

TOWN OF JEFFERSON
SELECT BOARD—ADG MEETING MINUTES
November 6, 2019

An announced meeting of the Board of Selectmen and representatives from ADG was held at the Select Board Office Wednesday, November 6, 2019, at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Kevin Meehan, Chair; and Tom Brady and Cindy Silver--members comprising a quorum of the Board

OTHERS PRESENT: Kathi Marshall, Assistant to the Select Board. Stuart Arnette (ADG), Nancy Decourcey, Liz Milligan, Adele Woods, Joy McCorkill and Jeanne Kenison were also present.

Stuart said we are about 2/3 of the way through with the school plans at this point. He said any one of the five or six options the town chooses will be workable. He summarized the pricing by explaining there were three levels that were reflective of the amount of work to be done. The \$2-million price included upgrading everything, and importantly, focusing on energy efficiency with perhaps solar panels, insulation, etc. It included removing some walls to reconfigure space. The \$1-million-(plus) price would include some energy-efficient changes and moderate renovations; perhaps lighting. The lowest price version would be nearly “move in as is,” and perhaps having town members do painting, cleaning, etc., and leave the building design pretty much as it is now. Stuart said it would be important to estimate what it would cost “to do nothing.” Even if the townspeople went down with paintbrushes to tackle things themselves, the town would still have to update the furnaces and do some insulation work. The school would have to at least meet the minimum standards for energy-conservation.

Stuart went on to say the ultimate cost is still dependent on many things. If the town chooses to go with a particular plan that includes rental space, community space, etc., there is a good chance the plan would change the land-use status of the school, and incur more expense. But he also mentioned some things that could mitigate expenses, such as the Historical Society and/or the Library contributing ongoing rental income for space. While the town does subsidize the library, he mentioned the school would not have zoned heating so the town would be paying the library's heat. Their commitment to covering a portion of that cost would help with expenses. Stuart said once these figures are solidified we would better know the impact on townspeople with regard to their taxes.

Stuart also touched on the marketing aspect of town buildings that will be effected by a move to the school. He mentioned the condition of the current library and its possible value. He said it has no running water, no sewer, and no land. It might be of most value to an adjacent property owner, or if the town would like to retain it, as an information booth of some kind.

The town offices are another story. Stewart said we have to consider what they would be worth as a lease and what they would be worth as a sale. He said we can only estimate these things since there are no other historical buildings around to compare them to—town offices affixed to an historic town hall which no one wants to knock down. The Fire Department has office space in the building as well. It complicates things. If you sell the building, the new owner becomes a landlord to the Fire Department. That would mean the town would now have a rent payment. Another option would be to demolish the building so someone could put in a store of some kind. But they would only have the land the store sits on, because the town owns the septic system that is behind the town offices. A sale could prohibit a private buyer from owning the town septic system. If we demolish the building, there is also a demolition fee that is around \$6.00 a square foot, and that option leaves the Fire Department without space.

Stuart again mentioned the possibility of reducing costs by having the Historical Society and/or the Library pay a rental fee for their space in the school.

Tom asked if Stuart was working on one plan or still working on all the plans presented. Stuart said, in his mind, all the plans are the same. Any one of them can be adapted to suit the preferences of the town. Tom said the town really needed to know what the minimum cost would be if we went forward doing a “bare bones” change to the school, and when we could possibly have those figures. Stuart said he could have them for the Board by the beginning of December.

Stuart said there would be changes made in the middle-cost scenario and the higher-cost scenario that would defer capital maintenance. The “bare bones” approach would have to pick up those maintenance costs, since many areas would not be 'fixed' or new, but would continue with needs to be upgraded going forward. If the project is done at the middle cost or higher cost most major things will be replaced or renewed.

Cindy said the \$2-million price was just too high. She felt if we had all three options with pricing, the board and town could select what would be needed to get people moved into the building without going overboard financially. Stuart said it would be important to determine at what stage you could begin to get some people into the building, and when you could get everyone into the building. He said if the board elects to do full insulation you would not want anyone in the school until the insulation was done. You also have to consider if you do it “piecemeal” it will cost even more long-term, since prices for materials and labor go up over time. It raises the question if the project would ever be complete.

