

NOTES OF AUGUST 15, 2013 RYE TOWN HALL COMMITTEE MEETING
Final Revision B – Provided by the Rye Civic League

Present: Selectmen Craig Musselman, Priscilla Jenness. Beth Yeaton, Victor Azzi, Peter White, Paula Merritt, Peter Kasnet, Paul Goldman, Mark Luz, Lucy Neiman (arrived at 6:01:34 p.m.), Michael Magnant, Cyndi Gillespie, Kim Reed (the last three are non-voting members and were sitting in the audience).

Non-public session (3:30 p.m.)

Based on information in the official minutes, the video recording of the July 25, 2013 and the video recording of this meeting, it appears that the Committee went into non-public session, pursuant to N.H. RSA 91-A:3, II(c) (reputation), and that the matters discussed included the merits of the proposals of the five candidates to be interviewed. *Editor's note: The RSA permits non-public sessions under this statute only when the secret discussion would "likely adversely affect the reputation of any person..."*

AG Architects Presentation (4:28:00 p.m.)

Art Guadano (the only presenter for this firm), states that there are 5 people at the firm. He emphasizes the scars from last time and maintains that the next time will be different. He talks about ongoing work being done by his firm for the Durham Town Hall. *Editor's note: This is the conversion of a 1980s bank building.* He distinguishes between renovation and restoration, stating that most projects are the former. While a restoration keeps the true historic character, a renovation can respect it or modify it. Of his work, 30% is new buildings, the rest are renovations. He has looked at the 2012 Space Needs Committee's work and feels that the total space need is somewhere between that and what he came up with in 2011. *Editor's note: He referred to the Building Committee, but clearly meant the Space Needs Committee as the Building Committee has not estimated the space need. AG Architects did a study under contract for the Town in 2011. That study arrived at a total space need of approximately 15,000 sq. ft. In connection with that work, AG presented an example design which consisted of a brick addition of approximately 9,000 sq. ft. added to the existing white clapboard Town Hall. The addition was added at an angle so that the first story of a portion of it was buried in the adjacent hillside. The 2012 Warrant Article that would have provided \$135,000 to proceed with "design development" failed, 484-830. An accompanying 2012 Petitioned Warrant Article that required, prior to proceeding to completion of the design, investigation of other Town facilities as possibilities for meeting Town Hall space needs, as well as the benchmarking of the space need per employee against other towns, passed 1070-268.*

(4:44:00 p.m.)

In response to a question from Victor Azzi, Mr. Guadano acknowledges that the Durham Town Hall project does not involve an historic structure, but rather is a renovation of a 1980s federal style building. In response to a question from Peter White, he acknowledges that someone else did the Space Needs Analysis for the Durham

project. *Editor's note: later in the meeting, we learn that it was Port One.* Mr. White follows up with a question as to whether the need increased or decreased after he went back and revisited it. There was a long pause from Guadano, who then argued that it was within 1000 sq. ft. Earlier, he had said that this was a 12,000 sq. ft. project with a cost of \$1.4 million. There were a number of other questions about schedule and the experience with the 2011 project with the Town. Paula Merritt emphasized the need for a physical model.

SMP Presentation (5:13:30 p.m.)

Jason LaCombe and Anthony Mento presented on behalf of SMP. They emphasize experience with historic buildings. The firm is 30 years old, 65% of their work is with municipalities: fire stations, town halls, and libraries. They did a library for Northfield and Tilton (combined for both towns) that involves restoration, preservation and an addition off the back that didn't overwhelm the building even though it was larger. There was another restoration project for the Rockingham Library. A 1920 school in Alstead was added to with a new gym and two classrooms.

(5:33:25 p.m.)

In response to a question from Victor Azzi as to who the “creative genius” is at SMP, the response is that all in the studio work on all projects, but Anthony is the key guy for more modern buildings, and Jason for more historic ones. Eric Palson, who was not present, is very experienced and looks at things from a high level. SMP further volunteered that their approach to the design process stresses the importance of involving the community: through meetings, presentations, charrettes, and the use of all available social media. In response to a question from Peter White, there was discussion about a dialog with the NH Preservation Office. SMP stated that they try to follow Secretary of the Interior guidelines. Additions should be contextual and not dominate, they should blend in, but not mimic. SMP is listed as a preferred firm in the eyes of the Preservation Office.

In response to a question from Craig Musselman, SMP states that they have experience with a slightly more than \$2 million new building for Canterbury, which combined police, fire, highway and town offices. They have also done a city hall and opera house for Lebanon, and a needs analysis for Milford (police, fire, ambulance and town hall).

Winger, Hoyt and Colwell presentation (5:59:00 p.m.)

Mr. Colwell was not present, however Messrs. Winger and Hoyt were. *Editor's note: Corey Colwell appears often before the Rye Planning Board and the Rye Zoning Board of Adjustment on behalf of residents seeking variances and other approvals.*

Doyle and Sherman presentation (6:30:45 p.m.)

