

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S) REGARDING THE TOWN HALL BUILDING PROJECT

Updated As of 9/7/2014

TOWN HALL WORKING GROUP

Question: Who are the Members of the Town Hall Working Group?

Answer: *The Regular Members of the Working Group are Bill Keegan (Town Manager) ; David Feldman (Selectmen) Bill Yukna (Permanent Municipal Building Committee); Randy Scollins (Finance Director) ; Bill Casbarra (Building Commissioner) , John Rhoads (Planning Board); Sharon Wason (Town Planner); Roger Hill (DPW Director); Bob Cutler (Town Clerk); Dick Heydecker (resident); John Schleyer (resident); Ken Elovitz (resident). Other interested residents such as Thom Freeman and Larry Stern (Advisory Committee); have also attended as observers.*

Question: To whom does the Working Group report?

Answer: *The Working Group is advisory to the Town Manager.*

Question: Is the Town Hall Working Group subject to the Open Meeting Law?

Answer: *Because the Working Group is an advisory group formed by the Town Manager (and not by a public body such as the Board of Selectmen), it is not subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law. However, to keep the public informed, the Working Group does post its meetings with an Agenda and their meetings are open to the public. The Group meets every other Tuesday evenings from 4:30 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. at the Boyden Public Library. They have established a page on the Town's Website (www.foxboroughma.gov) where information from their meetings is being posted. The Working Group welcomes public participation and will be holding public information sessions at certain points when they have gathered enough information to pull together a public presentation. Presently, the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen's representative (David Feldman) have been providing updates to the Board of Selectmen at their bi-weekly meetings.*

NEW TOWN HALL: PRECONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS

Question: Why do we need a New Town Hall?

Answer: *The present Town Hall was constructed in 1960. There are visible operational challenges with the current building that limit its effective use. The present building is not mechanically efficient in that it lacks adequate heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) resulting in warm conditions in the summer months and cold conditions in the winter months. The windows and doors are not energy efficient, the roof leaks and the mortar associated with the building has a long history of flooding due to poor drainage around the exterior site. The flooding program became so bad in recent years that the first floor of the building has been abandoned for daily use and is only*

used for storage of some materials. The present building has only limited access and is not fully ADA compliant. Space in the building is very limited and public meetings are typically held outside of Town Hall due to limited seating capacity. Wiring in the building is old but is currently handling the capacity. However, the building was built during a time when computers and electronic devices were not part of the daily operational equipment to operate a modern town hall. The short answer to this question is that the current building no longer meets the needs of the present operation.

Question: When you refer to a “New” Town Hall, does that imply that renovating the existing building has been dismissed?

Answer: *The term “New Town Hall” is used generically throughout this document to describe an improvement or replacement of the existing building. The Working Group has considered many options as part of its review to determine which solution is the most viable for the Town to pursue.*

Question: Has the Town considered renovating the existing Town Hall?

Answer: *Yes, over the last several years the Town has considered the possibility of renovating the existing Town Hall. The Working Group is evaluating this option and has been very careful not to rule it out without giving it full consideration. However, in recent discussions with the Group, it was the near unanimous opinion of the Group that new construction would be a more viable option to address this building project. Given the new structural building code requirements along with the compliance issues associated with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) along with fitting the building with the latest technology capacity for computer interconnections and for environmental efficiencies, along with the on-going concerns about mold and lead contamination in the building, the Group is advising that new construction should be the more practical approach. The Group has acknowledged that some members of the community may prefer a full renovation of the existing structure as opposed to new construction. However, after considering all of the factors noted above, the Group also expressed concern over the failing condition of the building including a leaking roof, porous mortar in the side walls and poor insulation considerations as factors that further support the building of a new structure. In addition, the Board of Selectmen has voted on several occasions to express their preference of new construction versus a renovation project. Their most recent expression of this support was communicated at their meeting on July 22, 2014.*

Question: If the decision is made to build a new building, where will the building be located?

