**PLYMPTON TOWN PROPERTIES COMMITTEE**

Minutes Wednesday, September 8, 2021, 6:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Butler, Ross MacPherson, Colleen Thompson, John Traynor,

Jon Wilhelmsen (Chair). MEMBERS ABSENT: 0

GUESTS PRESENT: Dan Pallotta (P3) OPM from Plympton Police Station project

NOTES:

* This meeting was conducted on a Zoom meeting platform with members and guests participating remotely. Members and guest will be referred to by their initials in the minutes.
* When possible, documents and plans viewed during this meeting, and/or electronic links thereof, are included at the end of these minutes.
* ACTION ITEMS: **In bold print**

1. OPENING – JW opened the meeting at 6:02 p.m. by reading the Governor’s orders of 3/12 & 15/20 which allow this Zoom meeting as a temporary change to Open Meeting Law during the COVID-19 shut-down. The meeting will be recorded to provide public access.
2. FIRE STATION – JW welcomed DP. JW said that we originally were told that the Sandwich fire station cost $3.5MM but that was the cost of the empty building. Fully equipped came to around $8MM. We are aiming for ±$6MM. Our first step on this project is to do a feasibility study to determine the viability of the site and get a firm idea of costs for building soon versus building in five, seven, ten or future years. We are waiting to hear back from FinCom to get their input, and ultimately their support for the study.

DP said that a bare bones station was recently competed in a western Massachusetts town for $4.8MM. He then screen shared a Construction Trends chart (see bottom of this document). This chart is diagraming school construction or rehab costs. Fire stations are slightly less expensive to build. The trends are not great. Prices will stabilize but they won’t go back to pre-COVID levels. It’s just not the way things work – prices go up and then they stay up. With time and inflation, they continue to increase.

DP believes that in addition to ARPA monies, there will be other federal funds becoming available for projects like this. ARPA is available for sewer and water infrastructure but not for buildings. Plympton should do the feasibility study as soon as possible in order to be ready to take advantage of any available money.

JW said that we are confident that we will need the new sewer. **LD is looking into the possibility that the driveway sightline issue can be addressed with ARPA funding.**

DP said that it is likely that P3 is still under contract to the town for the public safety buildings, including the fire station. He noted that we did a good job on the police station. Basically, this same group of people worked to build a police station that, while modest, meets the needs of the department now and into the future and the work was done within budget. P3 will do what we need to do to achieve the same result for the fire station.

JT asked if there are other things that we can unbundle from the fire station, like the sewer, to seek alternate funding. DP said it depends on how far the Selectmen want to push the boundaries of interpretation for ARPA. The County will look carefully at the project, but the federal government will just require a final report.

JW said that we have funds for the second phase of the Campus Plan, not including the fire station. We want to address the ball fields and create a solid recreation plan for the town. **DP will provide the names of some possible consultants for this.** Hiring an engineer could be a Chapter 7 process but it seems likely that this project can be kept under the $10k threshold. JT asked if there is any funding available for recreation, but DP thinks it is unlikely. We can use some CPA funding or use it for bonding a recreation project. The Open Spaces grants were under the CARES Act and were not available for capital expenses.

Regarding the fire station, our biggest concern, as it was for the police station, is safety. The current building is too small, nothing is in the right place, there is no compliance with OSHA standards, etc. It seems like an accident waiting to happen particularly when backing a truck into the limited space with people in the building and a driver who may be tired from being out on a call. When will OSHA step in and say that we need to fix this?

## ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION WITH DP – JT had some questions about Forge Pond Park in Hanover, a project that DP worked on. JT wonders why there were no trees left in the park. DP said that there were not trees there since it was just a big corn field. 1/3 of the park is conservation land. JT asked why the buildings were built using brick and concrete. DP said that there was just enough funding to build the concession stand and the bathrooms. Hanover decided to build with their DPW doing the work, but they ran out of money. They asked DP/P3 to help. DP/P3 was able to get local businesses and professional services involved. Much of the work was done for free or for very low cost. The resulting park is a jewel and a great community project for Hanover. DP noted that baseball and softball fields are underused but that the soccer fields are in constant use, requiring a forced two-month hiatus each year to allow the grass to recuperate. DP left the meeting at 6:31 FINAL THOUGHTS - JW reiterated that we need to hear back from FinCom. They have not met since coming to our meeting to hear about the project. We expect that the Special Town Meeting will be at the end of October or in November. Once the date for the STM is set, we will determine how to proceed with making people aware of the need and reason for the fire station feasibility study. JW will follow-up with FinCom. If FinCom has any problems, we need them to come back to us for more discussion and resolution. The amount needed for the study is not excessive. It may be less than the $290k suggested last spring but we want to make certain that we have enough to do a thorough study. We need to address the public safety driveway issues. The retaining wall (constructed by the State) and hill need to be reduced, whether or not we can use ARPA funds.

## TOWN HOUSE ADA RAMP AND MAIN ENTRANCE – The job is out to bid. The opening of the bids will be on September 27th. We’ll see then if both parts of this project will be covered by the grant money.

## FLAGPOLES – The flagpole on the green was cleaned and painted with the first coat last week. The came back today to put on the second coat and the rigging. The solar light has been installed on both poles. The work on the Rte. 106 pole has also been started. When both flagpoles are done LD will promote the project on the Town’s social media.

## TOWN HOUSE ROOF – $200k was allocated for this project. Approximately $55k has gone to the architect. The project will be more extensive than originally thought because there are more underlying issues that need to be corrected. The architect will help determine the order of the work and whether we will need to go back to TM for additional funds to complete both the middle and end sections of the building. The shingles on the middle section are not bad but there are issues with the ventilation, gutters/drainage, insulation, and flashing. Ventilation will likely be the priority along with the replacement of a few damaged shingles. Everything for the end section needs replacement. We will do as much as the funding allows but we will only do what we can do completely, correctly, and in the right order.

## LIBRARY AND FIRE STATION ROOFS – Habib and Associates did the on-site inspection last Friday. They paid special attention to the known issues. They will put their findings into a report and send it to us soon.

## TOWN OWNED LAND – Habitat for Humanity do not love the Main Street or Maple Street lots. We still have the option of the Old Brook Street lot but there are some concerns there as well. Note: Research has been done and it was found that Old Brook Street is not an abandoned street and can provide appropriate frontage for a buildable lot.

## DENNETT SOLAR – This project seems to be back on track after some questions about prevailing wages and the wording of the agreement. If the Town was to end up owning the system in 20 years, then the labor must be done with prevailing wages. It is unlikely that we will want to own, run, and maintain a 20-year system so that portion of the agreement was reworked. This will affect the rate paid for the electricity but will still lower the bill overall.

## OTHER DISCUSSION – JT asked if anyone knows of any problem with the septic system at the Old Town House. Steve Sarro, Town Custodian does not know of any problem, but the question has been raised. JW said that a previous issue with the toilets was fixed. JT said that this building is on the BOS agenda for the next meeting. There is hope that this building will be put back into regular use. Two other considerations are security and icy winter situations. The security issue could be addressed by changing the lock on the front door to an electronic lock which allows tracing of when and by whom the lock is accessed. Schlage makes a lock that will not look out of place on a historical building. The ice issue may be a matter of figuring out how to move the water from the gutters away from the parking lot.

## MINUTES – NB moved to accept the minutes for 8/25 as written. JT seconded. Roll call vote: RM aye, JT aye, NB aye, CT aye, JW aye.

1. NEXT MEETINGS – Tentatively 9/22/21, 6pm. JT said that he will not be available for most of the month of October. CT said that she will be away from October 9-24.
2. ADJOURNMENT – 7:05 p.m.

**CHART PROVIDED BY DAN PALLOTTA**

Link: [info.massschoolbuildings.org/TabPub/TableauCostData.aspx](http://info.massschoolbuildings.org/TabPub/TableauCostData.aspx)

Note: This chart is large and thus more easily viewed online.

The orange line is new construction. The purple line is renovation.

Graphical user interface, application, table

Description automatically generated