

# DRAFT

## MINUTES – SPECIAL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018

*Note: This meeting was warned as a joint Selectboard and Building Committee meeting. However, there was not a quorum of the Selectboard present. Therefore, this meeting was held as a Building Committee meeting only.*

**Meeting convened at 6:00 p.m. in the conference room of the Town Clerk's Office.**

**Committee members present:** Chair William Graves, William Biddle, Dylan Ford, Benjamin Heisholt, Stanley Robinson, Catherine Roy, Laurajean Stewart, and David Warden.

**Others present:** John Cook, Sarah Cook, Frank Jannarone, Kathleen Monroe, and Stephen Pitkin.

### **1. Read and approve minutes 9/27/18.**

Ms. Ford noted that in the draft minutes, on the fourth main bullet point under item number four, reference is made to Ms. Ford distributing a table. Ms. Ford noted that Mr. Graves, not Ms. Ford, had generated the table, and suggested that the minutes be edited to reflect this.

Mr. Warden moved to approve the minutes of the special meeting held September 27, 2018, with the revision suggested by Ms. Ford. Seconded by Mr. Robinson and approved by voice vote.

### **2. Receive a brief summary of Building Committee's activity to date. Take any action needed.**

Mr. Graves gave a brief synopsis of the Building Committee's activity to date. No discussion or action by the Committee followed.

### **3. Open the meeting to public comments for 10 minutes.**

Resident Kathleen Monroe appeared, and read a prepared statement. This statement is reproduced below.

I respectfully request that the record and meeting minutes reflect the following: I understand this meeting was called at the suggestion of Mr. Graves who said Mr. Pitkin may be able to impartially answer some outstanding questions (Oct. 8 Selectboard approved Meeting Minutes).

I, Kathleen Monroe, and Frank Jannarone wrote a letter to the Selectboard and the Building Committee dated July 7. We did not send that letter in July because the Selectboard suggested the Building Committee take the summer off. Thus, the delayed letter was delivered to the Selectboard and Building Committee on or near September 27, 2018.

Furthermore, in May 2018, I submitted questions to the Selectboard and the Building Committee regarding the McIndoe project and other work regarding Town Offices. Those questions have been unaddressed and unanswered over the past half year. Some of those unanswered questions date back to December 2017, the date of my first letter indicating an active interest in this project. Information in these letters and answers to the questions posed are vital to the community, the tax payers and citizens of Barnet.

There are many concerns about this project expressed among those letters. Some might have an impact on Mr. Pitkin's presentation tonight and responses to "outstanding questions."

So, I do have some questions for Mr. Pitkin. Was the May 14, 2018 letter from us shared with you and when was it shared? Was a July 7/September 27 letter shared with you and when was it shared?

Pitkin responded to Ms. Monroe's statement. He indicated that he had not received directly any letters consisting of public input, but had received all of his information regarding the McIndoe site and the generic new building from documents received from architects Arnold & Scangas, and through conversations with Mr. Graves.

**4. Review history of cost estimates for municipal office buildings with community spaces. These are two separate projects--one is a building renovation and one is a new building construction. Take action as needed.**

Mr. Graves reviewed a packet of information he had distributed for this meeting, which provides documentation of various cost estimates, produced since the beginning of the Building Committee's work, including several documents prepared by Mr. Graves, and professional estimates prepared by Arnold & Scangas and by Stephen Pitkin.

**5. Welcome Stephen Pitkin, and open a committee discussion with his presentation of his cost estimation work for Barnet and his summary of project values. Committee will ask questions. Take action as needed.**

Mr. Graves welcomed Mr. Pitkin, and introduced him to the members of the Committee. Mr. Pitkin then gave a brief description of his background and a sketch of his estimation philosophy. He then gave a brief page-by-page overview of his two estimates prepared for Barnet, and answered questions of the Committee and public. This presentation and discussion are summarized below.

