

GILFORD BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MEETING
December 5, 2007
Town Hall

The Board of Selectmen convened in a special work session with the Facility Planning Committee on Wednesday, December 5, 2007, at 3:00 p.m., at the Gilford Town Hall, 47 Cherry Valley Road, Gilford, NH. Selectmen present were Chairman Alice Boucher, Connie Grant and Gus Benavides. Also present were Town Administrator Evans Juris, Assistant Town Administrator Debra Shackett, Administrative Secretary Sandra Bailey, Police Chief John Markland and Police Captain Kevin Keenan.

Members of the FPC in attendance were: Chan Eddy, Tony Ferruolo, Bill Rohr, Jim Mull, Steve Grant, Andy Howe, John O'Brien and Dennis Doten. Also in attendance from Stewart Architects were Peter Stewart and Moe Gagnon.

Pledge of Allegiance – The Selectmen recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Boucher began the work session by thanking the FPC, on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, for their hard work and dedication. She further stated that the Board still has some concerns and she would like to ask Peter Stewart some questions. Mr. Stewart responded to her inquiry on bid packets by stating that seven (7) were sent out and three (3) were received back. Chairman Boucher further asked if all three of the bids that were received met the requirements of the Committee. Mr. Stewart responded that this is a complicated situation and because of the vagueness of the information requested, you could say that all three contractors met the requirements.

Mr. Stewart further stated that the Committee recommended Horne Construction of Rochester, NH because they provided a greater scope of work. The other two contractors did not include plans that were specific enough dealing with fire protection and sitework.

At this time, Chairman Boucher asked members of the FPC to share their thoughts with the Board. Tony Ferruolo clarified that the contractors bid on what they were asked. He also stated that with the compressed timeframe the Committee was working with that there has been concern with the upcoming deadline. The Committee is not where it would like to be right now.

Bill Rohr reported that the geothermal feasibility study was received yesterday. Although things are tight, he feels that the Committee might be able to have the proposal ready for the 2008 Town Meeting.

Andy Howe advised the Board that a great deal of time and effort on the part of FPC members has gone into this project. He also stated that the Committee is not as far along as he would like them to be, causing him to be concerned. He also stated that the \$1.5 million dollar limit was imposed to make the project more sellable to the public. Mr. Howe stated that the final figure could be below with \$1.5 million limit.

Andy Howe further stated that he feels the waters have been muddied with the need for the Committee to have to look at retrofitting the entire Town Hall building with a geothermal heating and cooling system. Selectman Benavides feels that the Committee has done a great job in a short amount of time and he does not feel that the geothermal issue muddies the waters for him. Mr. Howe replied that he is concerned that the geothermal heating system will cause the project to exceed the \$1.5 million limit. Extensive discussion ensued. Mr. Howe stated that the Committee is waiting for the Board to advise them on the heating system issue.

Chairman Boucher stated that the Board would like two (2) figures – one for the Police Department with geothermal heating and one for the entire Town Hall with geothermal heating. Selectman Grant stated that she is not comfortable with the situation since the geothermal feasibility study was only received yesterday. Mr. Howe suggested that the Selectmen present a warrant article for \$1.5 million dollars and that figure could be reduced at the Deliberative Session. Selectman Grant feels that the Board of Selectmen should make the decision on a contractor for the project and this decision takes time.

Chairman Boucher stated that the Board was under the impression that only Horne Construction met the requirements of the RFP and now they are finding out differently. Chan Eddy stated that three members of the Committee visited projects completed by two contractors and the difference between the quality of construction was striking. Town Administrator asked that no comments be directed at the contractors who submitted bids.

Discussion ensued on the legality of going to back to a bidder when the process calls for a sealed bid. Steve Grant feels that the Committee needs more time because they are lacking specifications. He feels that the situation this Committee is in is similar to that of the last FPC, where there is not sufficient time to make an acceptable presentation to the Budget Committee and taxpayers. He suggested deferring the project until 2009.

Chairman Boucher asked if it would help if money was placed in the 2008 budget. Peter Stewart stated that he did not feel that this would make a significant change. Mr. Stewart also addressed the matter of there being additional costs beyond the \$1.5 million limit. More discussion ensued on the geothermal heating system.

Dennis Doten stated that he feels this meeting is more of a hearing than a work session. Jim Mull expressed confusion at where the Committee would be if the matter were deferred to the 2009 Town Meeting. Would the Committee still be going with Horne Construction or would they be starting over? How would the Committee proceed?

Extensive discussion ensued on the bids that were received. Dennis Doten stated that the Committee felt they had selected the best value with the information that was available to them. Selectman Grant replied that not all parties involved are at the same comfort level with the choice of Horne Construction. She thought that the Board of Selectmen would negotiate with the contractors. Jim Mull replied that he thought that the Board of Selectmen wanted a recommendation from the Committee and assured them that a thorough due process had taken place in the selection of Horne Construction.