Answer: *It is the majority opinion of the Working Group that if we are to build a new Town Hall, the new building should be built in the parking lot of the existing Town Hall. The Group continues to evaluate the three options of*

constructing a new building in the current parking lot, renovate the existing Town Hall or tearing down and building on the existing Town Hall site. The least supported option at this time is the renovation of the existing Town Hall. The reasons for this perspective are cited above.

Question: How was this site selected?

Answer: *The Working Group considered many sites. At one time there were as many as 8 different locations under consideration. However, the Group narrowed the options to two Town-owned parcels. This decision was made primarily out of consideration for keeping the cost of the project as low as possible. The two preferred sites that were identified were 40 South Street (site of the existing Town Hall) and a parcel located off of Payson Road-behind the new Public Safety Building. After much consideration and with particular attention given to the Master Plan prepared by the Planning Board, the Planning Board and the Board of Selectmen recommended that the 40 South Street site should be the primary choice for this project.*

Question: Has the Town considered leasing office space as an alternative to new construction?

Answer: *The Town has reviewed many alternatives regarding the Town Hall including the possibility of leasing office space. In the Spring of 2014, an RFP requesting possible rental options was circulated by the Town. After considering three proposals received by the Town through this process, the Board of Selectmen voted to not pursue the lease option based on economic considerations. The Board then recommended that the Town give further consideration to the Town-Owned building option. In May of 2014, the newly appointed Town Manager recommended the formation of the current Working Group to further evaluate a Town-owned building approach.*

Question: Is it possible to build a New Town Hall in the existing Town Hall Parking lot?

Answer: *As has been previously mentioned, the Working Group is exploring all options including building in the Town Hall Parking Lot. Preliminary boring tests have been performed in the parking lot to determine if this is even possible. Initial results from these borings appear positive for construction. At present, this option has the most support from the Working Group; particularly if it means that building in the parking lot would allow many of the Town Hall offices to remain in our present location during the construction of a new building.*

Question: Why can't we just have a private sector company build the Town Hall for us as opposed to having the Town construct it?

Answer: *This is a very good question which has been fully considered by the Working Group. However, because public funds will be used to ultimately pay for this space, Massachusetts Law is very restrictive with respect to how those funds can be used for public building projects. The Inspector General's Office was consulted during the RFP process to lease Office Space and those*

requirements were communicated to the Town during that process. Attempts have been made in the past to utilize private sector companies to build public facilities but those approaches have been struck down by the Inspector General's Office as being inconsistent with Massachusetts law.

PROCESS/VOTER ACTION REQUIRED TO BUILD A NEW TOWN HALL

Question: What steps need to be taken to build a New Town Hall?

Answer: *The first order of business is to agree on a site. That step has been taken and confirmed by the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board. The second step is to reach some consensus on the size, scope and type of project that should be proposed. The Working Group has been diligently working to finalize this step. The next step is to secure funding for a design and specifications for the project. Securing the so-called "Soft Cost" funding is a goal that the Working Group has set for November of 2014. If a majority of the Town Meeting voters agree to fund this portion of the project, then the Town will secure the services of an architect to design and specify the solution. The Working Group estimates that to design and bid a project of this size and scope will take at least 8-9 months to complete. As such, the Working Group estimates that construction funding for this project will be sought at a Special Town Meeting in September of 2015. It remains to be seen if a debt-exclusion vote will be needed to fund any portion of the project. If it does, a Special Election will be needed for the Town to vote on the funding if the Town Meeting approves the project's financing plan.*

Question: Can you provide a time line of how this process will be carried out?

Answer: *As is noted throughout this document, the first significant vote on this project will be in November of 2014. If the Soft Cost funding is approved, the plans will be designed and the specifications developed. Construction funding would be placed before a second Special Town Meeting in September of 2015. If a Debt exclusion vote is needed to fund a portion of the project that would likely be held within a few weeks of the Special Town Meeting in 2015. If all of the funding is approved its possible that the project could begin in the Fall of 2015 or the Spring of 2016.*

Question: The question of a New Town Hall has been raised before but it was defeated by Town Meeting. What is different about this proposal?

