

**CANDIA SAFETY FACILITY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES OF
June 18th, 2024**

APPROVED

SFC Members Present: Brien Brock (BOS), Chief Mike McGillen (PD), Mark Chalbeck (PB), Russ Dann (BOS), Rick Langlois (PD), Tom Severino, Ed Domings (FD), Jim Wilson (FD), Joe Flanagan and Andria Hansen (TA).

Absent: Dennis Hebert, Jeff Wuebbolt.

5:02 pm B. Brock called the public meeting to order immediately followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

T. Severino said at their last meeting the Committee left with a goal to explore their options by adding an addition to the Town Hall building for the PD. They were curious to know what that cost would be because they were over 3 million dollars to build at the location where the was land purchased on Raymond Road and questioned if it might be possible to build an addition costing around 1 million or so at the Town Hall.

T. Severino designed 2 plans for their review, showing one plan at 2,500 sq. ft. and the second for 1,900 sq. ft. He took out some items but kept in what he thought were the essentials. He said they were limited to where they can add on as they cannot build the addition on the front or sides of the Town Hall, therefore they would have to go in the back. Unfortunately, in the back of the Town Hall parking lot is the septic tank, pump chamber to the septic system and where the Skate Park is located. They would need to rip up the septic system, redo the drainage, redo the septic and reconfigure the parking lots to make sure it matches the amount they currently have now and not to lose any spaces. He clarified the figures he used with this design plan of 2,500 sq. ft. costing approximately \$2,005,000.00 and that is based on a simple design fee that someone might help volunteer with a set of plans, and it is a very low fee of 2.5%. When he saw the amount that added up to 2 million, he decided to cancel the next meeting and pushed the meeting back in order to come up with a second plan. He cut down additional space on the second plan with only the bare essentials and kept it efficient. He also reconfigured the parking lot and was hoping to come up with an amount of \$1.5 million. However, after reducing the square footage of the building size it only saved \$10,000 to \$15,000 for onsite work, as they will still be doing all those functions. The design plan he came up with for 1,900 sq. ft. costs approximately \$1,725,000.

T. Severino feels his job is to assist by being a servant of the Town and looking into this, because it is their due diligence. Everything he has done has been very fair, as he did all he could do in his designing capabilities to make a site plan that was efficient as possible for a PD addition on the Town Hall, however he could not make it work. He said you can keep shrinking the building plan down, but why do anything if they are going to do that. If they are going to spend more than \$1.5, \$1.75 or \$2 million which is halfway of the amount needed for an addition, in his opinion it would be best to repursue building on the land that was purchased. He feels the community would be better served for a long-term facility. It is very difficult to keep good employees and feels this is what they owe the Police Department. These employees want to know they have a great place to work and a place that they can be proud to come to work at. As much as he knows that it would be a long road ahead, in his opinion it is best to pursue a new building on to the site where the land was purchased.

T. Severino said by moving the PD Officers out of the Town Hall, it will give additional space that our Town Hall Employees/Departments need. The septic system could stay the same and the parking lot would have ample parking space. Everything gets resolved when the PD department is moved out of the Town Hall building.

B. Brock said when they initially started this, the whole emphasis was for them looking for something that would serve them for over 50 years. The current Town Hall has served them for over 30 years now and it has been great.

R. Dann said this Town relies on their volunteers and T. Severino is a fine example of that. We must look at certain things that need to be done, and in adding an addition to the Town Hall building we would be losing out. The Town Hall is a small building for all the employees working there now, and it would be a relief if the PD moved out. When a warrant article was presented to the voters for the land to be purchased for a Safety Facility including the FD, PD and Highway the voters approved it. The study that was completed states that it would only be a band-aid by adding on an addition. He thanked T. Severino for all his work, and said he agrees with building on the land that was purchased.

