

**TOWN OF SEEKONK**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING COMMITTEE**  
**JOINT MEETING WITH BOARD OF SELECTMAN**

**DATE: Wednesday, May 8, 2024**

**TIME: 6:00 p.m.**

**PLACE: Planning Board Meeting Room**  
**Seekonk Town Hall**  
**100 Peck Street**  
**Seekonk, MA 02771**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Kevin Hurst, Michael Gagne, Michelle Hines; Edward Monigan

**Absent:** John Pozzi

**Attendees:** Board of Selectman: Michelle Hines, Chair, Michael Healy, Pamela Pozzi, Chris Zorra; Shawn Cadime, Town Administrator; Nate Ginsburg, Brewster Thornton Group Architects (BTGA); Marybeth Carney, CGA Project Management (CGA); Dan Tavares, (CGA),

A. **Call to Order:** Kevin Hurst opened the Building Committee meeting 6:30 PM.

B. **Update Presentation to the Board of Selectman:**

1. D. Tavares provided project updates since the previous Board of Selectman joint meeting. It was noted that the project was completing the Design Development phase and prepared to move into the Construction Document phase once approved.
2. D. Tavares reminded the Board that due to the estimated cost of construction exceeding \$10 million dollars, the town is required to prequalify contractors and subcontractors prior to bidding the project in August. The objective would be to present the actual construction costs and budget for town approval.
3. S. Cadime noted that the presentation could be found on the town website, as the live stream did not show the slide show.
4. N. Ginsburg shared the building design drawings, explaining that the administration building, and garage were reduced in size, the amount of glass was reduced, canopies simplified, mechanical screening removed, and roof heights reduced to decrease cost in response to previous Board comments. The mechanical bay with the bridge crane and wash bay were moved adjacent to each other to accommodate align the higher roof heights. Covered storage space was created at the back of the building to provide storage at minimal cost. The site plan with landscape screening, new location for the salt shed and fueling station, and line separating the wooded and trash areas was shown. N. Ginsburg noted that the active areas of the site were furthest away from the abutters. The existing DPW site was shown overlaid with the proposed garage, administration, and maintenance buildings as a comparison to the existing conditions and size indicating that the project was not being overdesigned. A plan displaying the soil borings and test pits was shared noting where trash was found. BTGA explained that if trash

had to be removed and not relocated onsite, there would be substantial costs added to the project. Lastly, BTGA explained that the project had been presented to the Zoning Board and received approval. Abutters that attended the Zoning Board meeting were concerned with the building location being close to their property lines.

5. D. Tavares presented the construction cost estimates that were prepared by two independent cost estimators, which after reconciliation were within \$500k of each other, confirming that the scope was consistent. Based on the average cost of \$34,750,000 for the two estimates, the total project budget is estimated to be \$39,490,986 with designer and OPM services, other project related costs, contingencies, and furniture, equipment and technology costs were included. N. Ginsburg stated that their consultant Gannett Fleming has designed many DPW facilities and provided comparable construction costs from other communities as a benchmark cost per square foot which confirmed that Seekonk's estimated cost of \$511 per square foot is comparable to the other projects despite Seekonk's site having an extensive site remediation cost. BTGA noted that some projects were constructed in 2019 which would be 25-33% lower than construction costs in today's dollar.
6. The Building Committee, design team, and town administration worked collaboratively to identify potential value engineering options to reduce the project costs. One option included not building the garage and having outdoor uncovered parking. Another option was to keep the salt shed and fueling station at the current Taunton Avenue site. D. Tavares explained that not constructing a new salt shed and fueling station would have an estimated savings of \$3,470,875. Other Value Engineering items provided an additional \$1,317,125 in savings resulting in a revised project budget of \$34,702,986.
7. N. Ginsburg explained that BTGA completed an equipment life cycle cost and with the current replacement schedule, storing equipment indoors would provide a \$9.7 million savings (in 2024 dollars) over the life of the garage. BTGA noted that eliminating the garage would save approximately \$8 million dollars, confirming that the garage would pay for itself.
8. S. Cadime presented a preliminary Tax Impact Analysis and explained that it was a live document and subject to the information available, including the interest rate and the current assessed value of the average home. The analysis is based on what a taxpayer would pay in 2025 without other projects being added. A 30-year level debt service bond at 4% interest rate, an average home at \$494,807 would pay \$267 in 2025 for a project with the garage. S. Cadime explained that with debt exclusion and bonds retiring yearly, the cost in 2026 would be \$222.66 and would continue to be reduced and by the 17<sup>th</sup> year the payment would return to \$267 per year as paid in 2025. When the debt is fully retired, it falls off the taxpayer's burden. A project without the garage would cost \$31,490,986, principal and interest would be \$1,821,127, which had an average impact of \$213/year. This equates to approximately \$50/year difference for the average household to keep the garage. S. Cadime also noted that the administration was reviewing to see if other funding sources could be used to pay for certain aspects of the project.
9. N. Ginsburg stated that the total project budget with no reductions is \$39 million, removing the garage would be \$31 million, and removing just the salt shed, fueling station, covered storage, and barn would be \$34 million.

