

**Municipal Civic Building  
Public Meeting #3  
June 20, 2013  
Thatcher Brook Primary School**

Present: J. Grenier (chair), C. Nordle, K. Miller, C. Viens, Select Board. B. Shepeluk

Q (Pete Wood): Where would we be today if the flood never touched Waterbury?

A (C. Viens): We would be at 51 South Main Street.

Q (Wood): How much of the planned projects (like the Main Street Reconstruction project) will fall back on us? When people's pay doesn't go up, how do you figure?

A (J. Grenier): Those projects have been on the books to do for a while now. We're trying to decide what to do for the future. We'd like to see the project happen at the same time as the Main Street project.

Q (Wood): Why don't you take care of your infrastructure?

A (Grenier): This is part of our infrastructure.

Q (Wood): This building is going to be pretty elaborate for a town this size.

A (K. Miller): Waterbury will contribute \$260,000 for the Main St. Reconstruction project, \$160,000 for the roundabout project, and \$5,000 for two roads that need to be repaired. We need to be fiscally responsible and ask if there are other options we can look at that accomplish similar goals without costing us so much.

Q (Wood): I'm not against growth, but I am this year.

Q (Linda Parks): It seems like you looked at sites from the perspective of putting four functions together. Did you look at other options within those sites?

A (J. Grenier): We looked at other options that would fit those four functions. We moved forward with what we've been asked to do. One building seems like a smart thing to do. Are there options to split functions up? There may be, but right now were looking at all four functions together.

Q (Rick Darby): I own commercial downtown property and have been in Waterbury for 40 years. It may be true that nothing would have happened for a few years but for Irene. But Irene hit us, and hit us hard. We lost the municipal building; the library had four feet of water in the basement. My building had 4.5 feet of water in it and I'm about 100 yards away from the Stanley and Wasson site. We've been wanting to do something about the library for as long as I can remember, and Winooski Street residents were forcefully opposed to the proposed addition onto the back of the library. It makes sense to put all functions under one roof, and at a location like Stanley Hall where it is within easy walking distance of most of Village. The Armory site would create problems for senior citizens and handicapped, and others. We've been lucky; we've worked hard to make this a very livable, prosperous community. Prosperity may not reach everyone, but we've always had feeling for less fortunate folks, the State Hospital is testimony to that. Our projects helped GMCR decide they would locate & stay in this community. Now they're an international company with thousands of employees, and the same goes for Ben and Jerry's. We have been blessed and now it's our time in the rain barrel. I can help raise some money to pay down

the bond. I see some creative people here tonight, and so can you. Maybe we can reduce the bond to \$4 million. \$500,000 is in the budget for overruns and contingencies; we can avoid this if we're careful. We can raise more money and we can have one of the best municipal complexes in the area. Look at the fire station and school; we've done it before and we can do it again. Join me and try to raise another million dollars. Thank you.

Q (Jane Willard): I'm on the board of directors for the Historical Society and would like to present my view from a Historical Society perspective. I've been pondering on a question from the first meeting, "Is this a bare bones or Taj Mahal project?" Some tonight have said it is extravagant, others said not. Last Thursday night at the playground, kids at school did a wax museum. The Historical Society came up with 60 names of notable local folk. Skip Flanders is co-president of the Historical Society, and he helped kids with the research. To do this, he had to go to the vault in the first floor of the library to get to the files. The vault is right off the reading room, and he needed to move bookcases and go into the very, very damp vault to access the files. One day he even worked 'til 3am. I have a grave concern about moisture in the vault and paper documents, and it is attractive that we will have room in new vault for HS documents. The HS is grateful for the \$100,000 gift from taxpayers for a catalog and inventory process, however, we don't have a workplace to use it. The conference room on the second floor of the library can't be used for workspace for the HS since the library holds programs there. We've been using the small room off to the side of the conference room instead, but we can't put all of our filing cabinets into this room because it exceeds the weight limit of the floor. From our perspective, space is a need, not a want.

A (C. Viens): All of the Board members get that we need something; that we need to do something. When I was elected, I felt like I was elected on premise that I would be fiscally responsible and prudent for the taxpayers as a whole. I've been in construction for over 34 years, and believe me, if I felt like this was a great opportunity, I'd be all over it. I don't agree with building in the flood zone. It's like getting hit by car and standing up and walking down center of road again. This scare tactic of "we've got to get interest rates now and low construction costs" is speculation. I understand we need new facilities; the question is what do we want to spend to do it.