J. Flanagan said he has learned that the Limerick, Maine FD received a \$2.8 million dollar grant from the HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development) Foundation. The Town of Limerick owned the property and had applied to build a FD and PD Safety Complex. He explained that if the PD & FD apply for a grant, they have the opportunity to receive up to \$3.9 million dollars from the HUD Foundation. B. Brock asked if HUD had approved of the Grant even though the Town had not voted yet. J. Flanagan said that is correct. B. Brock asked if it was contingent on the Town voting to build? J. Flanagan said the Town had voted on it and said they wanted to do something, but they did not have the funds. It is similar to what the Town of Candia is doing right now. B. Brock said that is different than accepting to build it. A. Hansen asked if they had voted on it knowing there could be possible grants? J. Flanagan said they have to submit an application and to get it approved. The drawback is that HUD is stating it must be for a PD and FD Safety Complex.

J. Flanagan pointed out that the FD is currently staffed for 14 hours a day without decontamination stations for the EMT's that work at the Fire Station. There are no primal vents for their diesel fuel vehicles. If someone becomes terminally ill or with cancer due to diesel fuel, they could file a lawsuit against the Town of Candia, and it would be catastrophic. He has heard they want to add an addition to the FD building to take care of some items. The FD has only one male and one female bathroom and neither one of them is handicapped accessible. There is no sprinkler system in the firehouse, and if it catches on fire it would burn to the ground. B. Brock said he understands that Mr. Flanagan's passion is in building a complex for both the FD and the PD, but the Committee did decide a while back that they would concentrate on just the PD. R. Dann said there have been some recent changes and the Committee might want to relook at this as we do not have a Volunteer Fire Department anymore as they are now being paid. We previously had the Fire Chief at our meeting, and his answer to them was that the firehouse was good for another 10 years. They have not come to the Selectboard on what they want to build, however from what he understands they will need to put in a septic system and the well is not good and those are two major items. There is also the ambulance crew that needs a facility that they can clean up if needed and where they can rest between calls. As a Safety Committee they should have some discussion in order to let the public know there are problems at the firehouse.

M. McGillen thanked T. Severino for his work on the design plans. As he is looking at the new plans, he is noticing that they are getting smaller. He thinks they should build on the land that was purchased located on Raymond Road. The Town Hall is overgrowing, and they could utilize the space the PD is occupying. His vote is to build on the land located on Raymond Road.

M. Chalbeck said thank you to T. Severino for all his work. It is an easy decision to make, that for only one more million they could easily be at the land parcel on Raymond Road. They have not considered the cost of temporary housing for the employees if they did an addition on the PD building. They would not be able to operate out of the building while construction is taking place, therefore that would be additional costs for temporary housing that could come up to the 3 million building to be built on land that was purchased. He's in favor of building the PD on Raymond Road. If they could find out more about the grant, he would probably be in favor of building both PD and FD on Raymond Road. We owe it to our Officers and to show them our appreciation by giving them a facility that is suitable for them to operate. J. Flanagan said he will get the paperwork needed and bring it to the Town Office.

A. Hansen agreed to them exploring into adding the FD back in their plans on Raymond Road. There is a better chance of receiving a grant when adding in the FD to the plans. B. Brock said there must be a reason why HUD granted the Town in Maine, because the Town of Candia could not get anything unless the Town

passed the building. After the building was passed, is when they would have been eligible to apply for a grant. B. Brock instructed J. Flanagan to send them the application, so they fully understand what the conditions are.

Public Input:

Jake Robie (resident) thanked the SFC for all the work they have done and in trying to figure out the best way to go forward with the PD for the next 50 years. He wishes he would have been involved much sooner and if there are any seats available, he is willing to join the committee and help out. His opinion is not to add an addition to the Town Hall. He believes they need to stay the course, the voters did not approve it this year, but when looking at other communities that is generally what happens, and it does not get passed the first few times by the voters. Eventually it will get some traction and it will pass. The PD deserves an environment that is good to work in, as well as a facility that is comfortable and adequate for safety reasons. He understands the concept of the PD and FD together, but they do not know if the grant is possible, and they do not have a design to put a number on what that grant would be. There would probably need to be a design concept that goes into that so they would be able to justify warranting a community our size that type of grant. The FD should not put any additional money into the current Fire Station for any additions. At some point they should have a full safety complex at the new property as well as a Highway Department in the future. We have done a great job in our community to keep costs down for many years and now we are seeing the effects of that. In building a complex it will cost them money, but he hopes the community will support this for the growth of the Town and its future.

