



CITY OF FITCHBURG
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT
COMMISSION
Fitchburg Municipal Offices
166 Boulder Drive
Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420

Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Capital Improvement Commission was called to order on Thursday, November 16, 2017 at 5:06 PM in the Mayor's Office at the Fitchburg Municipal Offices, 166 Boulder Drive, Fitchburg, MA.

Commission Members present: City Auditor Calvin Brooks, Appointed Members David Descoteaux, Stephen Descoteaux, and Keith Butler

Members absent: President Michael Kushmerek and Councilor Jody Joseph

Others present: Mayor Stephen DiNatale, Mayor's Chief of Staff A.J. Tourigny, City Purchasing Agent Mary Delaney, Building Commissioner Mark Barbadoro, Councilor-elect Samantha Squailia, Police Chief Ernest Martineau, Fire Chief Kevin Roy, DPW Commissioner Lenny Laakso, and Stacey Fenton.

Most of the meeting was recorded by Stacey Fenton, 114 Bishop Road, Fitchburg. Brooks brought the matter to the commission's attention partway through the meeting. While recording of a public meeting is allowed, the person recording is supposed to state at the beginning of the meeting that they intend to record it. The Mayor read the appropriate section from the open meeting guidelines. Ms. Fenton stated her intention to record the meeting, and, having been duly notified, the commission then continued with the meeting.

The commission had earlier received notice that its chairman Timothy Bean has resigned and that the Vice-Chairman David Basilio had also resigned. Rather than elect a new chairman and vice-chairman at this meeting, the commission chose to defer action until there was appointed a fourth appointed member. D. Descoteaux expressed a desire that the new member have some financial background or experience. On a motion by Butler seconded by S. Descoteaux, the commission unanimously elected D. Descoteaux as temporary chairman.

The commission next heard a presentation from Mary Delaney, Purchasing Agent and Chair of the City Hall Building Committee, of the results of a feasibility study conducted by Lamoureux-Pagano. The study looked at what we need to offer for services in a city hall and how those services would fit at 718 Main Street. The Building Committee recommended Option 1, a renovation of the interior of the current building, as reasonable on a cost basis which also provides the needed functionality. The basement would be fully dedicated to storage, so there would not be a need to find additional storage space outside of 718 Main Street. Storage is a problem at the current location on Boulder Drive, because most personnel are working in cubicles where there is very little space for storage of daily needs. Staff have to go to the back room on a regular basis. Basement moisture issues at 718 Main Street would be addressed in any renovation.

S. Descoteaux asked whether the Massachusetts Historical Commission had been contacted. Ms. Delaney replied that they were not contacted, because the report was looking only at the feasibility of the project. After approval, they could be contacted to see what options are available, including any grant funding. However, Ms. Delaney cautioned that historical grants often have conditions that cost more money in the long run.

The current plan is to do interior demolition first, then do design, which will allow the design process to start with a "clean" building. The city is looking at using the Contract Manager at Risk approach, though state approval for that process is required.

Ms. Delaney then explained the Cost Analysis spreadsheet. The Owner's Project Manager is mandatory for construction work and would be done through an RFQ process. Both the CMR and the traditional Design-Bid-Build processes were costed, and the building committee feels sufficient contingencies were included to make the cost estimates reliable.

The chairman questioned whether the building would be functionally obsolete after all the work is done. He felt the process was biased in that the consultant gave the pitch for Option 1, but the report and presentation seemed to lean toward Option 5. Furthermore, in terms of historical preservation, most of the building has been defaced by "improvements" over the years, the galvanized steel handicapped ramp on the west side of the building being one recent example. His opinion is that 718 Main Street should be demolished, leaving the façade and building a pavilion.

The mayor stated that the position of City Hall at 718 Main Street is impressive in terms of location from both the Upper Common and from middle Main Street and that the city deserves a true city Hall.

Butler indicated that elevators can be used to assist with the different floor levels and has seen some of that work in other buildings being renovated. Brooks pointed out that while the floors in Option 1 are the same as the old city hall layout, the stairways are more open and there is better flow between the floors.

