

MISLEADING STATEMENTS¹ ON RYE TOWN HALL (ARTICLE 9)

“The Town of Rye expended \$236,000 of taxpayer money, in 2014, for architectural and structural plans. Contrary to [the resident’s] statements, those plans indicate a need for structural steel, vertically in the exterior walls, horizontally to support the second floor, additional roof bracing and major foundation work.”

Response: **The Article 9 proponents continue to mislead by comparing their article to costly prior articles that are no longer on the table.** The resident simply (and correctly) asserted that “Town Hall is structurally sound.” The 2014 design was for gutting and renovation of the existing building and construction of an addition, doubling the existing 6000 sq. ft. at a cost of \$4.1 million.² The need for costly steel and foundation work in that design was due solely to the extensive changes to the existing building. Watch our architect and Selectman explain that, **without expansion, the costly work is unnecessary.**³

“The cost is \$338,000 less than last years (sic) proposal, whilst adding a full cellar and over 600 square feet.”

Response: The comparison is apparently between 2017 Article 6 (tear down and rebuild two story replica with extension) and 2018 Article 9⁴. At the January 3, 2017 Board of Selectmen meeting,⁵ Mr. Loftus mentioned a **\$1.6 million cost for his three story design. The cost nearly doubled to \$3,048,077.**

“The ‘renovation’ bid last year by a qualified commercial contractor was for \$3.2 million, and there were a number of things excluded. [The resident] now claims it can be done for a fraction of that cost. Don’t you just love magic!”

Response: The \$3.2 million bid was to gut the Town Hall interior and rebuild it, add a 2500 sq. ft. extension, reinforce the walls with structural steel and replace a portion of the foundation. Neither the steel nor the foundation work would be needed if the building were not expanded (see above). There is also no need to gut and rebuild the interior. While approximately 2500 sq. ft. of additional space is needed to eliminate the overcrowding of town employees, it **does not make sense to tear down a perfectly good 6000 sq. ft. building** to replace it with a

¹ Sources: John Loftus LTEs (Herald), February 27, March 2 (responding to Frances Erlebacher’s Feb. 27 letter), March 7, Committee for a New Town Hall mailing received March 8, John Loftus remarks on Article 9 at the February 3, 2018 Town Deliberative Session.

² This was soundly rejected by the voters 887-575 (39% yes, 60% needed)

³ Architect: <https://vimeo.com/259270546>. Selectman Musselman: <https://vimeo.com/259269812>. See International Existing Building Code (2009) §§707.3, 403, 807.4.2. Roof bracing (\$77K) was part of 2017 Article 30 (\$500K to fix Town Hall).

⁴ 2017 Article 6: \$3,386,752; 2018 Article 9: \$3,048,077; 2017 Article 7 (renovate and add extension): \$3,200,000. The difference relative to 2017 Article 7 is only \$151,923.

⁵ http://www.town.rye.nh.us/pages/RyeNH_SelectMin/2017/01-03-17_Minutes.pdf (page 3)

costly 8500 sq. ft. building when acquiring or constructing the additional needed space would be much less expensive⁶. Contrary to the assertion, the \$500,000 cost for 2017 Article 30 (which got 45% of the vote, nearly as many votes as his “free” article 34 that year) was **vetted by Mike Castagna, an experienced construction professional** who was project manager for the Verizon Arena.

“The cost of TD Bank, and the planned painting at town hall amount (sic) 23.6% of the cost of the new building.”

Response: The fact that Article 9 is over four times the cost of TD Bank plus painting demonstrates that it is much more economical to add additional space in a separate building than to tear down and rebuild. In addition, the \$3.048 million cost does not include interest, which according to amortization schedules prepared by Town Finance Director Cyndi Gillespie, **would add \$922,844 if bonded over 20 years** and \$367,781 if bonded over 10 years.

“The Town spoke last year, with only 22% of voters in favor of Renovation”

Response: Both 2017 Article 7 (renovate and extend) and 2017 Article 6 (tear down and rebuild a replica with an extension) **got only 22% of the vote**. Article 30 that year (to fix Town Hall without expanding it) got 45%.

“The \$3.048 million bond amount cannot be over spent (sic)”

Response: The Article 9 design is only at the conceptual stage. A full-blown design and construction documents (paid for out of the bond amount) will be needed to obtain firm bids. If the bids reveal an inadequate budget, the town would be **back to square one**, unless the scope could be reduced and the architect could do the necessary redesign within the budget.

“I would say mold is suspect due to rotted and wasted wood and water ingress...”

Response: Selectman Musselman confirms “there is **no known mold** in the building.”⁷

“...the grant chasing has produced very little”

Response: Nobody will provide grant money **as long as tear-down looms**. That is why we should soundly reject Article 9 so we can unite and move forward.

⁶\$624,800 for TD Bank acquisition (2018 Article 12) or \$422,000 for converting the Trolley Barn (Old Police Station, conveniently located across the street) to provide Town offices. See http://www.town.rye.nh.us/Pages/RyeNH_BComm/TownHallComm/TrolleyBarnFinalReport2013.pdf. A 2500 sq. ft. new building would cost only 10-20% more than TB renovation (page 8).

⁷ <https://vimeo.com/259269812> (at 0:46 elapsed).