, the Town should ensure that any asbestos on the property is abated. Discussion ensued.

- Mr. Young moved that the Building Committee recommend that the Selectboard actively pursue completing the scheduled roofing project at the Town Hall, abate any asbestos present on the Town Hall property, and then move towards the sale of the Town Hall property. Seconded by Mr. Warden and approved by voice vote.

#### **4. Report from Ford and Graves on funding sources for McIndoe Falls renovation, and act on that report**

Ms. Ford and Mr. Graves reported on their attendance at the McIndoe Falls Academy potential all-funders meeting, held at the Academy property on April 10, 2018. The Committee reviewed Ms. Ford's notes on the meeting. Ms. Ford and Mr. Graves discussed the meeting and potential outcomes from it, as summarized below.

- Rebecca Arnold of Arnold & Scangas spoke about the work completed thus far.
- It was noted that many of the available grants are dependent upon each other.
- There was a consensus that, in terms of direct cost to Barnet taxpayers, a new building would likely cost approximately the same as renovation of the McIndoe Falls Academy.
- It was noted that many of the available grants are cultural grants only available for a building with multiple community uses.
- It was suggested that the Building Committee seek an individual to help the Committee organize their efforts. Alison Low of Northeastern Vermont Development Association recommended that the Committee apply for a Municipal Planning Grant to employ a "community engagement specialist" who would help the Committee organize their efforts with regard to awareness and pursuit of available funding sources, and act as a neutral party to engage and communicate with the public. Ms. Ford noted that the Selectboard has used a grant to employ an individual in a similar role with regard to the Harvey's Lake Dam project, and that this arrangement has worked well. The Municipal Planning Grant available for this concept has an application deadline of May 1, 2018.

The Committee discussed the concept of applying for a Municipal Planning Grant for a position described by Mr. Graves and Ms. Ford as a community engagement specialist.

- Mr. McLam moved to request that the Selectboard apply for a Municipal Planning Grant to fund a community engagement specialist. Seconded by Mr. Warden and approved by voice vote.

#### **5. Examine current architectural plans for McIndoe Falls Academy renovation, and act as needed**

The Committee viewed existing plans from Arnold & Scangas. Discussion was had about the potential office space gained by use of the post office lobby as a common corridor/lobby. Discussion was also had about the difference in square footage estimates between proposed new construction (5,500 square feet on one floor for municipal office use only) and proposed renovation of McIndoe Falls Academy (9,300 on three floors for multi-function building).

#### **6. Academy renovations and improvements, consider funding sources, plans, comparisons, and act as unnecessary**

Mr. Graves presented the Committee with a one-sheet summary report reflecting recent estimates received for two potential options for a new municipal office space: 1) an existing building on a good site (McIndoe Falls Academy), and 2) a new building on a good site. The report, produced by Mr. Graves, summarizes his primary considerations and his projections for possible or likely scenarios that may evolve from following each of the two paths, with regard to costs and funding for the projects. It

reviews for each possibility the function of the proposed structure, available funding sources, total estimated project costs, total borrowing likely to be required, and other considerations. Discussion ensued.

**7. Examine, review, consider, and discuss cost estimates from Arnold and Scangas for McIndoe Falls Academy renovations and improvements, consider funding sources, consider plan for progressing with project, and act as necessary; examine, review, consider, and discuss cost estimates from independent consultant for McIndoe Falls**

The Committee reviewed cost estimates for McIndoe Falls Academy from Arnold and Scangas and from independent consultant Stephen Pitkin; the Committee also reviewed cost estimates for new construction from Stephen Pitkin. Mr. Graves made several comments about the estimates:

- The estimates for the McIndoe Falls Academy project are much more complete and accurate than the estimate for new construction. Site acquisition for new construction, for example, is very difficult to predict. The grade of the site for new construction is also hard to predict and could significantly affect costs.
- The estimates all reflect maximum price outcomes: they are based on completion of all of the Committee's checklist of desired outcomes at or above the average of construction costs.
- The Committee hired Arnold & Scangas in part because of their history of estimates that are consistently above actual costs.
- The Town may choose to use a construction model similar to a "design build," in which a construction manager serving as a contractor could direct the project under a design plan commonly understood by all contractors working on the project. This model may reduce design fees.

**8. Consider and take action as necessary on other committee business and interests**

- Mr. Graves indicated that the report on asbestos in the McIndoe Falls Academy building has been received. As anticipated, there is asbestos present in some parts of the building. Mr. Graves indicated that the report is available for inspection at the Town Clerk's Office. Discussion ensued.

**9. Consider timetable discussed and tentatively set in February**

- The Committee discussed the agreed-upon plan to pursue a Town vote on the municipal office project in May 2018. Mr. Graves commented that some traction and forward progress has been lost due to public comment that the Committee has not done proper due diligence in considering all Town properties for the proposed project or carefully considering deficiencies of the current Town Clerk's Office and space requirements of the proposed new offices. Mr. Graves also commented that some of the due diligence performed by the Committee was not recorded due to lack of quorum at meetings.
  - The Committee agreed that the timetable agreed upon in February must be postponed in light of Mr. Graves's comments above and the discussion earlier in this meeting, including the possibility of pursuing a Municipal Planning Grant for a community engagement specialist.
- Mr. Stevenson, a McIndoe Falls Academy Trustee, commented that the Trustees are awaiting a response from the Town regarding whether the Town will accept the Trustees' gift of the Academy building and land.
  - Mr. Graves indicated that the purchase option agreement with the McIndoe Falls Academy has expired, and the Committee should pursue a renewal of this agreement.

**10. Other business**

No other business was discussed.

**11. Adjournment**

Mr. McLam moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Warden and approved by voice vote. Meeting Adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

*A true copy.*

*Attest:* \_\_\_\_\_  
*Town Clerk*