

# Town of Newington, NH

## Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes for Tuesday, January 15, 2013

**Call to Order:** Chair Jack O'Reilly called the January 15, 2013 meeting regarding the Langdon Library Expansion proposal at 7:00 PM.

**Present:** Chairman Jack O'Reilly; Selectmen Rick Stern and Jan Stuart

**Public Guests:** Library Trustees Chair, Steve Bush; Secretary, Melissa Prefontaine; Treasurer, Lea Lamson; Nate Freditte; Guptil Knox; Grace Simms; Architect, Ron Lamarre from Lavalle Bresinger Architects; Jeff Parks, Construction Manager with Bauen Corporation; Director of Langdon Library, Scott Campbell; Pat Bennett; Sharon Brown; Mary Crossley; Ruth Fletcher; John Frink; Denis Hebert; Gail Pare; Justin Richardson; Marjorie Robinson; Wayne Wood

### **Public Hearing - Langdon Library Expansion Proposal:**

Library Trustee Chair, Steve Bush gave an overview of the Trustees actions over the past couple of years in consideration of a Library expansion, beginning with hiring a library consultant, surveying residents, and hiring an architect and building consultant to analyze their usage and space needs.

The Library was constructed in 1893, and a small addition was added in 1970. The building consultant has revealed that the basement and attic have structural problems with cracked beams and brick mortar, and sill plates are also cracked.

The Langdon Library was rated as being the sixteenth busiest library per capita in the State of NH, with over \$128,000 worth of product being checked out last year.

Currently there are 1,000 linear feet in the adult area, and 250 linear feet in the children's area, no multi-activity space, and more space being needed.

Recommendations for a town of this size are 6,612 feet, but the current design is for 6,012, which includes the current building. The project would keep the Historical District with period lighting and parking in mind. An arborist was consulted, and best management practices for the surrounding trees would be followed.

At this time cost estimates are as follow:

	<u>Without Addition</u>
Repairs of Existing Building	\$350,000
Sprinklers	16,000
Water Supply	<u>172,459</u>
	\$538,459

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	<u>With Addition</u>
Guarerta's Price	\$1,455,168
Construction Contingency	60,000
Furniture/Shelving	100,000
Technology Equipment	35,000
Sprinkler System	48,000
Clerk of Works	<u>20,000</u>
Project Cost <b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,718,168</b>
With FirePump/Cistern/Guarerta	<u>172,459</u>
Total incl. Construction, Repairs & Sprinklers	<b>\$1,890,627</b>

Chair Jack O'Reilly opened the meeting up for questions. Library Director, Scott Campbell addressed the audience with Knowledge of the Concept information.

Patty Borkland gave an update on Langdon Library Trust Funds in the amount of \$880,000 of which \$850,000 of principal cannot be touched at this point. Melissa Prefontaine gave an overview of fund's history that was started in 1893, noting that interest could be given to the Trustees for Library purposes. However, over time direction on the purpose had been lost. Since then, some funds were given to the Town for the Library, and some went to the Library directly, but interest was not given to the Trustees consistently. Problems began after a vote had been taken to prevent touching the principal of the funds in the 1940's, and since no interest was given to the Trustees, it went back into the principal and was untouchable. The Trustees have contacted the Attorney General and are hoping the issue will be resolved, and funds of up to \$200,000 to \$250,000 will be made available.

Justin Richardson of Old Post Road praised the Board for their efforts, and acknowledged that Library use is up, but thought the expansion plan is a bit excessive, building beyond needs, noting that the great staff could change and with a small population of 700-900 residents usage could go down. Richardson also noted that the Town has an excess of buildings, and facilities with meeting rooms available. Richardson also feels all of the Town needs should be looked at when considering expenditures, including the Fire Station and Public School. Richardson also said Newmarket and Portsmouth are looking at costs to upgrade their water waste treatment plants, and wanted to know what the Town of Newington would be looking at to upgrade theirs. Jack O'Reilly said he didn't know. Richardson said the sewer project will need to be bonded, but local businesses will help pay for the upgrade, and also pay for the Library bond.

Gail Pare of the Historic District Commission pointed out that there is a guaranteed cost of \$60,000 to do structural damage repairs to the existing building regardless of whether the expansion project is approved.

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John Frink of Nimble Hill Road and employee with Newington Public Works noted that a cistern was discussed at the time the new Town Garage was discussed, but they put in a generator and pump instead, so asked why the Library couldn't do without the cistern as well. Ron Lamare said the new sprinklers would put a greater demand on the water system. Mr. Lamare said sprinklers in public assembly buildings are required in Town Ordinances under A-3, and the Fire Chief said so long as money is being spent, it should be done correctly.

Larry Wahl of Nimble Hill Road said he was Fire Chief for 21 years, and knew of a 6" water main going up Nimble Hill Road with a T-valve at the corner of Nimble Hill and Little Bay. Mr. Wahl said he thought a small cistern with a pump is cheaper and would suffice until a fire arrived.