Tom asked if Stuart would have the tax impact figures for all three levels of planning, and Stuart said he would. Tom also asked about the possibility of grant funds. Stuart said grants are issued for many reasons, one among them being job creation. If the town decides not to make changes but paints the inside itself, there most likely will be no grant. Cindy asked about a grant for making the school an emergency shelter in the event of major or catastrophic events. Kevin mentioned he spoke with a gentleman from the Red Cross who was involved in the recent Emergency Operations Plan. He said there was a list of required assets a building had to have in order to qualify as a “full-time” shelter. Kevin said the only thing really needed at the school was a generator and shower facility. There are no other local emergency shelters. Stuart said it would be possible to check into grants such as that. He also said that at this stage in the planning there was no need to make detailed decisions on where things will be located or placed. He said the overall plan can begin and as the project develops those determinations can be made.

Tom asked what Stuart would have ready for Town Meeting in March. Stuart said he could work on the wording for the warrant if the board agreed. Cindy reiterated that she would like to see the warrant and a bond ready for town meeting, with the bond being contingent on certain things. Tom said there would have to be a warrant, and the town would have to vote on using money in the trust fund that was set apart for the new library. That would have to be done before a warrant for the school project. Stuart mentioned the pledges that had been made to the library, and the board confirmed they were totally separate. Liz said there were pledges made that were contingent upon their being used only on a “new” building. Kevin said they would each have to be called and spoken to in order to see if they would honor their pledge for the building being renovated as opposed to a “new” building. Stuart said the town may have to begin work on the project with a plan that covers all costs and hope that as time goes by some of these funds that are questionable right now may be unlocked and used toward the overall cost. Stuart said there was a real danger in assuming you should wait until every donation was committed to the project—it may never come to fruition. Tom said he felt we should proceed as if the only money available were the town funds. He said it would be tough to depend on anything else

without having a solid commitment.

Cindy mentioned the property at the corner where the new library site had been planned. Stuart asked for more information on the property. Tom said it doesn't matter how much money we can get from the reworded library warrant from last year or from any capital gain. We can't spend any of it until the town votes to spend it.

Stuart said there is some marketability in the school building itself. He asked if the town had considered selling the school and then building what was needed with the income. Tom said in the very beginning there were some who just wanted to get rid of the school, but the survey indicated most people wanted to see the town elements move to the school. Tom also mentioned the main concern from townspeople at this stage has to do with the \$2-million dollar price tag, and the effect that would have on property taxes. He would really like to know what the “bare bones” price is.

Stuart said he could work up a market value of the school—if the town could sell it for a phenomenal price you would want to do that. Tom said it would be great to have the “bare bones” price and then pricing for certain steps if we changed things as time went along. Stuart mentioned again you don't want to put things out too far, or you will end up paying much more.

Liz mentioned the current library had land donated to it by the Brooks family. She believes there may be a stipulation in the paperwork somewhere that if it is not used as a library, the land goes back to the family. Stuart thought about the feasibility of selling the town office space, but the town septic system is attached, and that situation could get quite involved. He believes the DES paperwork would indicate who was responsible for maintaining and operating the septic system, and that may always be the town. That could compromise a possible sale for someone interested in purchasing the building. Does he get the septic system? Would he get the funds for the septic that have been put aside? Many questions there.

Stuart felt the wording of the warrants would not be difficult. He asked Kathi to send him the financial information concerning the Historical Society. If they were going to have space in the school they could pledge a certain amount in rental fees. Adele Woods said the Historical Society didn't have a great deal of money, but she agreed to bring Kathi the information so she could forward it to Stuart.

Stuart will get back to the board some time in early December with three levels of pricing and an early draft of the warrant wording. He will let Kathi know if any other information is needed.

New Business: (None)

Non-Public RSA-91-A:3 (If needed)

Public Input: (None)

Any Other Business: (None)

Adjournment – The meeting ended at 7:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Select Board will be November 18, 2019.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,