

MINUTES
JOINT GORHAM TOWN COUNCIL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS COMMITTEE &
SCHOOL FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING
Meeting of Monday, November 9, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.
On-line Zoom Meeting

Present: Councilor Lee Pratt, Chair; Councilors Suzie Phillips, Ben Hartwell, Virginia Wilder Cross and Janet Kuech; Darryl Wright, School Committee Chair; Phil Gagnon, School Committee member.

Also Present: Town Manager, Ephrem Paraschak; School Superintendent, Heather Perry; School Facilities & Transportation Director, Norm Justice.

1. Welcome & Overview of work thus far. (Ephrem/Heather)

Town Manager Ephrem Paraschak shared that at the last Joint Facilities Committee meeting, the committees discussed advertising an RFQ and both committees then budgeted \$100,000 toward the process. COVID-19 delayed the process until the RFQ was due on Election Day – November 3, 2020. Five firms submitted proposals, which have been distributed to Town Council Capital Improvements and School Facility Committees. The RFQ was intentionally broad/open-ended, and provided a list of facilities and ball fields, and asked firms to propose what the Town will need in the future based on the size of the Town and needs. Goals for today's meeting include refining what the committees are looking for and who you want to select for interviews.

School Committee Chair Darryl Wright asked to clarify why some firms requested meetings and others did not; who are the firms that staff have virtually met with and which firms have staff not met with. Heather Perry said that staff – Mr. Paraschak, School Facilities & Transportation Director Norm Justice and herself - met with Harriman and Levallee Brensinger to help clarify the scope of work, and what materials the Town and School have available for their use vs. them having to recreate documents that may already exist. Mr. Justice added that Oak Point submitted written questions.

2. Summary of 5 Vendor Proposals. (Ephrem/Heather)

Mr. Paraschak said that the questions that staff have are with regard to the direction that committees want to go and identifying expectations for this process. How detailed of an analysis are the committees wanting to perform. Mr. Paraschak said that he does not personally recommend focusing solely on the bottom line proposed by each firm. He recommends narrowing down the committees' focus on what the firms are proposing and whether or not you want to talk to them.

School Superintendent Heather Perry said that she was impressed with the background of all firms as they all had over 35 years of experience in the field. All firms referred to their experience on the municipal and school side of things. Sebago Technics had a little more experience with municipal projects vs. school projects, but overall the combined experience was great. She noted that some firms have all of the necessary experience in-house, and some firms

would subcontract out components of the work, so that would be something to be mindful of moving forward.

Councilor Pratt said he would be more in favor of working with a firm that has all services available in-house and does not need to subcontract for outside services, and cautioned the committee to be leery of the same. School Committee member Philip Gagnon referred to the Studies section on page 25 of CHA Architecture's proposal, which references that they already performed the Gorham Facility Study some time ago – does staff have that and can the joint committees receive a copy of that to compare where Gorham was 20 years ago when it was performed to where we are now. Mr. Justice confirmed that he has a full copy and can send it along to everyone. He further said that the study guided the Town's work – the Middle School, Municipal Center, the Library, and Public Works were all laid out and categorized in the study. Mr. Gagnon expressed his feelings toward using CHA Architecture since they have a more intimate knowledge of Town buildings. He asked to clarify if the delay to the construction of Great Falls Elementary was do an issue with CHA, to which Mr. Justice said that the issue was with the contractor, not CHA. Regarding Oak Point, Mr. Gagnon saw that they were responsible for the Falmouth campus. He also feels that based on CHA's proposal, they are priced out for this work, to which Ms. Perry said that there are opportunities for clarifications regarding the scope of work that may reduce their proposal. Mr. Gagnon said that with more clustered subdivisions, the Town needs to provide more space for folks to go, so the Town needs to make up for space somewhere, which should be a consideration when reviewing the proposals. Levallee Brensinger, Harriman and Sebago Technics included proposed recreational and athletic fields.

