

Fire Facility Public Meeting
Saturday April 20, 2013
9-12 at the American Legion
Meeting Notes
DRAFT

At 9:00 am, Selectboard member Alan Huizenga called the public meeting to order. He introduced Adam Lougee from Addison County Regional Planning who would be the facilitator for both public meetings regarding the Fire Facility.

Adam Lougee called on Assistant Fire Chief Brett LaRose to give a brief overview of the need the Fire Department has for a new building. Brett began by thanking the public for touring the current Fire Station when they had the opportunity to earlier this year to help recognize the need for a new facility. He highlighted the current issues the Fire Station has particularly the utilities are in need of being updated specifically the septic and electric, the efficiency and safety of the building, the increase in members has gotten to the point that they have outgrown the station along with the need of additional parking for the facility.

Adam Lougee explained the process for the project, identifying when the Site Selection Committee might accomplish various aspects of choosing a site for a Fire Station. He began the public meeting asking the question: What is the community looking for in a Fire Station? Brett LaRose began the conversation expressing that it was important for the community to consider the location of where the facility would be. The location of a Fire Station is critical to town infrastructure, and must be easily accessible for the firefighters to get to when responding to a call from their homes. Gerry Slager spoke in favor of keeping the Fire Station in the village based on its proximity to the schools and town buildings. Mark Bouvier agreed but also felt it was important to have access to town water. He explained that when water is your number one extinguishing agent, it is important to be able to have access to refill the tankers because although there are some dry hydrants they aren't always available. Peter D. Ryan would like to see the future considered when choosing a location, would there be a need for the Fire Station to expand again? He would like to make sure that the location that gets chosen by the committee allows the Fire Station to be able to expand if the need is there. Tom Lathrop would like the Site Selection Committee to consider not only the population growth that potentially could happen in Bristol, but where that growth was most likely to occur. Where were they going to build/live when they came to Bristol? If they could use this information to help figure out the likelihood of whether they would need to expand in the future and if they would how long would it be before they would need to expand. Ted Lylis inquired about whether the Fire Department would need to expand in order to accommodate other towns. Peter D. Ryan responded to Ted's question by stating that even if fire service was regionalized, each town would need to have their own facility.

Town Administrator Bill Bryant expressed the importance of having the Fire Station visible to the public especially for a volunteer organization. Katie Raycroft-Meyer inquired about the change in homeowners insurance rates based on the distance to the Fire Station. Bill Bryant explained that there could be a

potential change in your rate based on your proximity to the Fire Station. He felt that this was a good issue for the Site Selection Committee to research for not only those that it would affect, but how many it would affect. Naomi Drummond spoke regarding accessibility to many of the homeowners because of response time to a fire. Mark Bouvier responded by stating that when they get called out to a fire, 80% of the time they are turning left when they leave the Fire Department. Porter Knight suggested that the location be looked at objectively based on their current location. Could they use mathematical criteria based on where most calls come from and where the Firefighters are coming from to respond to the fire. Willow Wheelock agreed with Porter's comment, but also wanted to include what could happen if response times changed. Chris McGrory-Kliza asked whether they should be considering regional response or mutual aid for other communities. Brett LaRose responded by stating that Bristol is not only the center of the five towns but is also the largest. They are typically one of the first departments asked to respond to another town. He explained that each town's fire department is part of the Addison County Fire Fighters Association, which they pay to be a part of as mutual aid for surrounding departments when needed. Each department has specialized resources and are called upon as needed for other towns.

Peter Coffey expressed the importance of the fire department having designated parking for all of the responders. Diane Cushman agreed with this statement, but wanted to know how many parking spaces are needed? Brett LaRose said the Fire Department would need 50 spaces to accommodate the 38 current members of the department, as well as 12 extra spaces to be used when they have a function or training at the station. Chris McGrory-Kliza said that he felt if they kept the station in the village the parking they needed wouldn't be available and he wasn't interested in seeing an open lot designated for parking for the Fire Station. Katie Raycroft-Meyer felt that it was also important for the design of the new Fire Station to fit in with the surrounding architecture of the neighborhood.