Q (David Luce): I own commercial property in the Village that is two doors up from the Stanley and Wasson site. I understand thinking about the floodplain, but the Town doesn't have as much faith in itself as the State has in us. Some people on the Board opposed to this project were pleading with the State to return to Waterbury. You write off many businesses and homeowners in the Village when you criticize building in the floodplain. We should show fortitude in going back into a site we now have access to. I don't think the Pinnacle and Armory Drive site are good sites. You don't just plan a community because there's land available, especially when it comes to most important municipal functions. I've looked at Chris's numbers; he's used the BRD numbers, and construction management costs may be less. We built our fire stations in the floodplain, but the fire station can't be used as community meeting space because parking doesn't allow it. There's hardly space for firemen to park, and certainly no room for expansion. Saying this can be used for meeting space is a quick way to cut out square feet and dollars from the plan. We know you're committed to bringing this in for as little as you

can. We know that just because the bond vote passes, doesn't mean you run out and spend the money. There is potential to raise more money in this town.

A (K. Miller): I would like to say two things. One, the community meeting space above the fire station was selling point when we went to bond for that project, and Darren Winham is currently working on finding us downtown parking. I don't understand why we are duplicating resources. We told voters we'd use the fire station space for the community, and now were saying there's no parking. I think this is wrong; this is what the space was originally for. Two, the building is in the floodplain. We can build in the floodplain, and I thank god the State's coming back. They can afford to build there because they have more resources than we do. It's going to cost us a lot of money for us to build there; flood mitigation is more expensive. You must deal with that expense before you start the process. Let's take a breath and look at what we're looking at. We haven't looked at other sites. What warned public meeting did you go to that looked at these options? John said we discussed these things, but there have been no conversations about this building at all. I kept bringing up Wasson Hall, and there was never a response about what we were going to do with it. We only want to watch your dollars. One person tell me: what is wrong with taking a breath and looking at other options that could save this community millions and millions of dollars?

A (C. Nordle): On March 19, 2012 we met to discuss what the Board's intention at the time was to hiring Weimann Lamphere to provide preliminary sketches for sites we could build on. Appointed members of each Board met with Weimann Lamphere to discuss design. Karen was part of this process. One month later, the Select Board meets to discuss various sketches with Architect Steve Roy. There were various meetings with opportunities to talk about the options at each site. The original designs were too expensive, so we've been trimming them back. At least 4 members of the Board were comfortable moving the project forward and presenting a bond vote. About Wasson Hall, there's been limited conversation. We want to develop a proposal and budget for a building the Town will put its functions in. Wasson is an existing building; it can sit there for the time being. I have a hard time believing there's no future use for this building. Darren has people interested. We could lease, rent, or do something else with this building. I don't think it needs to be addressed at this stage in the process.

Q (MK Monley): The last 2 bonds that I remember recently were both under budget. We were under by \$11,000 out of \$7.8 million for the school. Can we raise the money? In September of 2011 Revitalizing Waterbury took on ReBuild Waterbury. I, as president, had people yelling at me, saying I wouldn't be able to pay the Town back the \$100,000 that we borrowed from them. I knew it was the right thing to do. We can do this. I'm tired of hearing "what if we can't?" Well, what if we can? What if we have? What if we continue to?! I didn't elect the Select Board to save money in my pocket; I elected them to do the right thing for this community.

A (Carol Miller): I think this meeting started out well with thoughtful comments. I would have liked to have these conversations at warned meetings, and sooner. What I see happening at this meeting tonight, is when people have misgivings about this project, their positions are ridiculed, there are innuendoes, and people feel defensive. You could convince me if we'd had a better process in place to evaluate options. You're trying to tell me there's no room at alternative sites for what we want to do? It feels like this process has been railroaded and it feels rushed. At the end of May the MOUs and

agreements with the Water and Sewer Commissioners was made public. This may have been discussed, but in executive session, and not publically. Why set a date to vote when early voting was a week or 10 days after most of the information was made public? This process has not allowed for consideration of all possibilities. We may have come down to this option as the best option if we'd gone through a more thorough process.

A (C. Viens): I commend MK and Rick for their offer to raise more money to drop the price down. Tonight was the first night I've heard of this happening, and it feels like it's at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. I commend you and thank you for your efforts.

A (J. Grenier): We have been having public warned meetings. Every SB meeting has discussed this project and recovery and there has been public opportunity and input.

