

**Town of Auburn  
Police Department Building Advisory Committee  
August 29, 2018**

**Committee Members Present:** James Headd, Richard Eaton and Keith Leclair, Selectmen; Det. Sergeant Charles Chabot, Michael Rolfe, Police Commissioner; Carrie Rouleau-Cote, Building Inspector; Thomas Lacroix, Planning Board; Mary Beth Lufkin, Budget Committee and Robert Seling, Acting Fire Chief.

**Also Present:** Town Administrator William Herman

Mr. Headd called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

**Selectmen's Charge to Committee:**

Mr. Headd reported following the work done in 2017, the Board of Selectmen had agreed to separate the needs of the Police Department and the Parks & Recreation Commission moving forward, and it was felt the effort should focus on the needs of the Police Department. He noted part of the discussion moving forward is to determine whether those needs can best be addressed with an addition to the current Safety Complex or as a separate detached building on the same site. He asked Detective Sergeant Chabot to outline the space needs of the Police Department.

Sergeant Chabot noted there was a severe space limitation currently at the Police Department with the Sally Port being used as a garage to store various large items, in addition to the Department renting three storage pods for additional storage. He noted the MRI operational review of the department conducted in 2016 identified various space needs issues including space for the storage of large items of evidence; record storage and some personnel needs such as a female locker room. He indicated the pods currently contain the department's motorcycle, ATV, nearly 30 tires to support the cruiser fleet; large items like spare light bars, cages and other cruiser parts; and dated records. He further noted it would be beneficial to be able to have garage space for at least a couple of cruisers to get them out of the weather and be ready to respond when needed. He also indicated that on some occasions, the department could pull vehicles out of the garage area and use the space for training and demonstration purposes.

On the consideration of an addition versus a separate building, Sergeant Chabot noted a number of years ago Russ Pelletier developed plans for a two-story addition to the Safety Complex that provided a re-alignment of space that would address many of the issues identified today. At that time, the cost estimate for the addition was \$86,000 and it was felt it would be a more economical way for the Town to address the needs.

## **General Discussion:**

Richard Eaton noted he had looked at this extensively in 2017 and strongly felt the Town could not do an addition to the Safety Complex due to the pitch of the roof and that there would be no easy space to gain. He also felt such an addition would be expensive to accomplish. He felt the Town is going to need space in the future for multiple purposes which could include public works, cemeteries and parks and recreation, and that a separate building would provide more flexibility to meeting those needs. He felt the Town shouldn't put a scab on the current Safety Complex to meet current needs, but should look to meet future needs. He felt a stand-alone building is the best solution for long-term planning and growth, noting the building developed in 2017 could easily be expanded whenever it might be needed.

Mary Beth Lufkin indicated it was her understanding in 2017 the proposed stand-alone building would cost approximately \$300,000, and she wondered how a project of that cost could be considered not to be expensive. Mr. Eaton noted the project was priced out at around \$250,000 with Mr. Eaton supervising the project allowing the Town to be the general contractor. However, he indicated that offer was off the table now, so the project cost would likely exceed \$300,000. Mrs. Lufkin said what she heard being described tonight is something more than a storage building, which is all that came across last year. She felt this was a project that was evolving.

Mr. Eaton indicated there is a need for space from a multiple number of departments and he felt the Town should address as many of those needs as possible. Mr. Leclair suggested in April or May the Board had a general agreement to separate the police department needs from park & recreation needs, but that nothing was cast in stone.

Mr. Leclair asked how other police departments handle large items of evidence. Sergeant Chabot reported some just make do with what they have, like Auburn. Other scrounge space wherever they can. He was aware of a few communities that utilize a county facility for storage. Others have developed their own space, citing Newton as an example. Carrie Rouleau-Cote noted the Derry Police Department built an 18' x 24' evidence building which basically is a Morton-style building on a slab, electricity and a garage door. She indicated the facility was built for \$31,000.

Mrs. Rouleau-Cote felt in general this was bad timing to be looking to do a big project, noting the property revaluation that is hitting in 2018 and the cost impact of the school renovation and addition to come on line in 2019. Her sense was whatever approach is determined, it should be kept as simple as possible. She felt in 2017, the proposed project was getting way beyond what should be on the Safety Complex property.

Mr., Leclair asked how other departments handle their training needs. Sergeant Chabot indicated some agencies are able to do their training within their own facilities. Others go out to other public and private facilities. He did note the department has a shooting range on the highway property on Chester Turnpike that is part of the officers' training.

Mr. Leclair also asked about record storage, and Sergeant Chabot indicated beyond records stored out in one of the storage pods, he indicated the first floor of the dedicated space for an elevator at the Safety Complex is also an area the police department has records stored.

Mr. Leclair indicated while he supports the belief in planning for the future, he indicated that he does not see the potential for a lot more significant growth of the community beyond 1.5 to 2 percent per year. He said there is only so much land left to support growth and development. He agreed Town officials need to keep an eye on the future, but he was not sure there was significant growth ahead.

Michael Rolfe indicated he has discussed this potential with several of the police officers, and they have indicated to him they would prefer the space being developed as an addition to the Safety Complex and not a separate building. He indicated he has been looking at the site, and he felt that is the way the project should be planned.

The Committee took time to review the plans from 2000 for the existing Safety Complex that were pulled from the files, in addition to reviewing the design for a 72' x 36' storage building for the police department and parks & recreation that was prepared in 2017.

Mr. Eaton feels the Town missed a golden opportunity by not moving forward with the plan prepared in 2017. He felt the project would be more than half-way constructed by this time.

Mr. Leclair indicated beyond concern for the costs, there had also been major concerns expressed last year about building a facility for an operation that lacks specific direction and management. He felt it was hard to put infrastructure in place without having specific plans and goals for operation. He noted that was something the Board of Selectmen was looking to address this year.

Mrs. Lufkin asked what the specific task is of the committee and was there a deadline for reporting out, specifically asking if there was an interest in presenting something to the voters in March 2019. The Selectmen generally indicated the Committee should focus attention on what it determined ultimately was required to meet the Town's needs and to develop and plan and recommendation. Mr. Leclair noted it was almost September and there remained a lot of work to do, so it was likely a proposal would not be ready to be advanced for March 2019.

Mr. Leclair suggested the first step is for the committee to identify what it is that is actually needed, and then how best to address it. With respect to need, it was suggested the following space needs for the police department have been identified:

- ❖ Parking ability for two vehicles
- ❖ Radar trailer
- ❖ Motorcycle
- ❖ ATV

- ❖ Two Bicycles
- ❖ Approximately 30 tires
- ❖ Large items of evidence
- ❖ Records Storage (similar to space in the Town Hall for property records)
- ❖ A kennel or temporary holding space for dogs
- ❖ Female locker room
- ❖ Training space

Several of the committee members have not been in the police department facility at the Safety Complex. It was agreed the next meeting of the committee should be held at the Safety Complex so the property and the current facility could be toured and inspected.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM at the Safety Complex.

**Adjourn:**

Mr. Headd thanked the participants and adjourned the meeting at 8:07 PM.