Ken Weston suggested that perhaps the Fire Department use separate sites, this could help contain the size and perhaps help with the coverage of the town. Chris Griggs stated that the goal for the Fire Department was to have one site because they currently have two sites and it makes it more difficult to respond to an incident. Chris McGrory-Kliza suggested keeping the current building as training space and building a garage somewhere else to store the equipment. Brett LaRose explained that it is important to have one site not only to make it easier for the department to respond, but also when they are doing trainings, they typically are using the equipment to do the training so having all of this on the same sight is important. Ken Weston would like to see the new building become an Emergency Shelter in addition to the High School during emergency situations. Brett LaRose responded to Ken noting that during an emergency situation it was highly likely that the Fire Department would be out assisting the Town as much as they could, to have more people in the space would make it more difficult to respond.

Sheila McGrory-Kliza would like to see a Fire Station as a building that is combined with the Police Department and the Bristol Rescue Squad. Brett LaRose explained that the Bristol Fire Department and the Bristol Police Department are both Town entities, while the Bristol Rescue Squad is privately owned and funded. Sue Kavanagh would like the historic aspect of the building to be kept in mind when considering new sites. Justin Jackman expressed the importance of preserving the current building and

would like to reconsider the current site as an option. Eve Thompson suggested finding a site that didn't require the removal of another building, but could be completely its own.

Chris Griggs wanted to address the cost of the building since this has not been part of any discussion had about the Fire Station and it is an important factor. Sharon Compagna agreed that cost was important factor, but not just cost of the building but other factors that could increase any expenses for a household such as fire insurance. Alan Huizenga suggested establishing a minimum lot size needed to create a new station. Brett LaRose responded that two acres would be an ideal amount. Alan Huizenga also addressed the size of the building, in which most of the building would be used for garage space, but it was also important to have space for the other needs of the Fire Department. He also stated that the current septic capacity for the Fire Station is 300 gallons per day. Peter Coffey explained that they aren't just looking to build a bigger garage, but they need a space to help respond to emergency conditions, to use for training, and to use for meeting space.

Bill Bryant then read correspondence members of the public had submitted to him prior to the meeting. Peter Meyer wrote regarding his thoughts on who should be members of the Site Selection Committee. David Brynn wrote about what he thought was important aspects for the public to consider when discussing the Fire Station, particularly that this project has an opportunity to be a legacy, and could the project be completed in phases or does it all need to be completed at once.

Willow Wheelock asked Adam Lougee how do they determine what is deemed important from this list that they created. Adam explained that at the next meeting they could cross off some items on the list they felt weren't important, but ultimately the Site Selection Committee would have to determine what they think is important from that list.

Adam Lougee then asked the public what they thought good locations would be for the Fire Station. Adam had Selectboard member Joel Bouvier put pins in the map for locations that were suggested for the Fire Station. Linda Malzac suggested the keep the Fire Station right where it is. Sheila McGrory-Kliza thought the Post Office would be a good location since it was right in the middle of Town. Ron LaRose posed the question about whether the Selectboard was going to enforce eminent domain. Bill Bryant responded that the Selectboard had thought about it and wasn't going to rule out that option, but wasn't planning on using this to obtain a lot. Katie Raycroft-Meyer asked if they could see the list of 19 sites that were suggested in the previous Pacheco Ross study that was done. Joel Bouvier explained the location for the following 19 sites. (1) Mount Abraham Bus Barn, Airport Road, (2) Stoney Hill Property owned by the Town behind Nelson Memorial (former state gravel pit), the access for this property would be at the top of Stoney Hill versus the middle, (3) Bristol Recreation Field, frontage on West Street, (4) Ed & Sue Shepard and next door neighbor residence on West Street, (5) Thad's Automotive and the house behind it on West Street, (6) Horse Riding Ring property owned by the Town on Liberty Street, (7) Back half of Martin's Hardware, where the Community Garden is on the corner of Liberty and West Pleasant Street, (8) Corner of Pine and Liberty Street (Lawson Hammond's property), which Joel noted is currently occupied by 4-5 new houses, (9) Telephone building on Munsill Avenue in the former Autumn Harp parking lot, which is now used by Bristol Works!, LLC, (10) Corner of Pine and Maple Street which is now Bristol Works!, LLC, (11) Plank Road across from Roy's Automotive, the Heffernan's open land, this

