

Second Report To Selectmen  
Buildings and Facilities Committee  
(10- 17-19)

The Building and Facilities Committee filed a Preliminary Report with the Selectmen dated September 5, 2019. This second report addresses issues related to the Buker Building, and specifically as it relates to the Police Department. More work needs to be done, and a full explanation of the Committee's work will follow, after more information is reviewed. This report is intended as an outline of the rationale and basis for its recommendations as stated here.

The Committee makes the following recommendations to the Selectmen:

- (1) The Committee recommends to the Selectmen that the option to do nothing at the Buker building to meet the Police Department needs is not appropriate.
- (2) The Committee recommends to the Selectmen that building a brand new building for the Police Department is not an option that should be pursued.
- (3) The Committee recommends to the Selectmen that the Selectmen retain, from funds in the current budget, a design firm or other professionals who have the appropriate background and expertise, with experience analyzing the use of police department space for better efficiencies and flow of work and personnel ("process" expertise):
  - (a) to prepare conceptual plans for renovation of the current space at the Buker building, to include the space currently occupied by the Recreation Department, which will best meet the Police Department needs;
  - (b) such conceptual plans to be developed with the participation and involvement of representatives of the Police Department, the Building and Facilities Committee, and the Selectmen; and
  - (c) that all issues and questions which arise in that preparation of conceptual plans be pursued through the Committee, supported by that professional, with periodic review by the Selectmen, in order to obtain a final conceptual document suitable for further action.

- (4) The Committee recommends to the Selectmen that the Recreation Department be relocated in order to provide adequate space for the Police Department in the Buker building.

### Background

The Committee was formed on May 21, 2019, and had its first meeting on May 23, 2019. It has met almost-weekly since that first meeting, for a total of seventeen (17) times as of the date of this report. The first few meetings were organizational, including defining its intended role, which was reported to, and accepted by, the Selectmen. It then reviewed five departments and three Town buildings, which were the subject of the Committee's Preliminary Report: Archives (Academy building); the Fire Department (Fire Station); Tracy Memorial Library (Library building); Town Clerk (Academy building); and Administration (Academy building). That Preliminary Report addressed the several departments' budget requests.

The Committee requested all available information and reports from the Selectmen and Administrator that pertained to the Buker building and its issues, and were provided with the Mires Report, dated December, 2014, and the Harriman analysis and Report dated December 7, 2018. There was no written report from the Police Department of its needs and requirements.

The Committee began its review by reading and analyzing those two reports. On July 25, the Committee met with Chief Andersen, who presented to the Committee a written report of the Police Department issues and concerns. That report was supplemented by Chief Andersen's oral presentation as the Committee toured the facility. The oral report was included in full in the Committee minutes of that July 25 meeting. The draft of those minutes was sent to Chief Andersen for his review prior to approval of those minutes by the Committee, asking for comments and corrections. This was the same process used by the Committee for the earlier five departments it reviewed. Chief Andersen did not note to the Committee any changes to his report as set forth in those minutes, and the Committee adopted those two reports (the written report and the oral report as set forth in the minutes) as the full written report of issues

and concerns of the Police Department. The Committee then proceeded with its analysis of the issues and concerns with that rendition as the guiding document.

Over the course of the succeeding meetings, the Committee analyzed and discussed the information and data it had available, and sought additional information which it considered to be helpful to its review. The following is a synopsis of the salient points, and the information and rationale supporting the Committee's recommendation, as stated above.

1. *The Harriman and Mires Reports of Recommendations on improvements to the building*

The Harriman and Mires reports identified a number of building construction issues that required attention. As a result, the Selectmen retained the services of North Branch Construction to attend to a number of those issues, and more particularly, the main issues that required attention: water infiltration into the Police Department; mold remediation; HVAC insufficiencies and defects; and air exchange within the Buker building. The Selectmen also retained the services of a contractor to attend to roof leaking issues. Mr. Cross of the Committee served as a liaison to North Branch and monitored and assisted in the progress of their work. The end result was that North Branch did the work contracted for, plus approximately \$50,000 in additional necessary work included in approved change orders, for less than \$600,000. The original estimated contract price, without the change orders, was \$650,000, with a contract not to exceed that amount.

Of the remaining work recommended by Harriman and Mires, the Committee concluded that a substantial portion, based on the estimates in those reports, is work that would need to be done if the Police Department remained in the Buker building, and should be coordinated with the work recommended for the Police Department; the Committee believes that doing that work determined to be necessary as referenced in those reports in conjunction with work done to renovate the Police Department space would result in cost savings on those items.

The Committee's conclusion was that the work recommended in those reports was not a significant factor in assessing the Police Department location alternatives.

## *2. Options/Recreation Department*

The options considered by the Committee included: (a) doing nothing; (b) a proposal to renovate the existing space, to include the space presently occupied by the Recreation Department, with an emphasis on minimal cost expenditures; (c) a proposal by Harriman to renovate the existing space, to include the space presently occupied by the Recreation Department; (d) a proposal by Harriman to construct an addition to the Buker building for the Police Department, to include the space presently occupied by the Recreation Department; and (e) a proposal by Harriman to construct a new building on the abutting property (the Marianne McEnrue Trust property, consisting of 0.27 acre), and to demolish a substantial portion or all of the Buker building, preserving Whipple Hall.

Each of these options, other than doing nothing, necessarily includes the relocation of the Recreation Department. Therefore, the Committee has recommended that the Selectmen begin the process of relocating the Recreation Department. The Committee anticipates that it will participate with the Selectmen in a thorough analysis of Recreation Department location alternatives and that included in that will be a review during the budget process for funding necessary to accomplish that goal.

## *3. Space needs vs. available space*

The Committee has concluded that the totality of the space (gross sq. ft.) is not the significant issue; it is the layout of the space that is the main problem. The Committee nevertheless examined the space needs outlined by Chief Andersen in his reports, analyzed those stated needs in comparison to the charts developed by Harriman, and compared the total sq. ft. which appeared to be required to the total sq. ft. which is available with the included use of the space currently occupied by the Recreation Department.

Although the Harriman report states that its analysis of sq. ft. needs is based on "national standards," Harriman has not as of the date of this report

provided information on where those standards are set forth, or what exactly those standards are, despite the request of this Committee that it do so.

Moreover, the Committee has concluded that there are solutions available for certain uses/activities which would alleviate or obviate the need for those uses/activities to be contained within the Police Department facility itself.

The Committee also discussed other reasons to keep the Police Station at its present location – its central location; its proximity to the College, the Town Offices, and the School; the Town has recently invested close to \$600,000 in correcting problems at the Buker building; and State statistics show that the population of New London has remained stable from 4116 in 2000 to an estimate of 4212 in 2018 (*see, 2018 Population Estimates of New Hampshire Cities and Towns*, Prepared by the New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives; Date of Publication: August 2019). The Committee has also concluded that the space available for police vehicle and support staff parking can be made workable with relatively minor changes.

For these reasons, the Committee has made the recommendations set forth above. It looks forward to continuing to work on these issues with the support and input of the Police Department. There are many more questions that may need to be addressed in this process (the Committee has a list of 15-20 such questions); and there is additional information that the Committee could pursue that might lend additional insight into these issues. The Committee has concluded, however, that these additional questions, and such additional information, would be better addressed in the process recommended; that is, to retain a professional to prepare conceptual plans, and to pursue all issues and questions through the Committee, supported by that professional, with periodic review by the Selectmen, resulting in a conceptual document suitable for further action.

Respectfully submitted,  
For the Committee  
Robert Bowers, Chair