



**Warner Board of Selectmen  
Meeting Minutes  
Informational Session for Proposed New Fire Station  
Wednesday, March 2, 2016  
APPROVED**

Chairman Hartman opened the public information session at 7:00 pm.

In attendance: Selectman David Hartman – Chairman, Selectman Clyde Carson, Selectman Allan N. Brown, Town Administrator – Jim Bingham

Others present: It is estimated that about 75 or more attended this meeting. Those who spoke have been indicated in the body of the minutes.

1. Chairman Hartman informed the attendees that this meeting was a public informational meeting to talk about a proposed new fire station site acquisition. Chairman Hartman turned the meeting over to Selectman Brown.

2. Selectman Brown explained the research up to this point. The proposed site located at Map 34 Lot 15 (148 West Main St.) was the third site that the Fire Station Site Committee was interested in. At that time the owner was not ready to sell but recently that has changed and the property was offered to the town. The site is just under 3 acres and is very flat and all useable.

3. 3 appraisals were obtained for this property as well as a hazardous material report. The only item that needs to be removed is the kitchen sink, disposal will cost about \$250. A state driveway permit has also been granted. The appraisals that came amount to \$225K as the high, \$215K as the low, the town assessed value is \$221K and the proposed asking price is \$240K; the town negotiated down to \$215K.

**Public Questions**

Linda McGilvary: What does the driveway permit have to do with.....

Selectman Brown: Any alteration of a driveway on a state road needs a permit. The current owner applied for a permit a while ago but never used it so the town renewed it.

John McGilvary: Is the driveway going to be on Split Rock?

Selectman Brown: There is a 5.18' strip of land between Split Rock and the property. He spoke to the owner of that strip of land to see if the town can purchase it (about 280') so there would be a driveway off of Split Rock Road. The owner has not answered yet. But the strip of land is not a deal breaker, having the land would make the lot more user friendly.

Richard Senor: Has the site distance been considered at this lot?

Selectman Brown: There is 550' – 600' of site distance.

Richard Senor: Would a flashing light be considered.

Selectman Brown: I don't think the state will let the town do that, I don't believe flashing lights are allowed anymore.

Wally Morse: Is there a possibility to sub-divide the house from the lot?

Selectman Brown: If the lot is subdivided then the 5' strip of land would be needed for accessing the lot. My thought was to turn the house into office space and then add the equipment facility out back, having said that, I don't know anything about the cost of renovation. An architectural engineer will be able to determine if the building can be used. The cost to demolish the building along with clean-up would be about \$20K. Personally before the building is torn down I would like to see someone jack it up and move it.

Wally Morse: How big a lot is needed to maintain the house?

Selectman Brown: 20,000 square feet.

Wally Morse: So that would leave you about 2.5 acres in the back to build the fire department and you can resell the house. I would be in favor if the house could remain.

Jeanne Hand: What are the feelings of the Split Rock Association about putting a fire station on that site?

Selectman Brown: This property is not part of the Split Rock subdivision. When we looked at the lot across the street I spoke with each landowner and out of the 12 lots I had 6 no's, 5 yes's and 1 had no response. I don't know the answer to your question, they will either vote for or against.

Jeanne Hand: There is \$155K in the capital reserve, and are asking for another \$100K at Town Meeting, but you don't know if you can really put the building on that lot until the Split Rock Association OK's it?

Selectman Brown: No, the Split Rock Association, they each receive a vote at Town Meeting. They don't have any bearing on this lot other than their single individual vote.

Jeanne Hand: Except for that 5'.

Selectman Brown: The gentleman that owns the 5' strip will be the only one that says if we can or cannot buy it.

Jeanne Hand: What about eminent domain?

Selectman Brown: That's a little harsh right now, I would rather give him the chance, I met with him once and talked to him twice. If Town Meeting provides approval I will go back and talk to him again. I didn't want to hinge this piece of property on one person.

Jeanne Hand: With the acceptance of the original article last year, it was very specific what we were going to do with that money. And one was to have a firm that would do an architectural drawing, have we figured out how much that will cost?

Selectman Brown: The money was to buy the lot and then do some small engineering, not architectural drawings. The Building Committee began working on how big a building is needed when the other lot was being considered, since then the Committee has stalled until a piece of property is acquired.

Jeanne Hand: I know you worked really hard, I really would like to know what we are going to do with the \$40K, how does that come into play.

Selectman Brown: There will be expenses, deeding, closing costs, the cost of tearing down the house if that is what is agreed upon. There will be things the money will be needed for, I can't tell you exactly every one right now.