was the number one property from the Pacheco Ross Study, (12) Shepard property on the corner of Plank Road and North Street, (13) Bouvier property on 128 and 130 North Street, (14) Behind Bristol Rescue Squad on Monkton Road, (15) the corner of North and Spring Street, which was formerly Marion Burke's property, (16) Champlain Farms on West Street, (17) Weston and Hanson properties on North Street, (18) Nancy Dike's property on the corner of North Street and Fitch Avenue, (19) Bristol Fire Department at the present location. Numbers 2, 11, 13, 17, and 19 were the five sites that were forwarded to Dennis Ross for more depth in review of the Pacheco Ross study. Bill Bryant also explained that the homeowners of those five sites were notified regarding the interest in putting the Fire Department there. Ted Lylis would like the Bryden property on 98 North Street to be considered. Ken Weston suggested the old Roy's Automotive site. Willow Wheelock proposed the Town owned property near the Town Garage and Landfill. Porter Knight recommended the old Bristol Animal Hospital on West Street which is currently owned by the American Legion. Bill Bryant said Tom Lathrop had suggested his property near Daniel Four Corners between Dave Hunt's house and Greenwood Cemetary this would give access to both Burpee Road and Stoney Hill. He also said that Champlain Valley Plumbing and Heating on Monkton Road was willing to be considered as a site. Kris Perlee proposed the old Tomasi properties located on North Street next to the Rite Aid parking lot entrance. Mark Bouvier suggested using the Rite Aid parking lot on the corner of North and Main Street. Joel Bouvier recommended at looking to keep the Fire Station where it is, but purchasing George Vince's house between the Fire Station and the Library on North Street. Lance Perlee suggested the lot on North Street between Hazel Devino's house and Billy Bouvier's house, which is currently an empty lot.

Adam Lougee then posed the question to the public about what they would do with the current Fire Station if the facility were to move to another site. Diane Cushman suggested that the building be moved to the future site. Kris Perlee would like everyone to be aware of the current zoning that is in place when considering a future use for this building. Kevin LaRose also wanted everyone to consider the current septic system that is there and its capacity. Katie Raycroft-Meyer asked about a plan to increase the old septic that was there based on the previous proposal. Joel Bouvier explained that the increase in the septic system was specifically designated for Town owned buildings, therefore if this was no longer owned by the Town it would be up to the future owner to consider what would have to be done with the septic for the lot. Willow Wheelock proposed that no matter what the Town keep the building. Sharon Compagna wanted to remind everyone that if they kept this building it also required the Town to maintain that building. Chris McGrory-Kliza suggested that perhaps this could be used for other Town Departments such as the police department, or the expansion of the current Town Offices. Willow Wheelock also suggested that this space be used for early childhood education. Slim Pickens proposed that this be used for the Post Office if the Fire Department moved there.

Adam Lougee then asked the public if there were any questions or comments they had regarding any part of the meeting. Willow Wheelock wanted everyone to be able to have the opportunity to be able to have time to think reflectively about the meeting. She also suggested there be a limited amount of time at the next meeting to share these thoughts before they continued this process. Adam said that he would be willing to have a small amount of time at the beginning of the next meeting giving the public an opportunity to add to any of the lists that were currently works in progress. Lois Thompson spoke

regarding the Site Selection Committee. She felt it was important for the members of the committee to consider the neighbors surrounding the potential site and what they would like to see with the site. Sue Kavanagh inquired about how soon the minutes for the meeting could be posted. She thought this could be a good tool for others who weren't present at the meeting to review. Diane Cushman wanted to have the village defined by the Selectboard because currently there is no difference between the Town and the Village. After further discussion by the group it was decided the village would be defined as where the village water system is, or a property that could be easily attached to the Town water system. Lance Perlee the representative that works for Simon Operating Systems here in Bristol who is hired by the Town to maintain the water system stood and demonstrated on the map where the current water system is. Mark Bouvier wanted to make everyone aware of the importance of response time specifically for the Fire Department. Willow Wheelock asked the Fire Department if they could make a handout that compiled their data regarding response times, the average amount of time it takes to get somewhere would be beneficial for everyone. Chris McGrory-Kliza also thought they could include the change in response time based on the change in location and how many homes it would affect. Ron LaRose spoke regarding that location was not the only issue that this project will face. He emphasized that cost will be an issue for many people and that everyone here should be trying to get some of those people to come to the next meeting. Adam Lougee said that at the next meeting the Selectboard will address the composition of the Site Selection Committee. He also said that the next meeting would be an opportunity to hopefully refine this list. Brett LaRose showed his appreciation for everyone that came to the meeting and is hoping that everyone can continue to make this a public process and relay the message to others who are not here.