

**MINUTES FOR EXETER FACILITIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FAC)
MEETING, THURSDAY OCTOBER 1, 2020**

TIME: 10-11:28 AM, Exeter Public Library, 4 Chestnut Street, Exeter, NH

Attendees: Rob Corson, Chair; Kris Weeks, Vice Chair; Amanda Kelly, Mark Leighton, Peter Lennon, Russ Dean, Town Manager.

Scribe: Peter Lennon

(1) Previous Minutes: The FAC approved the Minutes of the September 8, 2020 meeting by a 5-0 vote.

(2) Public Safety Complex Feasibility Study: The Committee discussed initial steps to assist the Town Planner to draft a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the feasibility study for the Public Safety Complex project in the Town's new Fiscal Years 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Program (FY 21-26). The FAC had recommended such a study to the Exeter Planning Board (PB).

The PB on September 10, 2020, approved the FAC's recommendation with the understanding that the FAC would provide this feasibility study assistance.

The CIP project includes an analysis of alternatives and a feasibility study about options to renovate or replace (or some combination of both) the Town's current facility housing the Police and Fire Departments,

Chair Corson said he was beginning to draft a list of specific tasks for inclusion as deliverables in the RFP. Among those tasks, he said, should be applying to each facilities option specific siting criteria that considers continuing operations under emergency conditions. Such conditions might include power outages, computer network crashes, and site flooding, he indicated.

Chair Corson and Mr. Leighton both emphasized the need for the feasibility study and the analysis of alternatives to narrow down the total number of facilities options to a smaller number from which a preferred alternative would be selected.

Vice Chair Weeks and Mr. Leighton both stressed that this analytical first phase of the project should include specific periods for seeking public input on the emerging results of the alternatives analysis and feasibility study. These periods should include public forums, Mr. Weeks said.

Mr. Corson, Mr. Weeks, and Mr. Leighton discussed how the Town might reduce or eliminate any hypothetical delays in beginning the project's follow-on phases, especially Design and Engineering. They indicated such delays could be reduced or eliminated by releasing the RFP, discussing it with potential bidders, and interviewing bidders before the Town's voters made a final decision on whether to fund the project's first phase.

With this preliminary work already done, the actual analytical phase could proceed without delay if the voters approved the funding, they indicated.

(3) FAC Recommendations to Budget Recommendations Committee (BRC) on FY 21-26 CIP Projects: Clerk Lennon provided the Committee with a draft letter to the BRC transmitting the FAC's recommendations regarding the Public Safety Complex project and Department of Public Works (DPW) Facility Garage project.

Mr. Lennon highlighted the similarity of the draft letter to the BRC with the letter the FAC sent to the PB for its September 10 CIP meeting. The PB approved the FAC's recommendations for both projects.

He said the only major differences between the letters are:

- a. Changing from \$400,000 to \$200,000 the FY 21 request for the analytical phase of the Public Safety project, as recommended by the FAC;
- b. Expressing the FAC's gratification that the PB agreed with its recommendations on both projects;
- c. Clarifying in the Public Safety Complex section a reference to a description in the CIP about construction designs, blueprints, and plans in the follow-on phase that includes Design and Engineering work;
- d. Adding to the DPW Garage section a paragraph that identifies for the BRC several items under discussion that would influence the final scope and costs of the project.

Mr. Lennon said these items include erecting a larger structure to accommodate a staff consolidation there and perhaps new DPW missions in the future, developing a site-wide master plan for the entire DPW complex at 13 Newfields Road, considering the new structure's role in protecting town assets, and expanding the solar energy farm already at that location.

Chair Corson said the FAC would consider and vote at its next meeting on the draft letter to the BRC.

- (4) **Assessing Which Town Functions Might Remain "Virtual" After the Pandemic:** Town Manager Dean and the FAC discussed the hypothetical possibility of continuing to operate "virtually" a sub-set of Town functions after the pandemic. Mr. Dean said he and the Town Staff have begun to explore systematically this subject. He and the FAC discussed whether some Town boards, commissions, and committees could continue to operate effectively in a virtual mode.

Mr. Dean indicated that similar possibilities were being considered at the state level regarding in-person meetings in the state capital.

- (5) **Exeter Public Library Tour:** The FAC joined representatives of other Town entities and the public for a tour of the renovations and addition now underway at the Library. Leading the tour and discussion were representatives of the project's architecture and construction firms and Hope Godino, the Library's Director.

Highlights of the tour included:

- a. The project is about 60%-75% complete, with the remainder targeted for completion in February/March 2021.
- b. The project remains within budget.
- c. The facility's new entrance will include new access for the disabled under the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- d. The Town road running through the Library's parking lot will be repaved as part of the project.

- e. Most or all mechanical systems (electrical, heating, air conditioning, etc.) will be upgraded and relocated from the roof to a new ground-level “mechanical pit.”
- f. Water leaks from the outside patios have been eliminated by new aluminum and plastic material (polycarbonate) permanent “awnings.”
- g. All interior lights will be energy conserving and more efficient light-emitting diode (LED) types.
- h. Among other improvements, the Children’s Area has been renovated with new, larger vertical windows and window seats to give youngsters better views of the Exeter River and its associated wildlife (alewife fish, herons, eagles, etc.). A new parents’ room in the area may be used for the smallest children, and possibly for private breast-feeding of infants.
- i. One meeting room on the mezzanine level will include a floor “loop system” that works with personal hearing aids to improve sound reception for the hearing disabled. The system was financed by a private contribution to the Library.
- j. One upstairs meeting room will have “podcast” capability under the auspices of the Town’s “Exeter TV” department.
- k. The enlarged Adult Area will be vaulted and have 14-foot windows that provide a dramatic view down the Exeter River.

(6) **Next FAC Meeting:** Chair Corson said the next Committee meeting, by Zoom, would be on Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 4 pm. Among its agenda items would be the Public Safety Complex Feasibility Study RFP and the draft CIP letter to the BRC.