Charlie Albano: I think what I've heard was that at Town Meeting you will ask for \$100K for the purchase of the land and then after Town Meeting the town will complete the purchase & sale agreement. My understanding was I thought there needed to be two public hearings before the town purchases a piece of land. So if that could be clarified that would be helpful. I also think because there has been work done the previous effort to do a fire station that a ballpark figure on the cost would be helpful because I have been to a couple of the Building Committee meetings. There's a ballpark figure of about \$250,000 and that could be negotiated up or down. I think it's important for people to know that at some point there will be a cost that will need to be bonded and what those numbers may look like. I think that would help the process, and I do think your going through the process better than the last time. I think it would also be helpful to have something from the fire department that identifies the need. I think most of us know there is a need and that they are not working in very good conditions.

Selectman Brown: I believe the fire chief has been taking pictures of the facility as they use it. I really dread giving you a cost on the facility because the Committee was know where near finished. But I can tell you we had approximately a 14,000 square foot building designed for the site located at the edge of the river. The Committee did not finish and if I had to say what we are looking at for a building, as it stands right now it was figured to about a 10,000 square foot building. On the Committee is an Architectural Engineer who has experience designing fire stations and I think he said the building would cost around \$1.8 - \$2.2 million. Everything has to do with cost. Please remember the Committee is not done.

Charlie Albano: My first question was about going through the process of holding two public hearings.

Selectman Brown: So what we did, we spoke with legal counsel, the RSA was made so that the Selectmen wouldn't decide in June to buy a piece of land and just go out and buy it. If they do so two public hearings are required. Legal Counsel tells us that Town Meeting has the authority to say the Board can buy that piece of property. Now, I'm not saying that if it got past at Town Meeting that we wouldn't hold those two public hearings, I'm not saying that, that would be up to the Board as well as it's up to me. But, our legal counsel tells us Town Meeting has the authority, you actually gave us that authority at last year's Town Meeting. I don't have a problem with holding 2 public hearings at all, I'm not saying we wouldn't, I'm just saying what our town counsel told us.

Andy Bodnarik: I think you already have \$165K in the capital reserve that was approved. And your asking for another \$100K which doesn't leave a lot in the reserve to do what you want.

Selectman Brown: My thought is what we would do is get the money from Town Meeting, purchase this piece of land and I intend to move 90 miles an hour on getting the building committee going again and trying to come up with a building to bring forward at the next Town Meeting. I don't want to spend a lot of money designing a building and then have everyone say I don't want it. What I would rather do is, how many square feet do we need, what is it going to look like, and then see what the architectural costs and building costs are and present it as a bond issue.

Andy Bodnarik: Second question is give me some idea where the current driveway is in comparison where you would locate the new driveway.

Selectman Brown: Using a visual aid, Selectman Brown showed where the driveway would be. In the middle of the lawn, once we get the plans made then the driveway could be altered to where we need it. We superimposed the building plans we have and the building plans I think we might end up with, we put it on the lot to see if it would fit and it will fit basically anywhere on the lot.

Martha Bodnarik: I would first like to congratulate you, I think you have done an excellent job on addressing all the questions in getting prepared for this meeting. As far as the fire station, we need to have a site that is centrally located where the majority of the housing is in this town which is the village area and Kearsarge Mt.. I think it's an excellent idea here and we need to buy it while it's available.

Selectman Brown: Like I said this only came up for sale a very short time ago. Gordon had no intentions of selling it, but things changed in his life and I'm thankful that he thought of us and offered the property. I think it's a great location.

Phil Stockwell: I'm concerned about the position that the membership/leadership of the fire department takes on this particular site. Do we have a spokesman who can speak on that? Do you know what their position is?

Selectman Brown: We met in a nonpublic session with the entire fire department and I don't know if everyone fell in love with it, but I think we have the general consensus that it was probably the best site out of what we have.

Ed Raymond/Fire Chief: As a group, we felt at this time, that it is a good spot. It has good visibility and is something we can live with. It will get us out of harms way as far as backing in. Currently someone has to direct traffic, believe me, people do not pay attention to whether they are red, blue, green lights. We almost got hit 2 weeks ago. Also, we don't blow the siren unless it warrants that.

Selectman Brown: During candidates night it was asked what are you going to do with the other fire stations. I can't speak for the next Board of Selectmen, but I did pull the deeds for both properties and there is no covenants keeping the town from selling either property.

At this time Chairman Hartman called for more questions and comments from the audience.

Peter Smith: Just to let you know if the town doesn't purchase this property, it will be sold. I asked my father what he wanted to do and we agreed upon offering the property to the town. If the town does not accept it, it will be sold this summer.

Wally Morse: I think you guys did a lot of hard work on this project and as I said before I'm not a big fan of this project but I think there is a need. I personally would like to see you subdivide the house from the lot and sell it. I personally think you out to move forward with this. I personally would like to see you save that house.

Selectman Brown: You need to understand anything I'm telling you tonight is not etched in stone. All I'm asking for is the money and the authority to buy the property. We are a long way from finalizing any plan to build a facility, we are not there yet.