Mr. Wahl also noted there are bonds for a new truck, a ladder truck, and the Town Garage adding up to approximately \$600,000 by the time you add in the leases and interest.

Jack O'Reilly said the current lease to buy a ladder truck, using Capital Reserve brought down the monthly payment with less interest, the bond on the Town garage will expire in 2015, adding 20 cents per thousand to the tax rate, and adding the Library expansion project would add 40 cents per thousand.

Mr. Wahl said he attended the 2011 Meeting, and at that time Scott Campbell said a new library expansion was planned five to ten years down the road. Wahl asked why the proposal has come up sooner. Scott Campbell said after having the building analyzed, with the engineers pointing out structural issues that cannot support heavy loads of books, the Trustees realized the problems were serious and needed to respond by moving the plan forward. Larry Wahl said he thought cracks in beams were common, but Ron Lamare said these structural stress cracks are beyond normal "check cracks".

Ron Lamare went on to say the front end of the Library is dipping, and the wood sills are now rotting, both front and back. The main carrying beam has deterioration with rot on both ends as well as the mortar has deteriorated in the brick support.

Melissa Prefontaine said they could fix the building, but it would be at a higher cost than the expansion for the space available. Prefontaine also spoke of the Library not being ADA compliant without wheelchair turn-arounds, and the importance of keeping the future in mind. Marjorie Robinson said she is disabled, appreciates the Library and wants the addition and the ramp fixed too.

Patty Borkland asked if the Town would do the building renovations if the expansion project didn't get voted in. Jan Stuart said she believes the Town could do the repairs, but it would have to be a Warrant Article. Stuart said she is 100% in support of the repairs, but will not support the expansion project as she is concerned with costs added to the Town from the State turning over Woodbury Ave. and State education taxes.

Denis Hebert of Gundalow Landing said he agrees with Justin Richardson, and most of what Larry Wahl said. He is concerned with the economy, and increasing infrastructure, including sewer upgrades, and is concerned with cost spikes that will force residents to leave Town. Hebert said when he moved into Town the tax rate was

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\$5 per thousand. Hebert said he has seen local libraries decline, acknowledging the need to upgrade the library, and look at storage options, but is not in support of adding on to the library at a cost of \$2,000,000. Wayne Wood agreed that he enjoys the unique character of the old Library, but is concerned about the costs for other projects.

Melissa Prefontaine said they looked at other buildings in Town for storage, but none are rated to support the weight of books. Although there had been talk in the past of books being replaced with microfiche, and e-readers, the reality is those uses also have a cost, and licensing issues, and residents have a variety of needs from their library.

Ron Lamare spoke of the Master Plan, which includes controlled and unanticipated needs, and the importance of putting big projects on the agenda. He also spoke of problems with putting the books in storage, staffing, and building operations.

Mary Crossley wondered if the Library is really functional, if it isn't more of a community center than a library, and wonders if it might just be used for storage.

Sharon Brown asked what the size change from the original plan, and how much it dropped the cost. Lamare said it dropped about \$100,000 and leaving off the children's room would save another \$100,000. Sharon asked if only the repairs were done, would the ADA costs be included. Jan Stuart said it would not because it is grandfathered as a historical building. Ron Lamare said it would under NH Building code, and the local building code requires sprinklers.

Ruth Fletcher of Little Bay Road said she would like to see the Library expansion project go through, and appreciated all the work of the Trustees and their open "transparency" which she felt was missing in the Old Town Hall renovation project. As for sewer upgrades, Ruth said the sewers belong to the users who would pay for the Bond and the Town would not be paying.

Pat Bennett asked if the interest from the Trust Fund could be used to pay down the Bond if the Warrant Article for bonding doesn't pass at Town Meeting, and Melissa Prefontaine said the issue of obtaining funds is at the Attorney General's office right now, and they don't know if and when funds would be available. Pat then asked about fund raising campaigns. Ron Lamare said donations generally come after construction services and contracting begins.

Denis Hebert asked if the Attorney General rules in favor of making the funds available, would the Trustees pay down the Bond? Steve Bush said the committee had a straw vote and it was passed to use the interest from the Trust Fund to bring down the cost of the Bond, although they couldn't speak for future Trustees.

Justin Richardson agreed there is a need for a new library, but felt the consensus of the attendees was that the current proposal is too big, and if a two-thirds majority is required to pass the Bond, it will probably fail. Richardson said he feels renovations can be done but that the water and sprinklers should be taken out of the costs. He also objects to the Trustees meeting at the Library when there are alternative places to meet, and recommended taking the room off the back of the proposal for a future expansion, which would decrease the costs.

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Ron Lamare said the plan was analyzed and reanalyzed, then skinned down and cut back. They tried to eliminate the sprinkler issue, but part of NH State and local building code.

Mary Crossley asked if the building could be abandoned, and majority of those in attendance said that wouldn't be happening.

Jack O'Reilly thanked everyone for attending, and the meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

**Respectfully**

**Submitted by:** Jane K. Kendall, Recording Secretary