- Mr. Pitkin reported that he includes ten percent contingency and ten percent variance in his estimates.
- Mr. Pitkin reported that he uses unit pricing in his estimates, and provides as many different units as possible. This practice is built on the philosophy that while some individual unit prices and quantities will be inaccurate, but the more unit types there are, the more opportunities there are for inaccurate prices and quantities to compensate for each other. His estimates utilize spreadsheets that he has developed himself.
- Mr. Graves asked about estimation challenges with regard to the unidentified site for the generic new building.
  - Mr. Pitkin indicated that estimation for site work is difficult in these circumstances. Sewer and storm water systems are wild cards and can be relatively costly. With any proposed site, it is recommended that Town perform thorough due diligence. Without a specific site design, any estimate for site costs will be at best a sophisticated guess.
- Kathleen Monroe asked about the size of the vault for the generic new building.
  - Mr. Pitkin responded that the size assumed by his estimate was 26 feet by 32 feet.
- Mr. Graves commented that Mr. Pitkin's estimate fills in a number of missing items from Mr. Graves's drawings and estimates; among these are fulfillment of Department of Public Safety requirements.
- Mr. Pitkin commented that market forces and time of year of construction are significant factors that drive prices.
- Mr. Pitkin reviewed his estimates' exclusions.
- Mr. Pitkin reported that his estimates incorporate design and permitting at 10% of total project costs. Design and permitting costs would likely be similar for the McIndoe Falls project and for the generic new building project, but this would be dependent on the nature of the new building site.
- Mr. Pitkin recommended that at the time the Town selects a site, it also hires a civil engineer to advise regarding site review. He advised that the Town then keep this civil engineer under contract for ongoing design, as a consultant separate from the architect's contract.
- Mr. Pitkin indicated that he would estimate engineering and consulting costs to be approximately 6 to 9% of total project costs.

- Discussion was had about likely permitting requirements for a municipal project, including wastewater, stormwater, and possibly Act 250.
- Discussion was had about design and engineering costs, and potential cost savings of “design build” or similar models. Mr. Pitkin indicated that there are now more requirements for design and engineering of municipal projects. Any “design build” approach would require stamped architectural drawings. This approach may be possible for new construction, but likely would be difficult or impossible for a project with federal funding.
- John Cook asked about sprinkler system requirements, and whether an on-site pond could be used to supply a sprinkler system.
  - Mr. Pitkin indicated that his estimates did not include sprinkler systems. The requirement for a sprinkler system is driven by the type of construction and the size of the building. A pond could be used to supply such a system, but this approach would require diesel pumps, and could be expensive.
- Mr. Pitkin indicated that the construction type assumed for the generic new building is a gable-roof building of typical office or school building design.
- John Cook asked how the total square feet of 5,400 was arrived at, and why the proposed vault is so large.
  - Mr. Pitkin indicated that questions of size are one reason why the estimation process is done: obtaining a baseline of possible costs allows the Town to assess priorities and make changes to initial proposed designs.
  - Mr. Graves commented that the drawings on which the estimates were based incorporated measurements and designs of other local municipal buildings.
  - Ms. Stewart commented that the size of the generic new building was based in part on the scope of the proposed McIndoe Falls project, which would incorporate many features in addition to traditional town hall requirements. The Committee was attempting to achieve an “apples to apples” comparison.
  - Mr. Pitkin commented that decreasing size of construction will generally decrease costs, but not necessarily at a percentage equivalency. Decreasing the size of the vault by one-half, for example, will not decrease vault costs by one-half, because much of the vault’s costs are fixed regardless of size (e.g. vault door and ventilation).
  - Mr. Warden commented that the Town must plan for future expansion. Discussion followed regarding the prospects for expansion of the Town, and factors contributing to this.
- Discussion was had about the McIndoe Falls Academy, and its future if the Town does not pursue the proposed renovations. Mr. Pitkin suggested that often former public institutions become municipal concerns even if the Town does not own them.
- Mr. Pitkin commented that, with regard to the McIndoe Falls project, large renovation projects are difficult to predict; a significant contingency is therefore necessary.
- Mr. Pitkin indicated that his McIndoe Falls project estimate was conservative with regard to assumptions of what will be torn down or taken out. The entire rear wall and foundation will need to be replaced.
- Mr. Pitkin indicated that his estimates are based on what the work is actually worth, and will likely be too low for high-end contractors.
- Some discussion was had about possible grant funding opportunities.
- Mr. Pitkin indicated that he is not partial to either of the two possible projects. He also commented that he is nervous about an initial approach that would make assumptions to keep costs down: it is tempting to cherry-pick costs with higher estimates for cut-backs, but this risks causing an imbalanced estimate that will not accurately reflect actual costs.
- Sarah Cook discussed the possibility of the Town purchasing a private residence and converting for municipal use, suggesting a property currently on the market on Gilfillan Road.

**6. Other business.**

No other business was discussed.

**7. Consideration of scheduling of next Building Committee meeting.**

The Committee agreed to tentatively schedule the next Committee meeting for Tuesday, December 18, 2018 at 6:30 p.m.

**8. Adjourn.**

Ms. Stewart moved to adjourn. Seconded by Ms. Ford and approved by voice vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

*A true copy.*

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