Q (Roy Lloyd): As many of you know, we moved here for the sense of neighborliness; that people could disagree respectfully. I am wholeheartedly in favor of this project, but it's been troubling to me that there's a nasty tone to so much of the conversation, either expressed or hinted at. I respect what I'm hearing from people who say we should do something different. What's on Front Porch Forum or here is distressing; a healthy community can't be built on a spirit of nastiness. I feel I've been involved from the beginning and I feel informed to cast a yes vote. A different point of view doesn't mean were wrong, we need to listen to one another. It is encouraging that someone on the Select Board has experience. I feel it is helpful to have combined functions in one location, that's why I'm in favor of the project, but I'm not in favor of name-calling or being nasty to one another. This doesn't speak to the character of this community that drew us together in the beginning. I would like for us to be polite and considerate.

Q (Nate Lewis): I am wondering if any return on investment has been done on this project. For instance, I've heard of broadening the tax base as a justification. Has anyone run any numbers on this?

A (J. Grenier): That's a good question. We've been working on cost for the budget and building. We don't have the list of numbers to do this. In terms of hard numbers on one building versus two, no we don't have that analysis laid out unfortunately.

Q (Bob Dain): I brought pictures with me of the library from years ago if anyone would like to see them. In these pictures, the kids and parents are smiling and having fun not because of the building they were in. It's the people that provide the services that make the services valuable to us, it's not the building we put the services in that make the services valuable. There are meeting rooms here, though it's not always convenient. One concern I have about co-locating is the farmer's adage of "don't carry all the eggs in one basket". If something were to go wrong at the building, we'd lose all the functions at once for a period of time. If you're prepared for the worst, you'll probably survive the worst.

Q (John Gallagher): I put my faith in our elected officials. It sounds like you went through a fairly healthy review process. I don't know if there was a dollar figure when it was put to a bond vote. I like libraries, and we need new municipal building, but I'm not ready to jump off the cliff. Can you please explain how this project moves forward- including through the design review process?

A (J. Grenier): I would compare this process to that of the fire stations. The bond vote passed, a steering committee was formed and met weekly to keep the project on track and worked with a design build

firm. To date, we've worked with an architectural firm. The process and steps haven't been determined yet. We have several options going forward. Design-bid-build is an option. Hiring a design-build firm is another option. Construction Management, a hybrid of the two, is another option. There are a few options to go from the rendered option to the building you walk into.

A (K. Miller): When we went to bond for the fire stations we knew lot more information. We had sent out an RFP and met with people from the fire station to talk about the proposals. It was clear cut; we knew what things cost. The fire station was more concrete when we were at this point.

Q (Peter Hack): Thank you for the thankless job. I understand where you're coming from, but it's a lot of money. Based on the square footages and costs broken up on website, the estimated cost is \$293 per square foot. When I calculated \$7.5 million divided by 18,400 square feet, it comes out to be \$400 per square foot. \$293 per square foot is not realistic. There are a lot of meeting rooms around here; there must be a way to trim back the overlap. Why is 51 South Main Street not being used now for something?

A (J. Grenier) The Village owns the building and they would need to decide if they wanted to use it. I can't speak to their views.

Q (Hack): Fix it and use it. It's the only building that hasn't been fixed. Fix Stanley and use it as is. It can be reused, I know it.

A (C. Nordle): 51 South Main is not being used. Perhaps Skip can answer this better, but I believe the Village is holding onto the insurance proceeds because this would be a substantial portion to help pay for a reconstructed police department at a new location. The building is subject to this project going forward. If they spend the insurance proceeds now, it won't be available when they're ready to go elsewhere. The Village will eventually put 51 South Main up for sale and they don't want to put money into a building if they don't know what it will be used for later on.

Q (Gloria Como): Several buildings were discounted in the original search. The square feet of the building seems to have gone from 27,250 square feet to 23,400 square feet. Why can't each of the areas have been reduced in size? 4,500 square feet would give the library twice what they have now. Reality needs to be affected here. At the public design workshop, the BRD architects urged us, "If price were no object, which would you like?" He was herding us down a predetermined road. My table didn't want the police department in the same location, but it's still in the plans. My table didn't want it in the floodplain, and now it's in the floodplain; the bond ties it to the floodplain. And all those people who think renters don't pay property taxes- property taxes get paid on the property, and they pay it through their rent. I believe in Waterbury, but I don't believe this is the way to prove it.

Q (John Callan): I felt more comfortable with how the last project was being managed (the fire station). We had positive results when there were no overruns. I'm perplexed about the pump station. What if you need to replace the pump station if you have to take over responsibility of it?

A (B. Shepeluk): The pump station has nothing to do with the Town.

Q (Callan): There are so many unknowns, what are the costs? You want to build in the floodplain and I can't support it. The Armory site isn't remote. Maybe we need a new road access for High Street? This

might open up options. I recommend taking a fresh look at how were planning the town. You can't build in the floodplain with Town funds.

