

**MINUTES – SPECIAL BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING
TOWN OF BARNET, VERMONT
THURSDAY, AUGUST 29, 2019**

Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m. at the Barnet School gymnasium.

Committee members present: William Biddle, Dylan Ford, Benjamin Gates, Benjamin Heisholt, Mark Jefferson, Catherine Roy, and David Warden.

Members of the public present: 48 non-committee members present; attendance was not taken.

1. Municipal Building Project Information Forum

- Project Consultant Cynthia Stuart of Stuart Consulting facilitated the meeting. She provided a brief self-introduction and project overview. She spoke regarding the format of this open forum.
- Ms. Stuart presented a slide-show presentation on the municipal building project, and her consulting work thereon, as summarized below:
 - Project time frame
 - Outreach process
 - Current town offices
 - Lack of adequate space for public meetings
 - Lack of adequate space and facilities for other functions
 - Lack of adequate and appropriate storage space
 - Lack of ADA compliance
 - Building Committee identified new town office needs
 - Option #1 – Renovate McIndoe Falls Academy
 - Overview
 - Message from McIndoe Falls Academy Trustees
 - Financing considerations
 - Cost estimates
 - Other financial considerations
 - Option #2 – Build New
 - Example project – Fire & Rescue Station
 - Building new - advantages
 - Land for new building has not been determined
 - Cost estimates
 - Compare project options – highlights of each
 - Cost analysis
 - Tax impact
 - How much has the town spent to conduct the extensive research around moving town offices?
 - Survey process
 - Next steps
- Project partners were invited to speak:
 - Alison Low, Senior Planner at Northeastern Vermont Development Association, spoke about her involvement in the project thus far (Municipal Planning Grants, Village Center Designation) and possibilities for grant funding for building projects.

- Rebecca Schrader of United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development spoke about a number of programs available to fund projects of this nature. Among these are direct loans and guarantee loans.
- Mary Cote of Passumpsic Savings Bank spoke about loan programs available from Passumpsic Savings Bank for projects of this nature, at rates below business loan rates.
- Mike Welch of Northern Community Investment Corporation (NCIC) spoke about lending and grant administration services available through NCIC.
- Ms. Stuart facilitated a question-and-answer session between herself and the members of the public present. The matters discussed included:
 - Site acquisition for new building option.
 - The costs included and excluded in the cost estimates.
 - Square footage needs for both options, compared with that of proposed projects.
 - Genesis of project, identification of need.
 - Town Hall disposition.
 - Lack of space at current Town Office.
 - Analysis of cost estimates.
 - Post Office considerations – lease at McIndoe Falls Academy.
 - Inventory of town-owned property.
 - Use of McIndoe Falls Academy second floor - usefulness and cost efficiency.
 - Exploration of Town-owned property for new building construction.
 - Public transparency of project activities to date.
 - Validity of comparable projects in other towns as discussed.
 - Use of home offices by Town officers currently.

Meeting ended at 8:08 p.m.

A true copy.

Attest: _____
Town Clerk