

Bristol Selectboard Meeting

January 17, 2013

Attendance: Selectboard members Sharon Compagna, Alan Huizenga, Chairman Peeker Heffernan, Carol Wells, and Joel Bouvier; and Town Administrator Bill Bryant. Others attending included Ashar Nelson, Brett LaRose, Shawn Oxford, Chris Griggs, Lance Perlee, P.J. Ryan, Kevin LaRose, Mary Arbuckle (NEAT TV), Ed Hanson, Chuck Richardson, Nancy Wilson, Jim Cunningham, Kathy Burritt, James Cole, Randy Crowe, Peter and Katie Raycroft-Meyer, Mark Bouvier, Liz Hermann, and Xian Chiang-Waren (Addison Independent).

The special meeting of the Selectboard was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Peeker Heffernan called the special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and explained that the purpose of this special meeting was to begin the public process of describing and discussing proposed improvements to facilities for the Bristol Fire Department. Town Administrator Bill Bryant gave an introduction about the meeting and the project. He explained the Selectboard has signed a purchase and sale agreement with Allen and Lee Bilson for the property at 2 Garfield Street for \$250,000. It is adjacent to the NH Munsill building operated by the fire department. A bond vote will be held on Town Meeting Day, March 5, 2013. That vote will request \$375,000 for the purchase and for the design phase of the renovation and expansion project.

First Assistant Fire Chief Brett LaRose explained the background of the project. The original firehouse was built in 1897, the station in back of it was built by the members in 1972, and the Fitch Avenue station was purchased by the members of NH Munsill Hose Hook & Ladder Company, when Bristol Rescue relocated. These three buildings contain 6,600 square feet on two separate lots. He explained the limitations of the current facilities in terms of modern codes and standards, volunteer safety and energy use. Brett explained the facility study process which began in 2004 and included a consultant report and review of many sites in 2006-2008. That report indicated an appropriate size for a facility to be 13,300 square feet. In 2012, the Fire Department members asked to further explore the option of remaining on North Street through acquisition of an adjoining property. A conceptual architectural study was commissioned through an RFP process and Vermont Integrated Architecture was hired for a \$3000 fee to determine if expansion was feasible on the Bilson lot. The report included a site plan and conceptual elevations and floor plans for a 10,000 square foot facility including rehab of the 1897 structure.

Ashar Nelson of Vermont Integrated Architecture shared a presentation of the study, budget and plans. He discussed how the location of the firehouse close to downtown, the preservation of the historic structure, understanding the vision of the members of the department, integrating the facility with the surrounding neighborhood, energy efficiency, developing a site plan that improved access and parking, and a project that could meet budget parameters set by the Town, were the goals of this study. He showed how various elements of the design meet these goals. The basic elements are a site plan that includes a driveway entrance from North Street and that wraps around the rear of the building to exit onto Garfield Street with about 17 parking spaces on the north and east sides of the property. The plan envisions reuse of the historic 2,400 square feet of space in the 1897 building, removal of the 1972 building and construction of a new garage bay area and connector space between old and new totaling about 7,500 square feet. This is still a conceptual design and many details will need to be developed during final design. Interior layout is planned around the natural flow of members in arriving at the station and getting into gear to get the trucks on their way to the fire scene.

Bill Bryant reviewed preliminary budget for the project. Overall cost of the project is projected to be between \$2,000,000 and \$2,500,000. The bond votes will be conducted in two phases: first is \$375,000 at March 2013 town meeting for acquisition and design; the second will be for construction funding and is planned to be held in November 2014 (projected to be between \$1.6 and \$2.1 million). He reviewed the manner in which these cost estimates have been derived.

Shawn Oxford is serving on the Facility Committee as a citizen-at-large. Shawn explained upcoming public information and comment opportunities that are planned before Town Meeting. These include NEAT TV coverage of this meeting, future meetings and a planned information program. There will be an informational flyer mailed to property owners in early February. Two open houses at the firehouse are scheduled for Wednesday February 13th from 6 to 8 p.m. and on Saturday February 16th from 9 to 11 a.m. to give residents a chance to see the existing facilities. There will be two formal public hearings, the first at a regular Selectboard meeting on Monday February 25th at 7 p.m. and the second during the Monday evening portion of Town Meeting on March 4th (the meeting begins at 7 p.m.).

Shawn opened the floor for questions and comments. There was discussion about the size of the addition and its visibility from Garfield Street and the intersection of Garfield and North Streets. There were questions and suggestions about how the project might be designed to better fit into the neighborhood. Size, texture and landscaping were all discussed, as well as the possibility of moving the historic building to the corner and the garage portion to the interior of the lot. There was discussion about how the final design process would work.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bill Bryant, Town Administrator