A (C. Nordle): Bill is right about the pump station. The State is looking to come to an agreement with the Village Water and Sewer Commissioners regarding the station. The State is willing to pay a reasonable rate to the Village to cover their use.

Q (Everett Coffey): This isn't meant to be taken as a negative criticism. Is it correct that the idea for co-location came from a survey and town fair with less than 400 people?

A (J. Grenier): Co-location came out of the LTCR process, which about 400 people participated in.

A (C. Nordle): About 75% of the people that showed up and voted, voted this way.

Q (Coffey): 51 South Main Street hasn't been considered because the Select Board said they'd never go back there for municipal offices. The library folks and the Select Board and some Trustees have driven this project. You have not provided the voting public in Waterbury with options. Take down parker house, or restore it. You could have a parking garage on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, with an elevator to the municipal offices. They've asked for 4,200 square feet, and 1,800 square feet is what the police department asked for. They're currently renting space for about \$2,000 per month. Did you see the article in the paper today? I believe that within 10 years one of two things will happen: One, the police department will self-destruct, or two, we'll have a Town-wide PD. I have sincere doubts that the Waterbury library gets 600 people per month. People that "believe" have a lot more money than those not on the back of today's Waterbury Record ad.

Q (J. Grenier): We were trying to present to you the facts the best we can. We hire professionals to give us their best guess given construction, codes, etc. There's speculation about two buildings being cheaper, or, "if we do this it will be cheaper", etc. People say things like, "I have a hunch", "I feel", "I think", but it's hard to know what to present to the community other than the numbers we're given by professionals.

Q: The issue isn't the need for space. Why will we vote on a \$5 million bond if we can raise money on our own (as Rick Darby mentioned)?

Q (Felix Callan): What's the cost of the boat ferry to get people to and from building in a floodplain?

Q (Gena Callan): In an article in the Record on June 6<sup>th</sup>, it states that the proposed cents on a \$100,000 property will be 36.75cents. You said it would be 35 cents. The numbers are different. Regarding the pump station, the Village having to accept ownership of the pump station is contingent on a \$300,000 purchase. I thought Town Meeting Day would be an opportunity to weigh in. Are we building according to what the 1927 flood was?

A (J. Grenier): On the floodplain issue, the building will be built above the 500 year floodplain level.

A (K. Miller): On page 29 of the Town Report, the tax rate is listed at \$.3675.

A (J. Grenier): We haven't set this year's tax rate.

A (C. Nordle): We are targeting a real number with this vote. BRD included, in the original contract, a professional estimating number. The project can be done for this amount. The State is not looking for

the Village to subsidize services; it will be fair and equal. The \$1 million or \$2 million replacement values are off by orders of magnitude.

A (K. Miller): If the pump needs to be replaced, the Water and Sewer Commissioners would pay with monies from the water and sewer users?

A (C. Nordle): No, the State is asking the Water and Sewer Commissioners to come up with a rate that the State will pay to cover expenses.

Q (Margaret Luce): The library has been looking to build a new facility for decades. They've looked at different places, including the Armory land. At the time, the land behind the library was for recreation, and we were granted a land transfer. The Armory site is a 4 acre site: 2 of those 4 acres were taken out for recreation; the Armory building itself sits in the middle of the land and is used for storage; and the school has a 99-year lease on the parking lot. It is a heavily wooded site and very wet, which is bad for building, and there is no room to put library there. The Armory site is a nonstarter. The library site has water issues. The community room would also provide space for library programming, meetings, and civic functions, and the community can use it, too.

A (C. Viens): I looked at the Armory site. The soils are solid clay and the water on the site is surface water runoff only, there is no ground water, per say. Those issues can be dealt with. I'm not necessarily promoting this site, but I'm saying there are some options there.

Bill Shepeluk: Fundraising is admirable, but the community needs to be behind the project. RW didn't use the \$100,000 they were given, but they did put it out there as seed money and was key in their fundraising. Everett said the municipal office and library should be located on Main Street, but we would be using property that's not currently on the tax rolls. Also, people who go to the municipal offices usually drive to get there; they don't just pop in if they're walking by. The Main Street properties could be for taxable businesses. It's not essential for the municipal building to be on Main Street.

Q (Kristin Brynga): Earlier a person asked what the return on investment is for this project and you couldn't give him an answer. For you to put this up to vote without telling us what the ROI is, is irresponsible. You haven't done your due diligence. It's irresponsible for you to vote if you haven't done your due diligence.

Q (Jane Willard): To clarify, the Historical Society never asked for 3,500 square feet. The Select Board was the one looking at affordability, and the Historical Society is also looking to help.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14pm.

Approved on July 15, 2013