

Town Center and Library Committee
Minutes September 14, 2023
7-8:30 p.m.

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

Black River: Andrew McCullough

Community Members: Mary Houle, Suzanne Parent

I. Welcome and Public Comment - None

II. Additions or Deletions to Agenda

Table item b)

III. Items for Presentation or Discussion with those present

a) **Continue review of cost estimates**

Jeff stated that, now that we have had some time to digest the cost estimate and have had some clarifying questions answered, we need to explore next steps toward the bond vote.

Several committee members had thoughts:

- Laurie mentioned that she felt that the renovation to the Town Center building itself – new windows, HVAC, electrical, plumbing, insulation etc. is a must have. She also recognizes that a portion of the Post Office and Sitework are required due to flood plain mitigation. She is curious as to what the sitework cost is if you remove all but the “required” items. She stated that there is a possibility that the items that affect the library could have other funding sources.
- Dave stated that he feels that the project is expansive but not extravagant. He feels that the site changes and solar are important to the project and are personally important. He thinks that the problem is the funding of the project.
- Jeff stated that he has spoken with several people who were not surprised by the cost of the project, nor were they necessarily put off by the size of the bond.

The committee reviewed the work on the Post Office addition and, in the end, seemed to agree that all of this work should be done now including reinforcing the roof for potential future solar panels.

The possibility of “phasing” the project was also explored—we could do the solar panels at a later date potentially financing them with private donations or grants. The same could be true of the bulk of the site work outside of flood plain requirements.

The committee then looked at the soft costs spreadsheet that Black River provided which lists some items that are owner-driven. The committee agreed that the Clerk of the Works, Moving/Storage & Builders Risk Insurance need to be included. Jeff proposed that HVAC Commissioning needs to be added. We agreed that we could take out the \$300,000 for Solar. He will ask Connie & Josh to figure out if there should be a cost for “interim financing” and/or whether the Bond Bank can provide this. The \$45,000 for signage and furniture could be removed from the bond expenses and come out of department budgets.

Should the sitework be included in the bond, we could cut \$50,000 by using concrete rather than granite curbs and the \$60,000 story pavilion (which might be a good private fundraising option)

Andrew was asked to look at the sitework costs and give us a cost for doing just the flood mitigation part of that work now. He was also asked if they could do an elevation that we could use in public

presentations, perhaps next to a historic photo of the building and whether they could do a drawing that shows the opened up stairwell to the main floor.

The next step for the Committee is to plan and do public information sessions to gauge the response to the plan, to the importance of individual elements of the plan and whether there are big questions or concerns that we have not considered. While we don't anticipate anything we cannot answer, we could come back to the architects if more information or work is needed.

Amy summarized the discussion for the next meeting which will be to determine a schedule and groups that we want to present to and to review and finalize the FAQ and other materials that will be used at that meeting. We should develop an outline of the presentation, tentative list of groups and assign who is going to schedule and present at those meetings.

The Committee agreed that Andrew and John do not need to attend the next few meetings unless we run into significant questions that could not be answered via email.

b) Update on remaining Library building work

Tabled, waiting for more information from Jay Labare

c) Consideration of approval of minutes from 8/31/23

Tabled, not a quorum

d) Other business

Proposed Exploration of Private Fundraising -- Laurie reported on a conversation that she had with Martha Nye about doing a public fundraising (capital campaign) that would finance a portion of this project before the bond vote. She feels that there are community members who might make significant individual donations in order to help reduce the amount of the bond, and thus help out community members for whom increased taxes are a burden. Martha is willing to work on this and wondered about others who might be a good small group to have an "quiet" initial discussion, she mentioned Marsha Turner, Lisa Miller, Christine Werneke and Laurie mentioned Christy Witters and Kathie Mather. Amy mentioned June Heston. Laurie did tell Martha that the TC Committee did not have the capacity to be this fundraising committee—it needs to be a group of citizens. Jeff was planning to reach out to Christine, Christy and Katie to update them on the work anyway (as former chairs of the committee) and Laurie asked if he would also ask if they would be willing to at least attend an initial meeting.

New Committee Member -- Jeff stated that, since Linda Parent has resigned, he would like to ask Karen Yaggy to join the committee. Laurie & Amy felt this was a great idea as she has been interested and involved in feedback on the project throughout.

e) Items for next agenda – September 28 meeting

Planning for public meetings

Review and update FAQ

Update on Library building work left to do

Approval of minutes from 8/31 and 9/14 meetings

8:30 PM IV. Adjourn