Both Rob Doyle and Pat Sherman were present. Rob Doyle did the recent study of the 1899 Trolley Barn (Old Police Station). Ms. Sherman expresses concerns about

the size of the addition. *Editor's note: she refers to a 2000 sq. ft. footprint, when it's actually about 3000 sq. ft.* There isn't an obvious place for a 10,000 sq. ft. addition to be placed, she says. *Editor's note: While she refers to a 10,000 sq. ft., addition, it's actually closer to 4500 sq. ft. (i.e. the difference between the existing 6000 sq. ft. building and the 10,500 space need arrived at by the 2012 Space Needs Committee).* She talks about concrete that appears to have been put in place to shore up the granite foundation, and expressed concerns. A lot more facts are needed to make sure that the project is doable, she said.

(6:44:45 p.m.)

Peter White commended Rob Doyle on the recent Trolley Barn study. He then asked what town halls they had done. Pat Sherman indicated that her work had been mostly municipal buildings with town offices. In response to a question from Craig Musselman, Mr. Doyle stated that there is a concept of differentiating additions to historical buildings. The AG design was very different. That doesn't need to be the case. The differences can be subtle. Pat says that the materials would likely be the same (i.e. clapboards, etc.). She reiterated that the biggest problem is the size, as well as the issue of dominating the existing building. Craig Musselman asked whether Pat felt that they needed to backtrack, inasmuch as the property line has been located and the work done for the geothermal wells indicates subsurface dry sand way down. Pat emphasizes the importance of locating the grades, including the adjacent hill and walls.

Break (7:07:25 p.m. to 7:11:42 p.m.)

The audio was turned off during this period.

Port One presentation (7:11:42 p.m.)

Kelly Davis and Evan Mullen presented. Port One indicated that they had looked at prior work, including the 2012 Space Needs Committee study. They need to take a step back and test the assumptions with respect to that. A 10,000 sq. ft. program was taken down to 5000 to 6000 sq. ft. *Editor's note: these are approximately correct numbers for the AG analysis vs. the Space Needs Committee conclusion as to the additional sq. ft. needed, i.e. after subtracting the current building size of 6000 sq. ft.. AG proposed a total need of 15,000 sq. ft. and the Space Needs Committee arrived at a total need of 10,500 sq. ft., plus or minus 10 percent.* Port One stated that they had actually done a sample design. They suggested a basement in the addition to accommodate 2200-2400 sq. ft. Storage was mentioned all of the time in the 2011 AG study, they said, and a basement could accommodate that, they said.

(7:36:35 p.m.)

In response to a question from Paul Goldman, Port One acknowledged that the Facilities Master Plan would need to feed into the schematic design due to resolution of the location for the Recreation Department and the results of an ongoing storage needs analysis. Mr. Goldman had stated that the Facilities Master Plan appeared to come later, after the input from it was needed. There was then a discussion about the size of the

addition and the one building/two building issues. Beth Yeaton stated that public input revealed an issue with the size of the addition. She said that the Heritage Commission had stated that it would fight an addition of more than 20 feet "tooth and nail." Craig Musselman said that the limit was 26 feet, and said that there was an arithmetic problem with making everything fit. Peter White indicated that a basement could provide the necessary space. Craig Musselman stated that there would still be a problem.

Peter White asked why the Durham Town Hall work, in later phases, had been awarded to AG after Port One had done the earlier space needs analysis phase. Port One responded that the town manager had told him that the job went to AG as Art Guadano lived in Durham. In terms of experience, Port One said that it had done the Boscawen Town Hall, the old town hall in Newington, Greenfield (town offices placed in an old school), and Eliot (presumably Maine). *Editor's note: The Newington Old Town Hall is a separate building from the very large new Town Hall there.* Port One stated that they have also done a lot of projects with historic buildings at Philips Andover. Port One passed out a sheet, and stated that it had estimated \$750,000 for renovation of the existing town hall (\$125 per sq. ft., they said), and \$3.3 million for new facilities.

Initial Impressions (8:00:25 p.m.)

After AG had left, the group began discussing the candidates.

(8:02:25 p.m.)

Paul Goldman stated that he favored AG due to its systems approach and its focus on the master plan prior to the schematic design. He stated that there seemed to be a conflict between the SMP Principals, and Mr. Paulson was not there. The quality of their presentation was lower than that of the proposal. Port One was not as "systems oriented" due to the Facilities Master Plan not feeding into the schematic design.

(8:04:45 p.m.)

Peter White said that his favorite was SMP due to historical considerations. Selecting AG would be like first down and 20 yards to go, using a football analogy. He later said that the public would ask why the firm that was previously fired would be rehired.

(8:05:00 p.m.)