B. Brock mentioned that one of the complaints they received after voting was that it was not clear in their warrant article about the interest rate for the PD building on Raymond Rd would be. He was adamant about not adding the rate in because they could not define the actual interest rate. They probably should have given a guesstimate on the number and communicated that information showing a specific date of what their interest rate would be. R. Severino said that it needs to be very clear about the term, the rate and the budget. He is convinced now that they cannot have an addition done for some minimal amount of money, just get the Officers by for now. He would not have known that until he drew the plans out and tried to make minor adjustments for an addition, is when he realized that it cannot be done.

The Committee talked about providing the Residents with the current interest rate they have at that time and will want to include the amount of the bond.

B. Brock asked the committee for their consensus on the plans T. Severino created for the addition to the Town Hall or do they go back to the original concept of building on the land purchased on Raymond Road. All members verbally agreed to build on the land purchased on Raymond Road. No one opposed.

Jake Robie said, now that they have decided to build on the land purchased, he would encourage the community members to get behind the concept of building on the new property. He feels if we get their support, it can go a long way for the future of Candia.

The Committee made a motion to add Jake Robie as a member to the SFC.

MOTION: Mark Chalbeck made a motion for Jake Robie to become a member of the SFC effective immediately. Seconded by R. Dann. All in favor. Motion carried.

B. Brock said when they receive the grant application, they can see what it entails and if it needs to be a PD and FD combination. If they add the FD, they will need to pay for the engineering plans to be completed. T. Severino said they should not be budgeting anything yet until they understand the grant more. At one time there was a schematic and layout done and it displayed the FD attached to the PD, but the engineering was not included. If they receive a HUD Grant, maybe the Town Residents would vote for a complex that is 6 or 7 million if half the amount will be paid for.

Jim Wilson (Firefighter) said the FD recently had a stand-up shower installed in the men's room. However, he would not shower with the water that comes out of their well because it is horrible. No one wants their taxes to go up, but something needs to be done. It is inevitable that eventually the FD will be operating 24/7.

They are currently working 8am-6pm during days and with 40% of their calls at night, and still semi-rely on volunteers.

He gave an example of an employee that works a full-time job and is also on call many nights and believes they will eventually burn out. It is inevitable that they will be 24/7, it is not tomorrow but it is coming. Before they can do that the FD needs a lot of work. In his opinion doing the Safety Complex is the smartest thing to do. A lot of people have told him, they do not want their taxes to go up, but they would be more interested in hearing the plans for a 5 million Safety Complex, than for a 3 million PD. They would rather pay for something that would include everyone both for the PD and FD. They could add a training room in the middle for both departments to share equally. This way they would not need to cut things out. There are a lot of Grants out there, and for some reason they have more available for the FD. There are also Grants available for equipment and office furniture they could apply for.

B. Brock said part of the reason why they went the route they did, is because they knew within 5 or 10 years there was going to be another huge expense at the FD. That is why they were trying to only add the PD for now and pay for it before getting hit again with another big expense. J. Wilson said he agrees, however if they pay 3 million now for the PD, in 5 years it will cost 5 million to build a Firehouse or for an addition. If they build both now, it might only cost them 6 million, because they would already be doing the structure part of it.

R. Dann asked what they would do with the old FD building if a new one was built. He feels that if people know what that building could be used for it might answer their questions.

B. Brock asked if they were all clear on what they were going to do, to concentrate on the new site on Raymond Road and to obtain the Grant Application and see what it entails.

The next SFC meeting is Wednesday, August 7th, 2024 @ 5:00pm.

Approval of Minutes: SFC Minutes for April 2nd, 2024. None noted.

MOTION: M. McGillen made a motion to accept the April 2nd, 2024, SFC minutes as presented. Seconded by M. Chalbeck. All in favor. Motion passed.

5:53pm T. Severino made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by M. McGillen. All in Favor. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Chandonnet