Answer: *The Working Group recognizes that there were many unanswered questions the last time this proposal was presented to the Town Meeting. The reason the Working Group was formed was to try and address as many questions as possible and to bring proponents and opponents together in one forum to see if a mutually agreeable solution could be achieved. The meetings over the past several months have been very productive. While the Group has not always unanimously agreed on certain points, no one can say that their perspectives were not heard and respected. As is the case in all projects of this*

significance, there will always be varying opinions. The process that was applied here was to try and include as many ideas as possible and then narrow the focus of each idea as more information was obtained. The Working Group respects how critical it is to provide information concerning this project and the approach utilized this time will hopefully be successful in answering everyone's questions or concerns prior to the next vote at a Town Meeting.

Question: Will the Town get to vote on this issue or will this be an action that will only be acted on by Town Meeting?

Answer: *The Working Group estimates that Town Meeting will vote to support or reject this project on two separate occasions. The first vote is estimated to occur in November of 2014. At that time the Town will be seeking funding to pay for the "Soft Costs" or architectural fees of the project. The funding source for this portion of the project is being recommended by both the Town Manager and the Finance Director to be "Free Cash". Approval of this funding will enable the Town to hire an architectural firm who will be able to evaluate all of the information gathered by the Working Group and then develop plans and specifications for a proposed building solution. These plans will then be reviewed with the Public. Based on the requirements of Massachusetts General Law (MGL), a second Town Meeting will then be required to authorize the borrowing to fund **the construction** portion of this building project. A separate ballot vote will **only** be needed if any portion of the borrowing will be exempt from the provisions of Proposition 2 ½ (otherwise known as a Proposition 2 ½ Debt Exclusion). At present, the Working Group is unable to determine if any portion of the debt for this project will need to be exempt until the scope, size and estimated cost of the project has been determined. Based on the level of approval required of this project, a significant amount of public input will be sought before the funding requests will be made.*

Question: When will the Town vote on the Town Hall Project?

Answer: *A Special Town Meeting vote in November 2014 is planned for the funding of the "soft costs" or architectural costs for this project. If this funding is approved, we have preliminarily discussed the possibility of holding another Special Town Meeting in the Fall of 2015 to approve the construction funds for this project. A Special Election may also be necessary within this same time frame if a Proposition 2 ½ Debt Exclusion is needed to finalize the funding requirements.*

Question: Will the cost of the architectural work be one vote and the cost of construction be another?

Answer: *The short answer to this question is "yes". The Working Group anticipates that the first Town Meeting action on this project will be in November of 2014 and the second vote will be in September of 2015.*

Question: The Town has never had the opportunity to render the decision whether there should be a new or renovated Town Hall. Will they get the opportunity to choose in this case?

Answer: *A vote to determine the type of construction for a building project is not a common occurrence. Such determinations are best made based on technical information evaluated by experienced building experts. The one thing that no one on the Working Group wants to do is to spend money unnecessarily for a building solution that will not service the community for the next 50-60 years. At present, it is the near unanimous opinion of those serving on the Working Group that new construction would be most cost predictable construction project and that this construction solution will provide the most sustainable result for town's long term interests.*

BUILDING SPECIFICS

Question: Can you list the major problems with our current town hall building?

Answer: *The Town Hall building is over 50 years old. Major problems with the existing building include lead contamination from the old police shooting range located in the lower level, structural wall and roof deficiencies, inefficient mechanical and heating systems, inadequate or nonexistent accessibility features for people with disabilities, lack of a fire suppression system, outdated electrical system, site drainage issues that have made the lower level of Town Hall uninhabitable due to continued flooding over the years, and in general, an inefficient layout of space for providing services to the public.*

Question: What improvements will a new building provide if it is built?

Answer: *Current Building Code regulations require that the new building be constructed with materials and methods to meet current structural standards, be fully accessible, be highly energy efficient, and meet all life, safety and environmental regulations. Design improvements will also include better and more efficient layout of office and public space, larger community meeting areas, modern archive and retention systems, improvements to technology systems, and better site access to Town Hall. Additionally, modern materials and the installation of efficient energy systems, windows, and building components will provide a more energy conscious environment.*

Question: Why are the private offices more in number and larger than the original estimates that were given to the Town?