John France: I'm on the fire department and I understand trying to keep it down and keeping the house but we walked that piece of property. We are building a building that will be here for at least 75 years. I am involved in other fire departments and familiar with penny wise and pound foolish, it comes around and bites in you the ass in the end. Construction costs escalate greatly as time goes on. The proposed driveway that we thought was a good spot was very close to the house, in the grand scheme I think the house needs to go. To keep that house as part of the fire station I think is an error. I get the fact you want houses on the tax roll, again I think you need to look at the big picture here. I think Allan is being very low ball on the figure for the fire station to suit our needs. I understand you want to maybe go for what we can get away with now and let the future generation add on. I can tell you it's very expensive, so why not build a building that's going to fit our needs for the next 75 years. We had a rescue on the mountain last weekend, we had to borrow 4-wheelers to get up there because we don't have the room to store them. So, that's my two cents.

Selectman Brown: You have to understand the costs I told you were not my figures, those were from a person on the building committee that gave them from the top of his head for 10,000 square foot.

Martha Thoits: I hate to see us save the house and let it sit empty because know one wants to buy a house next to the fire station, and where would you put it's driveway?

Selectman Brown: Those things will have to be worked out. This meeting is for buying a piece a land. Like Peter said, if we don't buy it, it's gone, and we will have to start all over again. And from what I have seen, I don't think we will find anymore land.

Sarah Allen: Can you talk a bit about schedule, you want to buy the land this year, when do you plan on having the building in service.

Selectman Brown: The committee working on the building will be reconvened and then we can start working on prices from contractors and engineers. I don't know the route we are going to take. I will work hard this coming summer to hopefully bring something to the next Town Meeting. It would be a bond issue that needs 2/3 majority and sometimes this town doesn't pass a bond in the first year, the Library is a good example, it took 3 years. A fire station is something we all need and there is a lot of code violations at the current station. How many years do we have before someone slaps us with a fine for not meeting the codes. So I'm gonna move this along as fast as I can.

Sarah Allen: Does that mean you will come back next year for design money and the following for a bond?

Selectman Brown: It could be that way, it depends on which way we go with design build. There is someone on the committee who is an expert on that and there are a couple of other people in town that have said they would help with a design build. I guess what I'm saying is I don't know which route we are going to take yet, but I hope we will by the 2017 Town Meeting. This money is strictly for buying the lot.

Kimberley Edelmann: First I want to thank Peter Smith for making this property available. I would love this property, I am on the Building Committee to try to help design a future fire station and I am very excited about this.

Peter Anderson: Last fall you very clearly followed the RSA guidelines. I would feel a whole lot better if you had some more legal advise as to the legality of doing it this way because the RSA doesn't read quite the way legal counsel said it does.

Selectman Brown: All I can tell you is I'm not a lawyer, you need to understand even though the lawyer told us that doesn't mean the Board isn't going to have the two public hearings, we haven't ruled that out.

Peter Anderson: Now your talking about having the public hearings after you purchase the land.

Selectman Brown: We have a purchase & sales agreement contingent upon Town Meeting. We haven't purchased it yet. If we do the process it will bring the purchase to the first of April.

Peter Anderson: I think it would be better to follow the same precedent as last fall.

Charlie Albano: Will the Planning Board have a roll in this process prior to purchase?

Selectman Brown: I think we have to get input from the Planning Board, we did the last time.

Town Administrator: If we follow RSA 41:14a that would be one of the steps we take, yes.

Selectman Brown: They commented on the last lot, and I'm sure they gonna again comment on this lot.

Charlie Albano: Prior to purchase?

Selectman Brown: If we do the two hearings that will be part of the process.

Selectman Carson: Not prior to Town Meeting.

Martha Bodnarik: If the ultimate voice of authority is the Town Meeting and the Town Meeting authorizes you to buy, there is really no point in having additional meetings.

Selectman Brown: From what I understand Town Meeting is the authorizing authority. That means it's the governing body of the town and that's why we have a Town Meeting.

Audience Member: When do the abutters get notified about what kind of building your putting up there?

Selectman Brown: When we have plans made we will have public hearings which will be well advertised.

Town Administrator: As a courtesy we will notify the abutters as well.

Audience Member: Will the plans be brought before the Planning Board?

Selectman Brown: Yes, but that won't be this year, it will be in the future.

Barbara Annis: The Planning Board will not have a public hearing, it will be on the agenda, and it will not notify the abutters.

Selectman Brown: The Board of Selectmen can notify the abutters, and I would say we would do that as a courtesy to you.

Chairman Hartman thanked the audience for coming out and we appreciate your input and advise and will use it.

**Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 8:05 pm.

Board of Selectmen  
David E. Hartman  
Clyde Carson  
Allan N. Brown

Recorder of the minutes: Mary Whalen