**3. Discussion to clarify goals – what do we want as an end product from this work?
(Ephrem/Heather)**

Mr. Paraschak asked Councilor Pratt and the group how encompassing they want this analysis to be. Not all firms asked for a list of facilities. Staff had an interesting conversation with Harriman – they asked to clarify the scope of work and to what level of detail did the Town and School want it to be. Are we looking at the general facilities - what their usefulness is and the projected cost to replace them, or should we be looking at everything within those facilities if we plan to keep them (i.e. HVAC, electrical, lighting, etc.). Mr. Gagnon said that when the joint committees last met and discussed a facility study, they wanted something that would be similar to the last facility study done 20 years ago that guided the Town moving forward and took Census numbers into account. Councilor Pratt commented that the need for an updated facility study resulted from the amount of growth that Gorham has experienced and the need to scale up to accommodate that growth. He does not feel that an overview is going to provide enough guidance; a detailed scope listing everything from mechanicals to the roof is needed, which he is aware will cost money. A detailed study will guide where bond funding is applied first. He feels that the Town should be monitoring and improving on all buildings, and would leave athletic fields up for discussion. He asked if existing athletic fields will accommodate future growth with clustered subdivisions coming into Town. Mr. Gagnon asked if the Public Works Facility and High School will accommodate the Town's future needs. Councilor Pratt added that another consideration is to determine if we no longer need certain buildings and if other buildings would be better locations for certain services, such as the Little Falls Elementary building being used as a Senior Center. Councilor Pratt's goal for this study is to determine the current condition of Town facilities, what is failing and what it is going to cost to fix everything. Mr. Gagnon added

that we should look at whether we are maximizing spaces at all buildings and to eliminate “ego offices.” Councilor Phillips agreed that the updated facility study will be helpful, and having a new perspective on existing building uses may allow for increased efficiencies, such as combining/consolidating spaces with similar uses. She added that Sebago Technic’s proposal appeared to have the best understanding of Gorham’s athletic fields. Councilor Pratt said he wants to have an overview of all buildings in Town, including all Fire buildings, School buildings, etc. He doesn’t need to know details such as how old a sprinkler system is, but whether a field is sprinkled vs. not sprinkled. He also doesn’t want to shorten the scope of the study to save money; if we are going to pay for the study, it should be done right. Mr. Paraschak said that he doesn’t think that the committees are going to get their answers unless interviews are conducted with all five firms. Councilor Pratt agreed that all firms should be interviewed, and said that he would like to come up with a scoring matrix for questions. He doesn’t think it would be fair to narrow down the list of firms based only on what they submitted, because not everyone interpreted the RFP the same.

Councilor Phillips suggested appointing a subcommittee to conduct interviews of the five firms. Councilor Pratt suggested appointing a smaller group consisting of one member from each committee and one staff member to sit on the interview panel as it may seem intimidating for all present to sit on the interview panel. Mr. Wright recommended having two members on each committee present in addition to staff. Mr. Gagnon recommends that each committee propose their vision/reach a consensus to use as a guide. Ms. Perry commented that Mr. Gagnon’s holistic vision would come as a second step to the work that these groups are looking at now. Mr. Gagnon said that he wants to be sure that the studies provided by the firms are looking at all Town-owned properties, and we then look at whether we are utilizing them properly. Councilor Hartwell said that he wants to see every Town building and property in this study, so the committees know what they are working with. He also agreed with Mr. Wright’s recommendation to appoint two members from each committee to the interview panel in addition to staff. Mr. Paraschak commented that if the two committees are looking have a report back in time to formulate budgets for next year or help in the budget planning process, he recommended interviewing soon. Councilor Pratt suggested submitting the same list/goals that are being discussed tonight to all firms, so they are on the same playing field. Ms. Perry agreed that a common list of all facilities and clear set of three to four goals/outcomes should be provided when staff reaches out to all firms to schedule interviews. Ms. Perry further said that once a firm is selected, the Town and School should be as flexible with the timeline to get the job done well. Mr. Justice said that being transparent and direct with firms during the interview process will help the firms revise their scope and costs. Mr. Gagnon recommended moving forward with a unified vision and explain what we want during the interview process, and allow each firm to advise if something is included or not, and what the additional cost would be. Mr. Wright agreed with Councilor Pratt with sharing the interview panel’s goals with each firm before interviews, and said that it may help speed up the process. Councilor Pratt reiterated that he wants to send a list of all Town-owned properties and the goals/outcomes of the interview to all firms prior to interviews to better prepare them. Mr. Justice said that the range in estimated costs from each firm differed, because the list of Town/School facilities provided to the firms did not reference the sizes of buildings and properties. How much programming and the level of detail in new studies for each facility will drive the cost. He further said that the same level of details and programming will need to be done on the facilities condition index as the firm selected will have to study each system, identify it, catalogue the information and then price out each replacement schedule. Mr. Paraschak said that when

