

**MINUTES of the FREEDOM TOWN OFFICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING FOR 12/18/2023 (Draft)**

Anne Cunningham called the December 18, 2023 meeting of the Town Office Advisory Committee (TOAC) to order at 10:00 am at the Freedom Town Hall. Denny Anderson, Karrie Buttrick, Mark McKinley, and Ernie Day (BOS) were in attendance. Members of the public in attendance were Paul and Bonnie Elie.

Review the Agenda & Discussion

Minutes from the public presentation on November 18, 2023 were reviewed. There was one spelling correction. Ernie made a motion to accept the minutes with the spelling correction made. It was seconded by Denny and approved by all.

Rob Turpin from Misiaszek Turpin and Stacy Clark, an Estimator from Turnstone Corporation were in attendance to present their cost estimate for the proposed new town office building on Eaton Road. Stacy provided all committee members a spreadsheet showing the cost estimate and a second sheet that showed exclusions. Rob explained that with the new building, they tried to make the numbers comparable to the renovation of the existing building numbers as they pertain to office sizes and square footage. In discussing the importance of the comparisons, Anne acknowledged that in 2009, there were three warrant article/bond issues that caused a lot of agitation because the sites were not apples to apples in comparisons. Rob also mentioned the one difference in the cost estimate is that the existing Town Office building will need very little site work, whereas the new building will require a lot more site work.

Stacy said that this is a first round budget and that the budget can be revised for next year. Construction costs have gone up significantly since 2021, so to be fiscally responsible, they have added an escalation cost. Stacy added that without fully engineered drawings, they want to make sure that they are on the safe side of costs. Site costs and any possible hazardous material in the existing property is an unknown. Some of the proposed cost listed on the bottom of the spreadsheet would be given back to the town if not spent. Rob mentioned there is a line under sitework for a well and septic system for the new building. He was not sure if the existing well and septic could be used and that is why this cost is included. Anne asked whether the septic system could be detailed to display on the spreadsheet since it was not depicted on the present spreadsheet. Stacy said that she would update the spreadsheet to include this information. Denny asked if they could get the cost of new well and septic, in case it is decided to use the existing well & septic. Stacy said yes, it could be listed it as an alternate cost.

Anne asked if Stacy and Rob could review the spreadsheet and explain the different lines in more detail. Stacy started with Division 01, General Conditions which costs include a supervisor on site to manage the contractors, office trailer, toilets, and fencing. Stacy said that she would send the specifics for this line. Turnstone show 7 months as a baseline for this project. Division 02, Existing Conditions which would be demolition of the existing building on the site. Denny asked if this was something the town could do as a savings but Ernie said that the town does not have the personnel. Stacy stated the demolition could be indicated as an alternate cost if the Town decided to go with a local contractor but they had to put a number down. The discussion continued down the lines of the spreadsheet which were mostly self-explanatory. There was a discussion on Division 22/23 HVAC/Plumbing. Stacy explained that the cost listed was for a heat pump system but again, once the electrical engineer takes a look at this, heat pump versus forced hot air can be looked at and addressed later. Anne asked if there was anything in the proposal for fire and security. Stacy said that it covers an alarm and smoke detection system but not a sprinkler system. The Committee asked to list the fire detection system on the spreadsheet. A security system is not included.

Solar power on the site was brought up during the discussions. Rob recommended that if solar power is possible in the future, it should be considered when planning for the electrical system. Denny recommended ground mounted panels over roof mounted panels. Denny explained that since asphalt shingles are not lasting more than 20 years, you must remove the solar panels when re-shingling the roof. Also, it is easier to maintain and repair panels that are ground-mounted versus roof-mounted.

Denny mentioned that even if we can cut some of the cost that are listed on the spreadsheet, there are still cost outside of the building project that will accrue. This includes the excluded cost on the second page of the proposal.

Stacy mentioned that if Turnstone was selected for the project, once the site and civil engineering designs are complete, they would put the work out for bid to 3 to 5 sub-contractors for the different divisions. They would also look to the town for locally-sourced businesses that could do the work on this project. Mark asked if a construction manager or clerk of the works would be working for Turnstone? Stacy said the construction manager would manage the project as well as all of the sub-contractors. A clerk of the works would work for the project owner to oversee that Turnstone would be doing everything they are supposed to do. Normally the Town designates this person.

Anne asked if salaries were included in Division 01 General Conditions. Stacy replied yes. Denny said he has a complete list of items that are included under General Conditions that he can forward on to the Committee. Stacy also said that she would send a list of the items that they anticipate would be under General Conditions.

Mark asked about the cost per square footage. Rob replied the entire footprint of the building is a little over 2700 square feet. So, if you add up Division 3 through Division 26, which just apply to the building, it is about \$240 per square foot. However, when you add in the site work and all the other items, it is about \$400 per square foot.

Stacy said that she would send over more details on the General Conditions line, a summary of what was included in the electrical and HVAC, and a summary of the site work that included the septic. Stacy also said to reach out to her if the Committee has any other questions.

Ernie addressed the issue that was brought up during the presentation in August regarding town growth and the need for additional office space in the future. The traffic flow into the Town Office has change now that more online services are available. Anne asked Ernie if the TOAC should request the BOS to clarify their view before the next public presentation on January 11, 2024 since we know that this will be brought up. Ernie said that this could be put on the BOS agenda for January 8, 2024.

For the public presentation on January 11, 2024, Rob was asked to present the information that he provided in August and the cost estimate that we reviewed today.

With no further questions, the committee thanked Rob and Stacy for attending.

The Committee agreed that there should be information posted the Town website with the two proposals to help inform the public before the presentation on January 11, 2024.

The committee agreed there is a need for another meeting the week of January 1, 2024.

Anne asked if there were any public comments. Paul Elie asked if there would be two options, either the renovations or a new building. Anne replied that there would be two bond issues.

There were no further comments from the public. Ernie made a motion to end the meeting. It was second by Denny and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 11:20am.