

**Town of Richmond  
Town Center and Library Committee  
Minutes –June 30, 2022**

**Present:** Josh Arneson, Jeff Forward, Christine Werneke, Linda Parent, Laurie Dana, Amy Wardwell and Jay Labare

**I. Welcome & Public Comment – None**

**II. Additions or Deletions to Agenda -- None**

**III. Items for Presentation or Discussion**

**a) Decision on which architectural firm to hire for the Town Center feasibility study**

Jeff reviewed the discussion from the previous meeting and summarized that most committee members had Black River Design as their first choice. Jeff asked for Josh's input, as he was not at that meeting. Josh agreed with the Committee that both bidders (Bread Loaf and Black River) could do the work and that he agreed Black River was a good choice.

Since that meeting, Christine reached 2 of the 3 references that Black River had provided and she summarized her discussions in a separate document. She will try to contact the remaining one tomorrow. Highlights of her discussions with the references were that both were very satisfied with their work, that John Hemmelgarn (the principal in the company) is a "real diplomat" which was important on both of these public projects where there was a lot of community interaction. One reference also stated that there was a commitment to quality work that will last over time.

Jeff spoke with John informally, without revealing any decision, but asked what an appropriate "not to exceed" amount for the contract would be. Based on similar projects, he suggested \$35-\$40K.

**Amy moved and Laurie seconded a motion that the Committee recommend to the Selectboard contracting with Black River Design to do the feasibility study of Town Center renovation/replacement options and prepare design materials for a potential bond vote for an amount not to exceed \$50,000. The committee unanimously approved this motion.**

Josh will add this to the Selectboard agenda for the next meeting. Christine will add the 3<sup>rd</sup> reference to the summary document for the Selectboard if she can do this before the meeting. If not, the existing draft will be used.

**b) Review and possible decision on recommendation to the Selectboard for firm to complete proposed Town Center and Library Building projects.**

Jay reviewed the bid from Opus Corporation for the work contained in the RFP that was put out in June. Several firms attended the walk-around prior to the bid deadline, but this was the only bid received. The total for the bid was \$197,670 which was not broken down into categories. Jay and Jeff met with Opus and the mechanical engineer who prepared the drawings for the RFP and reviewed the specifics of the bid. Both Jay and Jeff felt that this was a fair bid for the extent of the work in the RFP. Laurie noted that Jay's initial "rough estimate" of the work was around \$150,000 and did not include the fire alarm and sheetrock in the library basement. He had also recommended a 20% increase to that estimate.

While a fair bid for the work, Jeff and other committee members were concerned about depleting the Town Center fund with so many other demands to come on those funds.

Josh estimated about \$430,000 in that fund at present. Members were also concerned about spending a lot of money on the Town Center building if there are planned renovations in the works within the next 2-3 years.

Committee members felt strongly that the fire alarm and the ADA doors and drinking fountain need to be done now. Laurie argued that the library mezzanine project needs to go forward as right now there is no ventilation in that space as well as heat & cooling. In light of Covid, that is a concern for use of the space. The sheet rock in the library basement should be done whether by Opus or someone else. Jay mentioned that some of the ADA door equipment could likely be reused in a building renovation/replacement.

Laurie commented that the ADA doors on both buildings and the library drinking fountain may be eligible for an Accessibility Grant through the Community Development Block Grant program. This is a "rolling" grant program based on funds availability and requires a 10% match. She will contact the Chittenden County coordinator to explore this further. The two projects total cost is around \$20,000.

There was a lot of discussion about the Town Center portico portion of the project and whether it is prudent to spend a considerable amount of money (\$50,000 or more) on this right now when plans for the building are being discussed.

After much discussion, the Committee agreed that Jay will contact Opus to find out what the total cost would be if we remove the Town Center Portico from the project.

Laurie will research any grants that could be applied to these projects.

The committee will review this information at the next meeting and make a decision at that time.

**c) Discussion of extending the contract with Jay Labare, Apex Consulting for his work as an Owner's Representative.**

The Town's contract with Jay Labare for Owner's Rep services has reached it's conclusion (the initial contract had some additions to it which are also concluded). The committee agreed that it has been great to have Jay working on behalf of the Town to provide management of the project assessment and bidding processes.

Jay provided an estimate for extending his services to supervise the execution of the Opus Corp contract under discussion (approximately 8 hours/week of work for the 3-3.5 months that Opus estimates the work would take). Laurie brought up that there is unfinished work to reissue the RFP for the exterior Library projects. Jeff and Amy wondered if there was any role for Jay in the feasibility study and design process being planned.

Christine suggested that at our next meeting the committee develop a list of the scope of work that we envision Jay being involved in. We can then provide that so that he can give us an estimate. The committee agreed with that plan.

**Next meeting is Thursday, July 14 at 7:00 p.m.**