Craig Musselman said that AG had done a decent job. He had ranked SMP lower based on their proposal, and even lower after their presentation. He had more confidence in their younger guy than in the principal who was going to be in charge. Port One got it and they had done an extraordinary presentation. AG had been his first choice, now Port One was. *Editor's note: by the time of the vote, he had switched back to favor AG.*

(8:07:15 p.m.)

Beth Yeaton said that she liked SMP at first, now not so much. Port One has moved up. For her, the choice would be AG or Port One, she said.

(8:07:45 p.m.)

Mark Luz stated that Port One transcended the competition. The presentation was systematic and clear and there was a nice juxtaposition between a younger guy with a fresher approach and a more experienced one.

(8:08:53 p.m.)

Peter Kasnet stated that he was impressed with AG, SMP and Port One, pausing between each. *Editor's note: the pauses appeared to indicate that he might have been stating the candidates in order of his preference.* Then he said that the choice would be between AG and Port One, both of which are qualified. He does not know who is behind the scenes at AG though. Victor Azzi interjected that it is one architect and two interns. Craig Musselman said that, in 2011, it was only Art. *Editor's note: He is apparently referring to Art Guadano, the principal of AG.*

(8:11:15 p.m.)

Paula Merritt asked about the concerns expressed by Doyle and Sherman, although they wouldn't be her choice. She wondered whether those are real concerns. She's struggling between SMP, Port One and AG. She is concerned about the absence of public input indicated by Port One. That was the problem last time.

(8:13:45 p.m.)

Priscilla Jenness indicated that AG was still the first choice. They've learned from experience and will save time due to prior work. She looked forward to seeing SMP's presentation, but they have slipped compared to their proposal.

(8:14:50 p.m.)

Victor Azzi stated that the SMP proposal was superb. He does not feel the same about their presentation. He was surprised and disappointed, he stated. However, he knows the people, the quality of their work and the esteem with which they're held by most people. He doesn't know why Mr. Palson did not show up. His presence and participation would have made all of the difference, he said. Nevertheless, he expects a better outcome from SMP. References should be checked for the three finalist firms (i.e. AG, Port One and SMP).

Final selection (8:20:00 p.m.)

(8:28:20 p.m.)

Lucy Neiman indicated that AG was the strongest by far. She didn't think much of SMP. Port One lacked historic experience, she said. *Editor's note: Lucy Neiman arrived at 6:01:34 p.m. according to the video. This was after both the AG and SMP presentations, and the associated question and answer sessions, had concluded.*

(8:29:00 p.m.)

Beth Yeaton suggested that they narrow the field to two candidates. The voting members went around the table and expressed their first and second choices. The results were as follows:

	<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>
Kasnet:	AG	SMP
Goldman:	AG	SMP
Azzi:	SMP	AG
White:	SMP	AG
Jenness:	AG	SMP
Musselman:	AG	Port One
Yeaton:	AG	SMP
Luz:	Port One	AG
Merritt:	SMP	AG
Neiman:	AG	SMP

Craig Musselman summarized the results, indicating that AG had received 10 votes, SMP 8 and Port One 2. *Editor's note: It appears that, because Mr. Musselman added the first and second place votes, he expected only that Port One would be excluded at that point. Apparently he expected another vote to decide between AG and SMP, perhaps after further discussion. Adding only the first place votes, AG received 6, SMP 3, and Port One 1.*

(8:30:40 p.m.)

Paul Goldman then moved that AG be selected. Peter Kasnet seconded. Mike Magnant suggested that the motion be made subject to references.

(8:33:45 p.m.)

Peter White indicated that there might be push back from the community as AG was fired last time. Paul Goldman responded that it was not fair to pin it on them. All of them had something to learn. Victor Azzi is now on the committee, Mr. Goldman said. *Editor's note: Mr. Azzi attended many of the 2012 Space Needs Committee meetings and made a number of comments supporting a smaller, and more architecturally consistent, solution.*

(8:36:15 p.m.)

Craig Musselman indicated that those sitting in the back of the room at Board of Selectmen meetings, who would remain nameless, would let out a loud gasp at the selection.

(8:38:20 p.m.)

Craig Musselman, indicating that there was still no chairman, stated that one needed to be selected next time. A vote was then taken on Mr. Goldman's motion, which carried unanimously. The motion by that point had been amended to make the selection of AG subject to the checking of references.

(8:39:10 p.m.)

The fee envelope for AG was then opened. Their proposed fee was \$58,625. Discussion ensued about the expenses, which apparently could be construed as up to 15 percent in addition. Peter White noted that these could be another \$9000. Subsequently,

Mr. Magnant was asked to negotiate a contract, with all expenses included within the \$58,625. *Editor's note: The amount appropriated by 2013 Warrant Article 4 is \$60,000.*

(8:47:35 p.m.)

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, August 29 at 6:30 p.m., with Art Guadano to be there (or the meeting rescheduled) the meeting adjourned.