Answer: *Some of the original estimates appear to have been incorrectly stated based on the information that was collected at that time. There are two offices that were identified by the Working Group that were originally identified as support positions but should have been identified as offices. At present, the Working Group unanimously agrees that the latest square footage estimates properly reflect all of the building needs. The only way we will be sure that the*

estimate is accurate is to have an architectural firm evaluate and confirm our results.

Question: If the overall size of the new proposal is smaller, what was “cut out” to achieve the reduction in size?

Answer: *The Working Group is applying a smaller common space factor of 1.3 versus 1.4 in our estimates. The Working Group generally feels that the 1.4 factor is overly conservative. The Working Group observed that office space square footage estimates were generally considered accurate in the previous study and were consistent with industry standards. There has been some debate among Working Group Members that the use of “U” shaped cubicles is not needed in all instances. “U” shaped cubicles use more square footage than “L” shaped cubicles. As such a combination U and L shaped cubicles has been applied. In addition, Town Management believes that our records retention needs into the future can be better managed both electronically and with a better records archiving strategy. As such we have taken this into consideration in planning for the new space requirements and reduced the amount of archive space by 50%. These reductions were the “cut out” considerations in our new estimates.*

Question: Will any offices be moved out of Town Hall permanently as a result of this project?

Answer: *The plan is to consolidate the Water Offices into the DPW building on Elm Street. Also the Technology Office will be relocated to the new High School Data Center. It is the intent of the Working Group to maintain all of the remaining offices currently located within the Town Hall.*

Question: When they did the renovations at the Charter school they used temporary modular units to do business in while construction was under way....is that an option the building committee is exploring if town employees need to be relocated during the Town Hall construction?

Answer: *The Working Group is considering all options. The Working Group is attempting to limit the number of times town hall employees and their offices are moved. Such moves are usually expensive and cause the greatest level of disruption for both the public and the employees.*

Question: Will there be a disruption of services to the residents if Town Hall is temporarily relocated?

Answer: *The Working Group is attempting to limit any disruption to taxpayers if the construction project were to result in the relocation of some Town Hall Offices.*

Question: If the Town Hall is built on the existing site, where will the Town operate the Town Offices during construction?

Answer: *The Working Group is in the early stages of developing plans for continuing operations during construction, but they are exploring the*

possibility of maintaining most of the current Town Hall operations at the current site if at all possible.

Question: What repairs are needed, if any, to continue occupying the existing Town Hall Building during construction of a new building?

Answer: *Evaluations of the present building are underway. Initial investigations indicate that a new roof and some re-pointing of the masonry on the exterior walls are needed at this time.*

Question: Will the Town use energy efficient construction practices to build the new structure?

Answer: *The Town is committed to using the most energy efficient construction practices that are practical and cost responsible. In many instances utility companies will now offer cost incentives to use energy efficient lighting, heating and cooling equipment. The Town will certainly be pursuing these options.*

Question: What will the building look like?

Answer: *Plans have not been developed at this point, but the intent is that the building would be designed to reflect a traditional New England or colonial architectural appearance.*

COST CONSIDERATIONS

Question: What are “Soft Costs”?

Answer: *“Soft Costs” are those costs associated with a project that are identified to pay for an architect, engineer, site designers, lawyers and any other non-construction costs related to the project. These costs are the front-end costs of any construction project. By funding the soft costs, the Town will then be able to design plans and estimate real time costs for the project. Once these amounts are identified, the Town can then seek further approval from Town Meeting to fund the actual construction costs of the project.*

Question: How big will the new building be?

Answer: *The latest estimates from the Working Groups’ study indicate that the new building should be around 13,500 to 14,500 square feet in size from a net internal space perspective. Total building size, when considering wall thickness and ancillary space issues is estimated to be approximately 15,500 square feet. This is nearly 2000 square feet less than what was initially proposed for this project. However, it is important to note that the Working Group will rely on the opinion of a professional architectural firm to finalize these estimates.*

Question: What will the entire project cost?

Answer: *The Working Group is unable to estimate the actual cost at this time without the benefit of detailed plans. However, the Group has been surveying recent public sector projects of similar size and scope and estimates have ranged from \$450 to \$500 a square foot to fully fund such a project.*

Question: How will the cost translate into additional taxes to an individual taxpayer?

