

Building and Facilities Committee
Minutes of 7-25-19
Whipple Hall Conf. Room; 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Bowers, Cross, Beasley, Bianchi, Williams,
Hoglund, Sherman, Lewis, Cannon

Absent: Cardillo

Guest: Ed Andersen, Chief, New London Police Department

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Police Department Report

At the start of the meeting, Mr. Cross reported that North Branch had completed the HVAC work, mold remediation and repair, the major component of water infiltration work, and insulated the space under the roof of the Buker building. Then, Chief Andersen delivered to the Committee a written report of his assessment of current and future needs/issues for the Police Department. (Written report attached hereto as Attachment A, and made a part hereof.) He outlined his history with the Department – he joined in 1992, and has spent his whole career here. He noted that he is not in charge of building and maintenance issues, which is the responsibility of DPW, and that Matt Grimes of the DPW takes care of those issues. He further noted that when the Department was first expanding into new space, the Department was at first involved in the process, but then the concerns the Department expressed about their needs were discounted, and the design process went forward without full consideration of those expressed needs or full involvement by the Department. Thus, the current space is not what the Department wanted when the initial work in 1999 for its use of the Buker building proceeded.

The Committee then accompanied the Chief on a tour of the Police Department, asking questions as to space requirements during that

process. (The Committee did not have time to tour the former court space, now being utilized by the Recreation Department.)

Some of the questions the Committee had of Chief Andersen, and his responses, were as follows:

Outside Entry. The steps at entryway to the building make it difficult for some elderly and disabled people. Chief Andersen and Mr. Cross noted that the sidewalk along the side of the building is being redone to make it safer for pedestrian traffic and handicapped access (it is not level, and water collects and freezes in winter). Chief Andersen also noted that there are occasional issues in the use of the common driveway with the abutting property, both as to police vehicle use, and neighbor use, and occasionally lack of access for fuel delivery. [See parking comments below.]

Main Floor

1./ 2. Entry Vestibule and Lobby area. The vestibule has hot air vented into it from the computer equipment in Dispatch. This makes the space uncomfortable in warmer weather. This should be corrected. The vestibule space along with the adjacent room and bathroom [through the secure door] is too small to handle the increasingly-frequent occasions when there are multiple people there, such as custody exchanges, for which the space is currently used, and multiple arrests or taking minors into custody where parents or guardians are often present, and, in some cases, dealing with accident cases. Nor is it a comfortable environment for those having to wait in that area.

Chief Andersen expressed that probably a reasonable area for these functions would be twice the existing area.

3. Interview Room. The interview room is through a second secure door, being the first room in that hallway. There is a one-way glass into the adjacent file room to provide outside observation of interviews. Because that room has three doors involved in egress from that room, it poses a potential for *Miranda rights* concerns that an interviewee is “detained.” The interrogation room should be a separate room with a one door exit to limit this concern. The room itself should be about one and a half times larger.

4. *Dispatch.* The dispatch area is too small and is not ergonomically designed to handle the long hours required of dispatch personnel. The dispatch area should probably be twice its current area, and the desks, chairs, and computer screens and consoles should be reconfigured. The bathroom is less than adequate for dispatch, and is currently shared with other officers on occasion. It has also been used as part of the call center in emergencies, which could be alleviated by enlarging the overall dispatch space. There is no shower. The existing window should be bullet proof, and preferably a one-way mirror window so that dispatchers can see out, but those outside cannot see in.
5. *Administrative Office.* The office used by the administrator is sufficient in size and function. It used to be the Department conference room, and the Department no longer has a separate conference room. However, the Department has now hired an assistant administrator, who has a desk in what was formerly the copier and supplies area, with no door, while the copier has been moved out into the hallway.
6. *File Room.* The file room contains paper files of cases up to about five years old. These files are the files most needed to be accessible. There are rules governing keeping these files, which Chief Andersen states requires that paper records retained “forever,” with some possibility of storage of some files on microfiche. The space is limited, and paper files must be rotated out to another room/location.
7. *Corporal and Sergeant’s Room.* The corporal/sergeant’s room is located next to the administrator’s office, and is used by two officers. It is useable in its present configuration, but a larger room would be helpful – perhaps the same depth (from entry to back wall) but half again as large in width.
8. *Assistant Administrator.* The assistant administrator’s space is the former copier/supplies space. Because of this, there is now a need for a space to put the copier and supplies, and to use for a work area.
9. *Conduits and wiring room, and storage area.* A small room next to the assistant administrator’s area houses conduits and wiring; it also is used for storage of notebooks, some equipment, and some work jackets.

