

**Town Center and Library Committee
Minutes June 29, 2023
6:30-8 p.m.**

Present: Laurie Dana, Jeff Forward, Dave Healy, Amy Wardwell

Black River: John Hemmelgarn

I. Welcome and Public Comment - None

II. Additions or Deletions to Agenda – Moved Funder’s Conference to end

III. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a) Architect’s Review of Design Details

John Hemmelgarn walked the Committee through a long list of specific design details and asked for input and/or agreement on items to allow them to move forward with designs and cost estimating.

Post Office: John observed that there is considerable damage and actual holes in the block wall next to the post office ramp. He asked if the ramp was required and the committee felt it was as it is used for mail carriers loading. One of the unknowns is the extent of the work needed on the back wall, including filling in pipe trench—John asked how far we want to go with this. Committee felt that we needed to fix the back wall problems that exist but agreed that windows do not need to be replaced as they are relatively new. John then stated that to do the work that is required, the post office will have to move out for some period of time. Committee feels these decisions need to be made in consultation with Richmond Postmistress Erin Lin. Jeff and John will schedule a meeting with her, hopefully before the next Committee meeting.

Building Entrance: No improvements or changes needed except for updated paint/finishes. There may be an opportunity for an added window in the lobby. Committee agreed.

Basement Window/Masonry Scope: John stated that the options for what to do with the existing windows/window openings depend on whether we cite the Historical Significance exemption which would allow us to bypass the flood gates and rely on slab pressure valves only for basement flood proofing. Flood gates are very unattractive and would need to be in the lower half of the opening with an infilled panel above—they would be above flood elevation so would not even come into play unless we had a 100-year flood above the building. The Irene flood was caused by water coming up through the sewer, which would be taken care of by the pressure valves. The Committee felt that we should take the historical significance exemption. We could place flood gates in some of the less obvious windows if we want to. There was discussion about whether to put windows back in, as in the original building, even though the basement is unoccupied. Windows could be clear or opaque glass with better R value. Other options would be to fill in with brick, perhaps using second color or insets to keep the aesthetic rhythm, rather than a solid brick wall at eye level. Committee did not determine which option but wanted to know which was more costly—perhaps use that for now. Historic preservation grant funding might affect this decision.

Net Zero Scope & Envelope Upgrades:

- **Roofs & Solar Panels** -- Structural engineers are confident that solar panels could be installed on sections of historic roof and don't feel further structural analysis is needed. It is unknown whether the Post Office roof could support solar panels as we cannot find plans for

this addition. John recommended moving the funding approved by the Selectboard for analysis of historic roof to an analysis of the Post Office roof. He also mentioned doing an Infrared scan of the roof and a core to determine amount of insulation and structure of roof. The Committee supported this change and Jeff will work with Josh on whether Selectboard needs to approve.

- **Building Envelope – Walls:** Assume cellulose in walls has settled and we will be adding where needed. **Windows:** Air sealing jambs and replacement windows. They are looking into the differences in cost between double pane and triple pane—do we get enough increase in R value for increased costs. **Floors:** Add rockwool insulation at rim joists & sill plate—Jeff suggested doing infrared scan of the intersection of 1st and 2nd floors and whether attention is needed there. **Basement:** To be determined. There will be complete demolition of existing basement walls, etc. as sheetrock and wood are not allowed in flood proofing. Metal shelving will be required. **Attic:** Existing insulation to stay, could be added to with cellulose if needed. Currently has spray foam plus fiberglass plus cellulose.

Sprinkler System: Height and area limits per IBC do not require this. John has requested to include within initial scope. Might want to know how much this would cost? After a lot of discussion about how adding sprinklers would work, the Committee felt that they were not needed. They are not required, they would require ongoing maintenance once installed, there would be visible sprinkler pipes as we are retrofitting an existing building. Linda had commented that vault was not airtight—need to assess whether seals need to be replaced. Fire Marshall or Fire Department input needed?

Fire Alarm System: Laurie mentioned that a fire alarm system needs to be added and is very important.

