

**MINUTES of the FREEDOM TOWN OFFICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING FOR 01/17/2023**

Anne Cunningham called the January 17, 2023 meeting of the Town Office Advisory (TOA) Committee to order at 1:30

pm at the Freedom Town Hall. Denny Anderson, Karrie Buttrick, Mark McKinley and Ernie Day (BOS) were in attendance. One member from the public was present.

Review the Agenda & Discussion

Minutes from the last meeting on November 30, 2022 were reviewed. Anne mentioned a spelling mistake, the word should be refurbishing, not refurbishing. The corrected sentence to read “Kate believes that a new building, all on one floor would be more expensive than refurbishing the current building.” Ernie made a motion to accept the minutes with the correction. It was seconded by Denny and approved by all.

Before this meeting, Anne had forwarded to all committee members the email she had received from Kate Richardson from Bergeron Technical Services (BTS) with the estimate for a set of schematic plans for a completely new building for the Town Offices. The estimated fee for these plans would be \$12,000.00. Kate gave us two options that would reduce the cost for the new plans, Option 1 would include a credit from unspent hazardous material budget bringing the total to \$10,650 or Option 2 to include the credit and using what would be the BTS public presentation cost as a credit bringing the total down to \$7,344.50. Anne asked the committee for their thoughts.

Karrie mentioned that she was surprised by the cost of the new building plans but she has no experience in building so she really could not make a good judgement call. She asked since we are only asking BTS to price out one option of the three options design for the Town Office Building if there would be credit that could be applied to the cost of the new building plans. Anne replied that there might be a credit but it still would not be enough to cover the cost of the new building plans. Anne said she would contact Kate and ask if about the possibility of a credit.

Denny expressed that from a contractor’s position that it might seem high but he hasn’t done a lot of public work which is usually more costly to put together. Denny believes that BTS should provide the public presentations since they know the ins and outs of the plans and there will be questions that only they can answer.

Mark expressed two concerns. First, the committee has no concept or idea what the Town would want for a new building nor have the Town Office employees given their input. Second, the committee was tasked to look at only the Town Office Building refurbishment and that spending money for a new building plan would require a vote by the Town’s people. Anne reminded the committee that we decided that there was not enough time or options to fully present this to the public and the committee would use 2023 to communicate the proposals to the public. We had decided as a committee that there was only one viable option to refurbish the Town Office Building and that the second option would be the cost of a new building as a comparison. The committee would need a warrant article to amend the 2020 Article in order to move forward with a new building estimate and a warrant article for funding a new building cost estimate. Mark asked if we know what the \$12,000 estimate includes. Anne said she would ask BTS more specifically what is included in the estimate.

Ernie expressed his concerns regarding the new building estimate cost and asked if we could get a clarification on what we have for credits and what the actual price would be. Anne said this is one of the questions she would ask BTS.

It was discussed by the committee and agreed that it would be best if BTS provides the public presentations.

Anne asked the public in attendance for comments. Darwin Moulton said that he has seen the town grow since COVID, and that new people are moving in and more people are working from home. He believes a new Town Office building, built all on one floor, would benefit the Town. If, in the future, the Town needs any additional office space, it would be easier to build an addition to a new building.

Anne said she would contact BTS with the following questions:

- What exactly is provided in the \$12,000 cost estimate for a new building.
- Since we are asking for only one option for the Town Office Building, could there be a credit that could be applied to the new building cost estimate since we are not requesting a second option.

Anne is asking BTS to reply as soon as possible so that the committee can meet before the warrant deadline.

Other Business:

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:09 pm.

Next meeting to be determined.