Steve Grant expressed the need to identify specific features and specifications of the proposed building, whereas the existing plan is lacking information. Peter Stewart again expressed concern with the \$1.5 million limit that the Committee has imposed on the project. Dennis Doten feels that if the project is put off until 2009, it will present a problem with the heating system if one of the existing Town Hall boilers is replaced in 2008. He is worried that if the boiler is approved in 2008, the taxpayers will not approve the geothermal heating system in 2009. Brief discussion ensued on the boiler replacement with Town Administrator Juris indicating the cost to be \$5,100.00.

Assistant Town Administrator Shackett stated that at this time, the scope of the project is uncertain and it was her impression that the FPC would be making a recommendation on the scope of the project. Bill Rohr indicated the cost of the geothermal system for the entire Town Hall to be \$135,000.00, but the savings in energy costs would be extensive. Steve Grant also mentioned the potential for a credit from PSNH with the geothermal system.

Town Administrator Juris asked Peter Stewart if the \$1.5 million limit is a problem. Mr. Stewart replied that the cost limit is not consistent with the building specifications. Town Administrator Juris further asked Mr. Stewart about the cost savings suggestions he has brought forward. Mr. Stewart is concerned with cheapening the building with budget cuts. At this time, Chairman Boucher asked for input from the Police Department. Chief Markland stated that he has been a member of the Facility Planning Committee for six years and in his opinion, the interview process was very thorough and fair, with Horne Construction clearly being the best contractor.

Assistant Town Administrator Shackett stated that regarding the \$1.5 million limit, the Board of Selectmen did not make that decision. If the project cannot be done for that amount, it is important that the Board be advised of that now. The FPC may be comfortable with this figure but the Administration and Board of Selectmen are not. Chairman Boucher would rather have a quality building than one where costs have been cut.

Dennis Doten stated that several people thought that the \$1.5 million limit was a doable amount for the project. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett stated that if the scope of the project changes that the cost will also need to change. Jim Mull asked if there was anyway that the Committee could go past the January 8, 2008 date with a final amount for the project. Town Administrator Juris stated that any information would have to be submitted at the Budget Committee's public hearing, which is scheduled for January 15, 2008. Selectman Grant feels that there is too much pressure to have the project finalized for the 2008 budget. Dennis Doten pointed out that there is a member of the Budget Committee on the Facility Planning Committee.

Andy Howe inquired if there could be two warrant articles for the project, making it clearer to the taxpayers. Assistant Town Administrator Shackett did not see the need for two warrant articles since the entire building needs the geothermal heating system.

More discussion ensued on the heating system and the concern of what would come next for the FPC.

Chairman Boucher closed the work session at 4:25 p.m.

Non-Public Session – RSA 91-A:3 II (c)

The Board of Selectmen on a roll call vote entered Non-Public Session at 4:30 p.m. Present were Selectmen Alice Boucher, Connie Grant and Gus Benavides, Town Administrator Evans Juris, Assistant Town Administrator Debra Shackett and Administrative Secretary Sandra Bailey.

While in Non-Public Session, the Board discussed personnel matters. While in Non-Public Session, no action was taken.

The Board exited Non-Public Session at 5:29 p.m.

Selectman Benavides stated that he is concerned with the FPC running out of time. Committee members, including Bill Rohr, expressed the need to continue working on the project but are concerned with having to rush through it. A presentation still needs to be made to the Budget Committee. Selectman Benavides thinks that the project should be pursued in 2009, not 2008.

Selectman Grant feels that cohesiveness is lacking between the FPC and the Board of Selectmen. She does not feel that the Board will have the time to review the material properly for 2008. Chairman Boucher stated that since the Board is only meeting once in the month of December, it makes time constraints even tighter. She commended the FPC for their hard work, but feels there are too many questions that need answering.

Selectman Benavides moved to continue with the Facility Planning Committee, but not make any proposal for March 2008, and look towards March 2009. Selectman Grant seconded. Motion carried.

Town Administrator Juris will call Co-Chair Jim Mull and advise him of the Board's decision. Mr. Mull will be asked to call all Committee members to advise them. The Board will send letters to individual Committee members advising them of the Board's decision and thanking them for their hard work and dedication. He will also ask Peter Stewart to attend the December 19, 2007 Selectmen's meeting and discuss the contractors with the Board.

Selectman Benavides moved to stop negotiations with Horne Construction and meet with Peter Stewart to determine the next steps to be taken. In addition, all bonds will be released and contractors will be thanked for their bids. Selectman Grant seconded. Motion carried.

Next Meeting – December 19, 2007 at 3:00 p.m.

Adjournment – With no further business before the Board, the Board of Selectmen's December 5, 2007 meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra J. Bailey
Administrative Secretary