



## OFFICE OF SELECTMEN

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### **SELECTMEN'S MEETING MINUTES**

**August 24, 2021**

Chairman Paight called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Selectman Nelson and Selectman Pitt were present. Also in attendance were Ellen Smith, Town Administrator and David Bergeron.

The Board asked Mr. Weller and Mr. Bergeron to attend this meeting to ask some questions about the library addition project.

Selectman Pitt explained the history of the project and the Selectmen's involvement. The Selectmen are also Library Trustees but were not involved in the decision making process in the beginning as all parties understood this to be a privately funded project. Concern about the underground tunnel was raised from the beginning. In 2020, the Attorney General's Office weighed in on the project saying since the library is a town building on town land. The project was to be supervised and built by the Board of Selectmen. This essentially threw the project in the laps of the Selectmen.

Currently, the Board of Selectmen are playing catch up.

Selectmen asked Mr. Bergeron when he became involved with the project. He stated that he was working with Brickstone during the conceptual phase, several options were considered. There was no detailed site plan completed at the beginning of the project. Ed Goodrich did volunteer his time to gather some preliminary information and measurements.

The Board of Selectmen met Mr. Bergeron shortly after Town Meeting. Up until this point there were no comprehensive site plans. During Mr. Bergeron's work to create a site plan he did an analysis of the watershed and discovered that the library site is at the bottom of a 400+ acre watershed and that the underground structure was at capacity meaning that no additional run off created as a result of the addition could be put into that system, also, being at capacity, the tunnel would need to be upsized at some point in the future.

Tom Weller joined the meeting at 9:15 am.

The discussion above with Mr. Bergeron was repeated for Mr. Weller's benefit.

The Board is trying to do the best for the library and what is best for the town. They want the addition to be the best it can be but are stuck with the underground tunnel and concerns for the neighborhood. At the time the AG's Office got involved, no one knew about the size of the watershed or that the tunnel was at capacity. The "system" that handles the water from Bixby Street all the way to the river is made up of many different components made of different material of varying ages. Part of the system that is on the front lawn of the library is the same granite system that is causing major flooding problems in the downtown area. These granite elements were classified as having a very high probability of failure as well as a very high impact should failure occur.

The Selectmen then asked Mr. Weller what the original concept was. He said that it was to make an attractive design that did not shadow the original granite structure, a bigger parking lot, more space for children and youth and a meeting space. The Selectmen asked if the emphasis was on programming or on meeting space. The meeting space was very important. What budget was given at the beginning? Mr. Weller did not think there was a budget at that point. How and when did Cheshire Builders get involved? With the addition being a private project at that time, there was an existing working relationship between Cheshire Builders and Hamshaw Lumber. They were an economical choice when other builders were considered.

The group then discussed the public bidding process which is necessary for any public project, even if it is built without taxpayer funds, the process needs to be fair.

Mr. Weller confirmed that it was the March 27, 2018 schematic plans that were given to Cheshire Builders for them to formulate their bid.

The basic plan has not changed too much. The big issues at this point are the increased cost of materials and market volatility.

The original structure is to stay the same except for the removal of the bathroom.

Mr. Weller was asked what the square footage of the renovated area was, he did not have that number off the top of his head. The work to be done upstairs is to put in air barriers and bigger closet doors. When asked what the Memory Hall was for it was noted that it was not for the Historical Society. It was noted that this 200 square foot space has potential for many multi-use projects.

The Board then asked if there was any idea of what the costs associated with the protection of the tunnel would be?

It was confirmed that the widening of the driveway is part of the Cheshire Builder's bid.

The Board noted that the preliminary design Weller provided for the east side was very nice and meets programming needs. Mr. Bergeron noted that the east side had challenges as well, the hill and the drainage will need to be dealt with, you will lose a tree and there will be significant grading.

The east side option means that the stairs, which are the second means of egress for the upstairs space, need to be rebuilt, if the upstairs was to be exclusively for storage, could the stairs be eliminated? This would be a question for the State Fire Marshall's Office.

The "bump out" on the west side is estimated to cost between \$80,000 and \$100,000. Are there any possibilities in the east side design to accommodate the need for increased children's space? Mr. Weller noted that one issue is that the librarian on duty needs to have a clear view of a children's area which may not be possible.

The west side option, long and skinny design, causes the loss of a couple of parking spaces. Is it feasible to reduce the size of the meeting room farther and not lose the functionality?

Selectman Paight asked Mr. Weller if the addition is built of the west side and there was a catastrophe when is it considered an act of God vs a covered liability? He did not know the answer.

Final thoughts were shared. Mr. Bergeron and Mr. Weller left the meeting at 11:45 am.

Selectman Nelson moved and Chairman Paight seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:00 pm, motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted  
Ellen Smith, Town Administrator