Answer: *It is too early to predict that impact at this time. However, the Working Group is committed to making a recommendation to fund this project using the most cost efficient methods possible. Everyone on the Group is fully sensitized to the tax impact of the project.*

Question: Does the tax impact reflect both the included and excluded tax change?

Answer: *The Working Group will estimate the cost impact of this project to include the included and excluded cost impact. It should be pointed out that this may be the first such project that has provided the cost impact with this level of detail. As such, the Working Group will be careful not to confuse voters when providing this amount of information.*

Question: Are there any grants available for construction of a New Town Hall?

Answer: *Unlike school or library buildings, there are currently no grant monies available to assist in the construction of a New Town Hall.*

Question: Wouldn't renovating the existing Town Hall be cheaper than building new?

Answer: *Based on unconfirmed estimates put forth by the advocates for renovating the existing building, they believe that it would be cheaper to renovate than to build new. However, the majority of the Working Group members believe that renovating the existing building, given the unknown impacts of mold and lead contamination and the cost of resolving the water problem in the basement that building new is the better option to pursue. The unknown cost factors of renovations have more commonly had an adverse effect on the budget of this type of construction project. The old adage of "fixing this old house" leaves many unanswered questions until the layers of the building are actually peeled back. The other considerations given by the Working Group is that many building code requirements have changed since the time that the present Town Hall was constructed. This means that if a renovation were pursued, the present building would have to be retro-fitted to meet today's code requirements. These new requirements include the installation of a sprinkler system, inclusion of an elevator and the installation handicapped accessible doorways, bathrooms and entrance/exits to and from the building. Given all of these considerations, the majority of the Working Group members believe that new construction is the better and perhaps even more economical option to pursue over the long term.*

Question: The cost of this project sounds high for just around thirty employees. Why would we spend that amount of money for the benefit of a small number of people?

Answer: *The cost of this project is not for the benefit of just thirty employees. A New Town Hall will be constructed for the benefit of the community as a whole. Over the years, thousands of people have passed through the doors of Town Hall for meetings, to pay their taxes or to obtain a license or permit. While thirty employees will occupy this space during the work week, over time thousands more will occupy the building at night and even on some weekends.*

Question: Does the cost of the project include moving costs, rental costs for temporary relocation, use of other Town assets, new equipment and furnishings?

Answer: *The cost for constructing the new building will include cost estimates for all of the above cost factors if they are part of the project. As previously stated, the Working Group would like to avoid some of these cost considerations through the present planning process.*

Question: It was reported in the newspaper recently that the Town Hall Project is estimated to cost \$13.5 Million dollars. Is that accurate?

Answer: *It is unclear how the author of that estimate reached this amount. The Working Group has been careful not to mislead the public with cost estimates for this project at this time because they don't want to unintentionally provide inaccurate information. The Working Group has only talked about a working estimate for the project to be in the \$7.2 Million dollar range. This number is based on cost estimates per square foot of similar public projects that have recently been completed. The Working Group is working hard to identify the real costs of this project before Town Meeting acts on any funding requests. This is being accomplished by seeking bid proposals in September and October for the soft costs. If the funding for the "soft costs" is approved in November of 2014, the Working Group is recommending that the cost of construction and fit-out be bid prior to the request for that level of funding in September of 2015. Any cost estimates for this project, not supported by actual bid information is not something that should be considered factual at this time.*

CONSTRUCTION TIME TABLE

Question: When will the construction start?

Answer: *If all of the funding and contracting approvals are in place, it is conceivable that construction could start by the Fall of 2015 or the Spring of 2016.*

Question: How long will the construction take?

Answer: *Construction for a project of this significance can take anywhere from 12-18 months to complete.*

Question: How will parking in this area be affected during construction?

Answer: *There will be some minor disruption of parking during the construction period, but all attempts to minimize disruption will be made.*

LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE

Question: Once a new building is built, how will the building be maintained?

Answer: *The Town Manager is working to coordinate with all town departments including the School Department to establish a central maintenance program for all of the Town-owned properties.*