Town Hall Preservation Committee
Minutes
Regular Meeting
10/10/2018

Membership in attendance: James Sullivan, John Giotas

Staff in attendance: Dean Shankle, Jr., Diane E. Boyce, Bruce Thomas, Nick Germain

Meeting began at approximately 4:30PM

Topics Discussed

Warrant Article

Mr. Sullivan opened the meeting by summarizing recent acts relative to Old Town Hall made during the September 19th session of Council, highlighting that a vote to increase the amount of funds dedicated to Old Town Hall failed to proceed 4-4. A warrant article was discussed as a possible alternative. The amount floated was approximately $100,000 to cover structural improvements based off of rejected bids from the summer. Council instead voted to return $20,000 to the building maintenance line for old town hall that had been part of last year’s budget, but had been removed as part of managing the default budget.

Mr. Sullivan said that the dissenting votes more or less hinged on a belief that adding more funds to the present building maintenance line would be inappropriate without input from voters. As far as the state of the project was concerned, Mr. Sullivan indicated his potential support for such a warrant article in the event that said details made sense for the overall completion of the project in alignment with getting the building ready by the town’s bicentennial.

Dr. Shankle, Town Administrator, responded by emphasizing that the plan put forward by staff was what he thought was the most appropriate way forward on the building restoration given the state of the project.

A discussion ensued about the merits of a warrant article versus continuing to support the staff plan. Topics included rehashing estimates on costs discussed at the last meeting, code requirements, and obtaining accurate, up-to-date cost estimates. General consensus was that the staff plan still made the most sense based on a number of points:

- **Warrant article requirements**: To achieve Council’s goal of getting the building usable by the town’s bicentennial, a warrant article estimated at well in excess of $250,000 would be required, as not just structural work, but also heating, electrical, finished plumbing, flooring, and other projects would be necessary. Staff would also have to get estimates on systems that haven’t been decided on yet, such as heating and lighting methods. There was also a dim view by staff and committee membership that a warrant article above a certain size
would pass this year, regardless of the general positive feelings associated with the building’s restoration.

- **Warrant article failure:** Should a warrant article for old town hall fail, regardless of the construction of its funding source or wording, staff would in all likelihood have to stop all work for the year due to state budget law in accordance with the one attempt rule. This would have tangible consequences for building preservation goals in the face of weathering.

- **Warrant Article Fatigue:** Should an undersized warrant article pass, the public might be reluctant to pass another in the future or support some other funding source to fully finish the building. Currently, work considered would bring the building into baseline usability according to code standards and would still look rough and unfinished.

Dr. Shankle noted that all the same, staff would seek out updated cost estimates on the anticipated immediate project scope. This would allow Council to proceed with an appropriately funded warrant article if desired or to better accommodate stages of the staff plan. The next Council meeting (Oct, 24th) was identified as a target date to present updated cost estimates and decide ultimately whether to proceed with the warrant article or not.

**Emergency Structural Improvements to Addition Roof**

Bruce Thomas, Town Engineer, presented a memo he produced dated 10/10/2018 relative to the emergency structural improvements identified by engineers at TF Moran. Memo was sent out to a list of contractors asking for estimates. Dr. Shankle clarified that this was to address the most pressing portion of the structural reinforcements in the building addition that may be in danger of snow loads during the winter. Mr. Thomas was hopeful about getting estimates for the assigned portion of the project soon this week and/or next. Updates will be provided to committee members and Council as they emerge.

Meeting concluded at approximately **5:40PM**.