Stairwell Addition: There is the question of whether to terminate the stairwell addition at grade or continue into basement. Committee felt that continuing to basement might be advisable for a means of egress if someone is down there and for storing. John is not sure whether that would have a ramification for flood proofing—needs to check.

Stairwell Addition/Windows and Vault Roof: The committee looked at several proposals for changing the shape of the vault roof where it meets the new stairwell addition and which might help with aesthetics and rain/snow shedding—it would allow opening up some closed windows. There are some windows proposed in the stairwell and committee felt that it was important to have some natural light in stairwell. Committee also supported exploring the construction of the vault roof with an eye toward making the changes recommended.

Finishes: Floors -- John said they are assuming that the wood floors would be restored, rather than carpet—exists in most if not all areas—they will have an allowance/percentage of replacement flooring where it exists but is not salvageable. **Except bathrooms.** Discussed wood stairs with runners in the center. There was a lot of discussion of sound transfer from 2nd floor and also squeakiness of existing floors. Sound mitigation might be done in ceilings on first floor to help transfer. **Ceilings** – There was an extensive discussion of whether to keep the tin ceilings. Acknowledgement that where drop ceiling has been installed, tin may have been damaged in that installation. Also tin ceilings will likely cause more acoustic issues around hearing in rooms such as meeting rooms. Drop ceilings are why the windows have panels at the top as current ceilings come below that point—can we raise the drop ceilings to let full windows be seen? John also mentioned casing drop ceilings so they end before coming to the window wall. No firm decision was made—are there other options than the traditional grid and acoustic tile drop ceilings that might be more visually

appealing? **Walls**--Existing plaster and lath to remain, paint, new walls would be wood studs with drywall. **Windows**—Look at whether window trims and sills can be preserved.

Elevator: Mechanical needs to be relocated above the flood plain. Look at possible new traction elevator (electric) to replace existing hydraulic elevator—keep same hoistway. Does elevator need to go to the basement—committee felt possibly not as where it lands in the basement is not in a good spot. Would it be needed for hauling things to storage down there?

Floor Plan Update: Per discussion with Historical Society Staff, swapped the proposed break room with Historical Society space—break room gets more daylight from exterior walls and Historical Society gets more storage. Committee liked this solution—commented that break room is large enough for table for small meetings.

Main Stairway/Building Entrance: There was discussion about whether we could open up the main stairway entrances onto the 1st and 2nd floors to bring back the feel of the old school with the open stairways. Items discussed included larger double doors at the top of the first and second floors (perhaps with magnetic holders to keep them open when Town Offices are open), full or partial glass wall plus doors, or elimination of wall altogether—but that creates many security concerns. No decision but worth further discussion. Same applies to 2nd floor entrance. Original tin on the underside of the stairways should be retained.

b) Schedule Review

John reviewed their proposed schedule which includes having some pricing set in mid-July and targeting a preliminary cost estimate for early August. Then there would be a 3-4 week period of discussion with Committee and/or Selectboard to make adjustments to scope as needed. That would mean the Final Feasibility Budget Estimate would be ready for early September. That would leave a 1 week buffer before going to Selectboard meeting in September to get bond language approval and start the process toward a November vote. John said this was an “aggressive” schedule but doable. As seen above, there are still many questions to be answered. Committee felt that this was doable on their end.

c) Recap of Funder’s Conference

Jeff and Laurie reported that the Funder’s Conference was well-attended with around 20 people from various funding sources. Overall it was informative and it was gratifying that most felt we were doing all of the correct steps to move toward a successful bond vote. Laurie & Diane took notes, which are being compiled and can be shared with the committee later.

d) Approval of June 15, 2023 meeting minutes

Tabled as no quorum for vote

e) Other business- None

f) Items for next agenda – July 13 meeting

- Discuss Hiring an Architectural Historian as suggested at Funder’s Conference
- Report on Post Office meeting and other design items
- Approve minutes for 6/13 & 6/29 meetings
- Planning for community outreach

8:30 PM IV. Adjourn