

Future Facilities Committee

MINUTES ~ Feb 20, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Pat Christian, Chair. Attending the meeting were the following: Pat Christian, Jesse Peters, John Libby, Matt Nielsen, Susan Briggs Peters, Mike Pascarella, Paul Schumann, Bo Chesney (notetaker), Dick Hogue, and Andy O'Brien. Jon Morris (Chair of Select Board) attended part of the meeting. Public Attending: Sandy Schumann.

Committee Resignations: Pat Fairbanks and Paul Giddinge have stepped down from the committee for personal reasons. The Committee thanked them for their valuable contributions and the many hours they devoted to it.

The minutes for Jan 22, 2024, were approved with minor corrections.

The committee reviewed and discussed Andy Hyland's e-mail of 2/20/24 (attached). The recommendation in the e-mail was to have an environmental site assessment performed prior to proceeding with any more work. This follows a site walk earlier by Andy Hyland and a civil engineer which noted some potential issues with respect to wetlands. A formal assessment can't be performed until the March/April time frame. The site engineer was from Site Design Associates of Topsham. There was a discussion about whether there was sufficient room in the budget for the additional \$3,000 to \$5000 expense. It was decided that it would be best to have PCA contract for the site assessment and handle it as a change order to the existing contract. Paul Schumann made a motion to authorize the chair to execute a change order with PCA for an environmental site assessment as long as it's within budget. The motion was seconded by Susan Briggs Peters and unanimously approved. Mike Pascarella expressed disappointment that PCA didn't bring this issue before. Bo Chesney agreed the PCA should have raised this issue prior to now. Jesse Peters and Matt Nielsen noted that when the original site walk was done, these issues were not as obvious due to the challenges of seeing these types of environmental issues at that time of year. Both Jesse and Matt were on the most recent sidewalk and concurred that there were some potential issues, and a study was needed to determine the impact on the overall project location.

At this point Jon Morris asked about the impact this delay could have on the timeline for the project. Pat reviewed the timeline laid out by PCA in the e-mail and Bo reviewed critical dates that the committee needs to be aware of. Specifically, language for a word article for this year's town meeting June is needed by March 5th, the committee's annual report to the town needs to be completed by April 10th, the first public hearing on the warrant is

tentatively May 22nd and Town Meeting is scheduled for June 17th. Andy O'Brien asked Bo what was needed in the way of actual plans to submit a grant request for congressionally directed spending. Bo said he thought that the PCA report should suffice but that the town will need to have approved the project even if it had contingencies. Bo reported that he has asked Becky to put a placeholder on the warrant for a possible article related to the committee's work.

The committee then reviewed each one of the seven deliverables. The first and second deliverables being:

- *Evaluate current and future needs of public safety infrastructure and make specific recommendations for meeting those needs.*
- *Evaluate current and future needs for public works infrastructure and make specific recommendations for meeting those needs:*

The committee felt much of this information should be part of PC's final report which needs to incorporate the information supplied by Jesse and Matt for their respective areas. We still lack operational expenses for the proposed facility which we've asked for repeatedly from PCA. Additionally, we need a clear picture articulated of future uses of existing facilities including ongoing operational expense of those facilities versus a new facility. Jesse indicated that if the facility were built to include space for student residents it would be helpful to have them on site sooner rather than later. This would enhance response times and assist during times of low turnout by the volunteers. There was also a discussion regarding the Wash Bay/Salt Shed extension and the timing of each component of the project. The issue of where fuel tanks could be located was once again raised and the need for a separate Wash Bay versus planning for wash bays in all the bays at the new building was discussed, though no conclusion was reached. Again, PCA's report will be critical in this area to help answer some of these questions.

Evaluate the potential impact that regionalization could have on public safety and or public works facilities: There was discussion about regionalization, and it was deemed unlikely to be the reality in the foreseeable future. Paul Schumann asked what the potential impact could be should regionalization become a reality down the road. He noted that Pownal's relatively small size makes it difficult to sustain standalone models for delivering services such as Education (already regionalized), Public Works and Public Safety. After further discussion it was concluded that the new facility would be needed for Pownal to participate in any regionalization effort that might develop in the future. It was noted that the potential for regionalization and its impact was not explicitly raised in the RFP with PCA. The committee concluded that the proposed project enhances Pownal's opportunities to participate in future regionalization both for Public Safety and Public

Works. It was noted that having a regional map showing surrounding towns and locations of public safety and public works facilities would be helpful to support the conclusion.

Evaluate pros and cons of co-locating Public Safety and Public Works: This information should be part of PCA's final report including operational costs going forward.

Determine planning slash design horizon for any recommended new Public Safety and or Public Works facilities: This information should be part of PCA's final report.

Evaluate sighting (Pownal town owned land and or privately owned land) for any new public safety or public works facilities: The committee noted that this is an open item with respect to the site chosen because of the need for environmental site assessment. PCA's final report will be critical to address this deliverable as well as the ISO ratings / Map the Town Planner has provided.

Evaluate and recommend future financing options and timing including opportunities for grants: The committee has identified different ways the town could pay for the project including seeking meaningful grants from the federal government. The challenge the committee and the town face is what is the next step? It was concluded that the committee needed to meet with the Select Board (SB) as soon as possible (3/19) so that they can be updated on the status of the committee's findings and discuss the need for a possible warrant article for June's town meeting. This would have to occur before any site assessment report could be available, but the committee thought it was critical to go forward with what we know at this point in time. Pat will check with Becky and the Select Board about a joint meeting of the SB & FCC so that a formal vote could be taken by the SB if necessary. In addition an additional meeting of the FCC was scheduled for March 12th to review plans for presentation to the SB on the 19th.

There was a motion to adjourn.