Chief Andersen states that he has been informed that no more conduits housing wiring can be installed, and no more wiring can be installed within the existing conduits. The need for wiring is extensive, especially due to the need for communication equipment, including from the tower. Moreover, the lockers on the lower floor for use by officers are not large enough, so storage is found wherever possible, as with the coats in this area. [See locker rooms item, below.]

10. *Chief's Office.* Chief Andersen noted that although his office was adequate as an office, it should be larger to accommodate a separate meeting table and chairs for small meetings with one or two officers, or other individuals, with the ability to have private discussions with the doors closed. Although he does not need a separate bathroom facility in the office, it is something the Committee should consider, as times change and there may be a reasonable need in the future.
11. *Patrol Area.* Chief Andersen noted that the area serves its purpose well, after creating four built-in desk spaces, rather than separate desks for each officer. However, the meeting area/conference table is used for meetings and as a lunch area for officers, but does not allow for private consultations, in part because daily operations necessitate foot traffic back and forth by the conference table to access other areas of the Department. The entire area used by the patrol officers should probably be larger. In addition, it is unsafe for the officers to have the bay window as it exists, and it should be redone so the opening is higher, and should be bullet-proof (as should the window in Dispatch, and other areas of the Department).
12. *Lieutenant/Investigator Office.* Lieutenant Cobb and the Department's investigating officer share the space that was formerly the Chief's office. Although it is functional, each should have a separate office.

The main floor of the Department should have a separate bathroom, as now all officers are restricted to using the one available in Dispatch.

Lower Floor

13. *Electronics Room.* Although the electronics room now has a sump pump to draw off any foundation water infiltration, it does not solve the problem of the possibility of a leak or rupture of the water sprinkler lines that run through that room to serve the rest of the building. A leak occurred at one point, but was found quickly and remedied. Were this not to have been found timely, such a leak could cause catastrophic damage to the communications and electronics network. This area could be dubbed “Area #3” of wiring problems, with Dispatch being “Area #1,” and the communications equipment room “Area #2.” All three areas are limited because Chief Andersen has been informed that no more wiring can be run to and from those areas.
14. *“Kitchen.”* What had originally been intended as a kitchen/eating area is now used for various storage needs and as a place for officers to take a short break. It is inadequate for those purposes.
15. *Men’s locker room.* The lockers are too small, and the shower is not adequate.
16. *Women’s locker room.* The lockers are too small, and the shower is not adequate.
17. *Sally Port.* The Department has storage problems and items are stored in the sally port, such as tires, car seats and bicycles, when the sally port should be free of all storage items for safety reasons. In addition, Chief Andersen would like to have an indoor area to wash police vehicles. Even if the storage issue were resolved, Chief Andersen feels the Department should have at least a two bay garage, so that police vehicles could be brought inside when it is cold, and officers wouldn’t have to leave them idling outside in order to have them ready for use at a moment’s notice. He noted that each police vehicle has a computer built into the dash, and a separate keyboard, for computer use in each vehicle (there are six police vehicles – 3 cars, a truck, a canine vehicle, and a ???). Finally, he noted that the layout for the entrance to the sally port is problematic, and is very difficult to keep cleared of snow because of the setup for the entrance.

18. *The Trap, Holding Cells, DWI processing area.* Chief Andersen feels that the system and set-up for processing individuals brought through the sally port works well. The large physical area where the breathalyzer is located needs to be that size in order to have adequate air passing through the breathalyzer to obtain accurate results. Because the breathalyzer is state funded, it must be available for use by State Troopers. There are two adult holding cells, and one for juveniles. They are monitored by Dispatch through cameras in the areas. The main problem with the processing area is that it is not on the same floor with the active office of the Department, which presents difficulties when an officer has to go to the upper floor as part of the process. Most detainees are held for no more than four hours, and then are transported to the Merrimack County jail by New London officers – they are not transported by the Sheriff’s office. The maximum length of stay allowed is 16 hours, but this is rarely an occurrence.

19. *Evidence Storage.* There is a general lack of space, and appropriate space, for evidence storage. The Department has firearms that must be stored as evidence, which requires specific care; sexual assault kits and clothing that must be stored for 22 years after the alleged victim has reached the age of 18; recently a vehicle that had to be stored under camera and secure, which was accomplished by using the sally port; another vehicle is currently held inside a fenced-in area at the DPW site. The storage room does not have a service window which would be appropriate, to allow better control of access to the evidence. The area outside the evidence room is also used for evidence storage, including hand grenades which were confiscated, held inside a locked cabinet. Evidence must be retained for varying lengths of time depending on the level of charge (felony, misdemeanor, offense); but, as a result, some evidence can be removed and destroyed, as other evidence is added. The level of need can vary, going up at times, and back down at times.

