

**MINUTES FOR EXETER FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FAC)
FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2020**

TIME: 1-2:30 pm

Attendees: Rob Corson, Chair; Kris Weeks, Vice Chair; Amanda Kelly, Mark Leighton, Peter Lennon, Clerk; Daryl Browne, Select Board (SB) Representative; Russ Dean, Town Manager; Dave Sharples, Town Planner; Erik Wilking, Chief, Exeter Fire Department.

Scribes: Peter Lennon, Kris Weeks

1. **Previous Minutes:** The FAC briefly discussed the Minutes of past meetings, and no changes were recommended.
2. **Introductions and Committee Charge, etc.:** FAC Members introduced themselves to the new SB Representative, Daryl Browne. Peter Lennon outlined for Mr. Browne the major components of the Committee's Charge and 2020 Goals and Objectives as approved in May 2019 by the Town SB.
3. **Officer Elections:** Chair Rob Corson and Vice Chair Kris Weeks were re-elected unanimously to their respective positions. Peter Lennon was elected as the Committee Clerk.
4. **Status and funding of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Committee's proposed Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA):** The Committee discussed that the RFP is ready for release, but that funding for the effort is unavailable in Fiscal Year 2020 (FY 20) and uncertain in FY 21. Mr. Dean noted that concern about the level of forthcoming revenues due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic has required the Town to reduce its FY 20 discretionary spending. He pointed out that the FAC could try to use FY 21 discretionary funds or seek funds in an FY 21 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) warrant article.

The Committee decided to issue the RFP now to obtain budget-quality cost data to use in the FY 21 budget process, and to re-structure the RFP from a two-phased approach to a single phase. Vice Chair Weeks and Mr. Lennon were tasked to do a "final" final version for Mr. Dean to release as soon as possible.

Despite the absence of FY 20 funds, the FAC discussed ways to begin the FCA informally this year perhaps by members initially reviewing various Town buildings and by seeking UNH graduate student interns to collect initial data sets. The FAC agreed to work with Mr. Sharples to use his and the Town Manager's contacts at UNH to determine intern availability.

5. **Town Hall Cupola Repairs Status:** Mr. Dean indicated, that, despite revenue concerns for FY 20, the Town Hall Cupola Repair project would be accomplished, beginning in July.
6. **Status of Development of FY 21-26 Capital Improvement Program:** Despite revenue uncertainties, Mr. Dean said that the town's staff is assembling the new FY 21-26 CIP as per a normal budget year, and that revenues will be tracked every 90 days to see if changes are warranted. He said that some CIP projects have been deferred, especially vehicles, but he indicated that the major Public Works Facility Garage project would be included for next year as projected in the current CIP.

He indicated the Public Works Department has begun initial planning activities for that project this year with Lassel Architects, South Berwick, ME.

Mr. Dean gave no indication whether the previously proposed Recreation Park Renovation/Expansion project would be included in the new CIP.

7. **Town “Re-Opening” in the Pandemic:** The FAC heard the Town Manager describe how the Town is approaching “re-opening” in the wake of the pandemic, and that the goal is to re-open some Town buildings, especially the Town Offices, in early July. Re-configuring space, social distancing, and wearing masks are being considered for the Town Offices, he said.

He said that the Select Board will consider the next draft of the re-opening plan at its June 29, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Dean said that the Public Library, Senior Center, and the Parks & Recreation Department are planning to open in July.

8. **Public Safety Studies Results Update:** The FAC heard from Mr. Dean and Fire Chief Wilking regarding the results of the *Fire Staffing and Deployment Analysis* and the *Police Operations and Data Report* both conducted by the Center for Public Safety Management, Washington, DC. Exeter’s Emergency Communications (Dispatch) Center (ECC) and its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) also are included in the studies.

The Committee focused its discussion on the studies’ conclusions related to facilities, including current structures and shortcomings, and future capabilities and locations for renovated or new buildings.

The studies presented three facilities options in three possible locations for Exeter to consider. The three facilities options are: (a) a new combined Police/Fire Public Safety complex; (b) a new Fire Station and major renovation of the existing Public Safety Complex for the Police Department; (c) a new Police Station and major renovation of the existing complex for the Fire Department.

The three highlighted locations are: (a) more centrally located within the Town; (b) in the southwest portion of the Town; and (c) in the southeast portion of the Town.

Regarding facilities, the studies recommended the Town complete a detailed space needs and location assessment for the Fire and Police Departments and the ECC and EOC.

Mr. Dean indicated that consideration is being given to allocating anywhere from \$100,000 to \$500,000 in next fiscal year’s budget request to accomplish these needed analyses. He said the analyses also should examine space needs 20-25 years into the future.

He said the assessment would examine operations, personnel levels, and technology issues to “inform” consideration of the facility options. SB Representative Browne said that any examination of technologies should include information technology (IT) security, such as dispersing or concentrating IT assets.

Mr. Dean said that the Town would need a formal Public Safety Working Group to assist the Select Board, Town staff, and the relevant Town Commissions and Committees to conduct oversight and provide recommendations for taking any next steps in this effort. Members of the Working Group would include the SB, Budget Recommendations Committee, the Fire and Police Departments, and others.

Chairman Corson recommended, and the members agreed, that the FAC also should be represented on the Working Group.

Chairman Corson pointed to the two studies' conclusions about alternative personnel levels and operational models and said those issues needed to be settled before doing the space needs assessment.

Fire Chief Wilking agreed but cautioned that, while current staffing levels and operational models should be addressed, those conditions might look different in 20 years. Given the extended lifetime of any facility, the Chief indicated that specific capacity requirements identified in the upcoming needs assessment should include "growth room" for future Fire Department configurations.

Chief Wilking said Assistant Chief Justin Pizon already is evaluating various operational models, even including a model with no staffing increases.

The Town Manager said the SB has not yet received a detailed briefing on the results of the Public Safety Studies, and that the Fire and Police Chiefs would attend a future FAC meeting to discuss these reports.

Vice Chair Weeks recommended that, to build citizen support for the follow-on space needs assessment and related analytical work, the Public Safety Studies results be publicized as soon as possible, especially with respect to the facility options and potential locations.

9. **FAC Participation in FY 21 Budget Process:** Mr. Lennon pointed out that a major FAC Goal and Objective approved by the SB for this year is for the FAC to participate fully in the ongoing Town budget process on facilities-related projects. He said that the SB-approved timeline for this participation contemplated FAC recommendations to the Town Planner in early July and to the Planning Board in early August. Mr. Lennon asked Mr. Dean when the FAC could weigh-in on these projects. The Town Manager said he would discuss with Mr. Sharples the latest status of the FY 21-26 Capital Improvement Program and when the FAC should take part.
10. **Future FAC Meetings:** Chair Corson said the Committee would conduct virtual ZOOM meetings on Exeter TV (Channel 22) for the next three months and then reassess prospects for in-person sessions depending on the state of the pandemic at that time.

Mr. Corson listed as future agenda items, including: (a) a status report by the Director of Public Works on planning for the Department's Facility Garage project to replace the existing Highway/Maintenance building that suffers from structural/safety deficiencies and other shortcomings; and (b) a status report from the Conservation Commission on facilities-related activities at Raynes Farm.