interviews are scheduled, he will work with Ms. Perry and Mr. Justice to refine the list of facilities to send to each firm. He added that a time period was not addressed in the RFQ for this project, and that they aim to ask for a 20-year window for future needs for all facilities. Mr. Paraschak reviewed that the group has discussed so far including studies for all properties, ball fields, specifying a timeline, new or repurposed uses vs. long-term maintenance costs (is “X” building working for the Town, or should we look at other alternatives), maximizing the use of spaces with the consideration of some of the workforce working remotely when/where possible. The Covid-19 pandemic has proved that the remote workforce model works, and there is a significant cost savings to be had when you can account for staff working remotely where possible. Councilor Pratt agreed with Mr. Paraschak’s summary.

4. Work to create common questions for vendor presentations. (Ephrem/Heather)

Councilor Pratt shared that Councilor Hager and the Industrial Park Steering Committee developed a scoring matrix that could be used for the interview process; the matrix provides a grading scale and is a good way to grade a vendor without each interview panelist trying to do their own computation. Ephrem shared his screen and the matrix summary that Councilor Pratt referenced.

Mrs. Perry suggested using the four headings from the RFQ as possible areas from which to ask related questions for the interviews. The headings were “methods and approach to the project as defined by the proposal,” “team qualifications and experience,” “estimated fees and costs for the work,” and “achievability to perform the work in a timely manner and meet deadlines.”

Councilor Pratt recommended asking how many subcontractors are each firm willing to use for this project, and what does each firm estimate as time required for this project. Ms. Perry recommended that committee members email questions to staff and staff can then align the questions with the matrix. Councilor Pratt recommended that the group enter all questions on a shared Google Doc, and Ms. Perry said that she would create the Google Doc, and she and Mr. Paraschak will then review and categorize the questions to create a maximum of eight to 10 questions. Once ready, staff will send the draft matrix to the committees for review.

5. Finalize dates/times for vendor presentations. (Ephrem/Heather)

A discussion ensued between Mr. Gagnon, Mr. Wright and Ms. Perry regarding the interview timeline. Mr. Paraschak added that interviews would need to be done in November in order for the Town Council to review and vote on the joint committees’ recommended firm at their December 1st meeting. He added that interviews could be done via Zoom video conferencing on November 23rd, 24th and 30th, and run 45-minutes to one-hour each interview. Councilor Phillips commented that the Town Council will have a scheduled workshop in December, so the Council could review and vote on the recommended firm as part of a Special Meeting if needed. Councilor Pratt commented that he will be out of the state during the week of November 16th and would return the week of Thanksgiving; however, another councilor could take his place on the interview panel if one volunteered. Mr. Wright commented that there may be another member joining the School Committee this week that may want to join the School Facilities subcommittee. Councilor Phillips said that the second Capital Improvement Projects Committee member that could take Councilor Pratt’s place on the interview panel will be identified at the Town’s Organizational meeting tomorrow evening – Tuesday, November 10th.

Mr. Paraschak reviewed that staff will be sure that the same list of facilities is provided to all firms, as well as the concepts that the joint committees are looking to explore. His office will also schedule the interviews. He will also ask Executive Assistant Jessica Hughes to scan and send the last Facility Study to all firms.

Ms. Perry noted that the School Committee has a workshop scheduled in the evening of November 24th, but they could be available in the afternoon. She will share the Google Doc. with everyone tomorrow morning, so everyone can start formulating questions.

6. Adjourn.

There being no further business, a motion was MADE by Mr. Wright, SECONDED by Superintendent Perry and unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Hughes, Executive Assistant