S. Descoteaux said that the location of 718 Main Street is desirable and that not wanting to be in a former factory, which is 166 Boulder Drive, is understandable. He is concerned about a renovation rather than new construction, but understands cost is a concern. He questioned the cost estimates for Option 5, but was told that the consultant did the cost calculations based on their experience.

The chairman speculated where the city would be if the roof trusses had not failed and city hall not relocated. Would the city be doing a renovation? He asked if the city only replaced the roof, could city hall be reoccupied. The response was that it was unlikely, since the heating system and electrical system needed overhauls and there were other health and safety issues that would need to be addressed.

S. Descoteaux asked about other options, including the Rollstone Bank Building. The mayor responded that the city had tried to look at other options but none were satisfactory. The Rollstone Bank Building was considered, but the city was limited by law in how much it could pay for the building.

The topic of work needed at the Oak Hill Road Fire Station and the Summer Street Fire Station was raised. Chief Kevin Roy said these plans have been on the back burner since 2008. The stations should be relocated at some future time, but the department can deal with the current situation for now.

Public safety is not an issue, and response time is acceptable. The issue is that the department needs more room.

The chairman then stated that he did not want to go ahead with this project, because he was concerned about other capital projects that would arise in the future. In the absence of a five year capital needs projection from all city departments, the city's debt service needs over the next twenty years are unknown.

On a motion by Brooks seconded by Butler, the commission voted to recommend expending funds for the purpose of renovating City Hall as recommended by the City Hall Feasibility Study.
(3-1 D. Descoteaux in opposition)

Next, Police Chief Ernest Martineau reported that the department has been annually updating its vehicle fleet. Normally the department replaces two cruisers per year. This year he is asking for one cruiser, because he has used other funds to replace a second one. He would also like to replace four detective vehicles, which were last replaced in 2005. A regular replacement schedule is important. The entire fleet is about 55 vehicles.

On a motion by D. Descoteaux seconded by Brooks, the board voted unanimously to recommend expending funds for the purpose of acquiring police vehicles as requested by the Police Chief.

Fire Chief Kevin Roy followed by presenting a letter he had sent to the mayor on September 19, 2017. In it he has first requested new "Jaws of Life" equipment. What the department now has is 25-30 years old and replacement parts are not available. The new equipment would be battery operated rather than hydraulic, and would be much lighter. The driveway in front of the apparatus bay at the North Street Station needs to be replaced, because of wear and tear over the years. Engine 2 is nearing fifteen years old and should be moved to reserve to replace a reserve vehicle now thirty years old. A new pumper would allow this shift to take place. Finally, the current support vehicle is pretty beat and should be replaced as part of routine replacement. The chief reported that he has tried to get grants for all this equipment, but the city has been unsuccessful.

On a motion by D. Descoteaux seconded by Butler, the commission unanimously voted to recommend expending funds for the purpose of acquiring Fire Department vehicles and equipment as requested by the Fire Chief.

In other business, the commission heard from DPW Commissioner Lenny Laakso, who is looking for approval to obtain a used Vac truck. The DPW's current Vac truck is twenty-three years old, and although it gets a lot of use, it requires a lot of repair. The DPW has often had to rely on the Vac truck controlled by the Wastewater Division. While a new truck costs over \$460,000, the city is looking for a used truck costing between \$200,000 and \$250,000. Funding would come from appropriations for MS4 compliance.

On a motion by D. Descoteaux seconded by Butler, the commission unanimously voted to recommend expending funds for the purpose of obtaining a used Vac truck as requested by the DPW Commissioner.

The commission also briefly discussed putting together a five year capital needs plan. That matter will be addressed at a future meeting when there are four appointed members.

On a motion by D. Descoteaux seconded by Brooks, the board unanimously voted to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 6:50 PM.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Calvin D. Brooks".

By: Calvin D. Brooks, Member *ex-officio*

Reviewed by: David Descoteaux and Keith Butler