20. *Fitness Room.* Chief Andersen noted that all officers are required to meet established fitness standards, and, as such, it is important to have a fitness center on site. He recited that some years ago an officer had

been using the Colby-Sawyer fitness center, and that later when he made an arrest of a young person who was a student there, that student's mother accused that officer of harassing students at the fitness center and harassing her son. Therefore, he doesn't think having officers use the Colby-Sawyer fitness center would be a good idea. He also thinks the fitness room should be about ten feet wider to accommodate the equipment they have, and the use of the room. There are three small rooms along one side of the fitness room, one used for ICAC (International Crimes Against Children) investigations, which must have a computer housed separately from all other computers in the Department; an electric equipment room, which may not be used for any storage; and the old jail, which is currently used for various storage needs, such as evidence that is no longer important nor sensitive.

21. *Training Room.* The large area which is the renovated basement of Whipple Hall is used for training, including laser training. Statewide training sessions are hosted here a few times a year, including for LEDA FBI training programs. In that instance, New London officers may attend free two times per year because the space is made available. Chief Andersen feels it is important to have training available at the Department facility, rather than at another location, in part because the officers carry weapons.

There are two storage areas which were the original bathrooms for Whipple Hall, and are plumbed, one having been plumbed for anticipated use as a kitchen. One is used for Emergency Management Team supplies (and the men's locker room is also used for animal containment during an emergency); the other is used for file storage.

22. *Attic of Whipple Hall.* The unfinished attic of Whipple Hall houses an antenna for communications and the radio base, which services all Department radios. This is an unsafe location, and Chief Andersen is concerned as to maintaining the integrity of the equipment and antenna in this location.

23. *Sally Port roof.* The Sally port roof serves as a catch basin for water runoff from the Buker building. There has been a problem in the winter when a huge icicle forms, running from the Buker roof to the sally port roof.
24. *Tower.* The communications tower is at capacity. It needs to be secured to prevent climbing on it, and to protect the bundling of wiring that runs the height of the tower and into the Department.
25. *Recreation Department.* Chief Andersen noted that there are issues of concern to him with having the Recreation Department adjacent to the Police Department. The children have lately been playing inside the air conditioning units which have been installed, and this is dangerous. Moreover, they are witness to prisoner transactions, and he feels this is not a good thing. On the other hand, the Department tries to interact with children in a positive way as much as possible.
26. *Parking.* Chief Andersen stated that there is a parking problem. When it was noted that there are almost always open spaces surrounding the Buker building, he said he believed there is a parking problem, and cited examples of the shared driveway right of way being blocked once in a while by the tenants of that adjacent building; once preventing the oil truck from making a delivery; and the need to have patrol vehicles parked along that right of way for ease of access by officers, and that this sometimes upsets the neighbor. He also noted that individuals wanting to access Dispatch for any purpose may not have an available space in front of the door.
27. *Growth of the Town.* Chief Andersen expressed his concern that the Town will grow, and that there is much more of a transient population coming through Town. He also noted that the Department has had to respond to over 18,000 service calls, and Dispatch has had approximately 30,000 calls for all the towns covered by Dispatch.

1. *Approval of Minutes*

The minutes of the July 11 meeting and the July 25 meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

2. *Reports*

There were no additional reports.

3. *Discussion of next steps/future meetings.*

The Chair reminded the Committee that there would be no meeting on August 1, and that the next meeting would be on Thursday, August 8, at 6:30 p.m. in the Syd Crook room. The Committee had earlier decided to use the meeting of August 8 to discuss the Police Department issues that have been presented.

4. *Action Items.*

- a. There were no action items to attend to.

The next meeting is scheduled to be held in the Syd Crook room on Thursday, August 8, at 6:30 p.m. There will be no meeting on August 1.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Robert Bowers, Chair

Attachment A

1. I am not in charge of the overview of the buildings. I would refer to the highway department for this information. I do not manage the Rec Department or Whipple Hall.

2. Building Issues: Police

Currently the lower basement training room and kitchen areas need attention. Bathrooms, storage rooms, back stair case area.

All the windows should be removed and repaired or replaced in Whipple hall and the Buker Building;

The flat roof off the back of the addition is a water nightmare.

The stairs leading to the Dispatch window from the sidewalk to the entrances every year are becoming more of a challenge. The entry stairs are a danger in the winter as well as the sidewalk. We should design an area that is much more handicap accessible as well as easier for the elderly coming in and out of the building. The entrance to the PD is very uninviting. This building because not designed for a police department, does not look like a police department.

Parking is a nightmare for people who want to report something. We have zero parking for people coming to the police station. We do not have enough parking for our own department many times.

The front lobby is small as well has a fan blowing hot air into it, year around.

The complete outside envelope is not safe for a police department; wrong window height, too many windows, no security.

Interview rooms upstairs need to be accessible from PD as well as the front lobby, we should not be walking people into the PD to interview them "Miranda Rights"

An interview room should have access out not having to walk through a police department.

Lack of a proper patrol room for officer personal gear as well as department equipment.

Need two more offices for personnel.

Lack of a conference room.

Lack of a first floor bathroom for the officers.

Lack of appropriate paperwork copier area.

Need an elevator for first floor to second floor. We are currently walking prisoners outside the building through pedestrians and currently kids for the rec department to bring arrestees to the booking area.

The tower needs to be walled around, we are one dump truck away from taking down the communication tower. The tower needs to be secured and fenced in. The tower is out of compliance for future equipment. It was purchased second hand to save money and I have recently learned that it is a section of a tower not what we should have. The Tower needs to be walled off and more secure.

We are going for Calea Compliance which is to be federally compliant and the building is in violation on many levels.

The Generator needs to be moved and secured by a fence, lock, and key.

Kitchen for PD, we are at times required to work 16 hour shifts as well as over night shifts nothing open after 10 pm.

Bathrooms down stairs way too small shower spills water onto the main floor and no exhaust vent. We need a much larger locker room and shower.

Storage; we have none.

No place to store detective's evidence or equipment.

We need a place to store large evidence items with security.

We need an evidence storage area on site capable of handling multiple cars at the same time.

Booking cells are nice, but too far away from any help when nobody else is working.

Exercise room is not designed for an exercise room we are required by state law to be fit and must pass a fitness exam every 3 years.

Our evidence rooms are requiring us to lay valuable guns on the floor; the room is not climate controlled, no vents we are still locking things in old filling cabinets.

The sally port needs to be emptied of all items and left clear.

We need a place to wash our own cars, we have nothing for us in the winter but to use other facilities which is a burden to us and other departments.

We need a minimum of two more garage spaces for cruisers we constantly listen to residents upset we let our cars idle in summer and winter. We do this because of equipment in cars need to be at certain temperature.

Records room designed for records needs to be built.

Need to remove the water (sprinkler) room from the dispatch radio equipment in the basement.

Again no parking, the sallyport is wet and cold . We can't plow around it properly, snow is a major issue.

Down stairs is not handicapped accessible.

The lay out of the building is unsafe as a police department.

3. Dispatch:

Dispatch center needs to be moved and expanded. To move dispatch over for a small amount of time, again is a band aide to a much larger issue.

Dispatch cannot grow. There is no more space for wires and to put in the appropriate console and desks.

At times we are dispatching while sitting on a toilet.

No storage in dispatch and no locker rooms or bathrooms for a dispatch center.

No enough wall space to put appropriate monitors.

The ergonomics of the center is a nightmare.

Window is not secure.

The way the lobby is set up has people on two directions for dispatch to monitor.

No break room available for dispatchers. Dispatchers sit for 8 to 16 hour shifts.

4. Parking:

Parking, parking, parking we are on a shared driveway and a few times the neighbor wants to park her car on her side we just lost four spots on the ramp which we should not be using as a parking area.

We should not have a right of way issue when trying to park in our driveway. At times she has threatened to shut down her share of the driveway.

I have to constantly tell people who are coming to the station to stop parking in her driveway as well as her lawn.

Huge propane trucks have to back down the driveway and on an occasion have just driven away due to not being able to get access and we have run out of propane.

We recently had kids climbing in our new air conditioner units outside as well as kids climbing our radio towers. We have had our personal cars damaged over the years.

Having a group of children in a facility where emergent calls are being responded to, is dangerous for all.

Why would we waste the money of retro fitting a building that has zero parking spaces available?

The building outgrew its use a year after it was built. It was never ever designed for a police department; the building has always been a band aid to where we can shove the police department.

Times have changed and are continuing to change. Types of calls for service has changed.