#### **C. Discussion on Building Design Process and Direction:**

1. M. Healy said that although the total project cost is higher than what was expected, he would rather keep the garage as part of the project but asked that the garage size get reduced to only store the heavy equipment and large body vehicles indoors rather than cutting the wash bay and working bays. Standard pick-up trucks and other similar vehicles could remain outside.

inside and leave the pickup trucks outside. It was his opinion that the DPW should have been out of the existing building years ago and he would like the committee to focus on having the operations all on one site. C. Zorra asked what the zoning setbacks are, and BTGA stated the Industrial Zone has 50' setbacks.

2. S. Cadime stated that moving forward without a garage would not be a good use of the taxpayer's money. P. Pozzi agreed that the garage is needed and stated removing aesthetics from the building was sensible, as it did not need to be a showpiece. M. Hines also noted that covering equipment saves the cost of replacement.
3. The Board of Selectman asked for a description of the exterior covered storage and what it store. K. Hurst explained that it would be open storage with three walls and roof, meant to house j-hook bodies, trailers, and other seasonal equipment.
4. D. Tavares explained that the total project costs included removing 15' of unsuitable material, spreading it across the site, and backfilling with appropriate fill. D. Tavares mentioned that rammed aggregate piers were also being explored noting that they had a positive experience using them on projects in Taunton, MA. M. Hines stated that she would only support a project constructed on solid ground and would never allow constructing a building on trash. D. Tavares explained that the project team would never propose constructing a building on trash.
5. N. Ginsburg stated that the project team explored options for moving the building to address concerns raised by the abutters at recent public meetings. However, it was stated that rotating the building increased the amount of structure in the landfill from 2,500 SF to 8,000 SF, which added about \$500k to the project for trash removal and that shifting the building 50' to the east increased the amount of structure in the landfill to 19,000 SF. M. Hines stated that moving the building would add substantial cost to the project because of the trash removal.
6. K. Hurst explained the option to use the existing salt shed, fueling station, and the upper garage for storage was to provide choices for the Board of Selectman to review. He noted that the County Street storage would not last forever and that the existing DPW building could be used for storage. K. Hurst further explained that since the abutters were concerned with 24-hour operations, this would move that work away from them and keeps these types of operations more central in town. M. Healy reiterated his opinion that a fragmented operation did not make sense and C. Zorra noted that 24-hour operations would only be in the winter months. The Building Committee explained they had the same concerns but wanted to provide cost reduction options for consideration to move the project forward.
7. It was noted that the project is 2 weeks behind schedule and the designers required a vote to move into the construction document phase. S. Cadime asked the Board of Selectman which project they want to move forward. The building committee's recommendation is to keep everything on one site, but since they were concerned with the budget, they made suggestions to reduce the cost. M. Healy said he believes the town would understand this project is needed since it had been discussed for a long time. M. Hines made the motion that the Board of Selectman approve the project to move forward based on the design presented. The motion was seconded by M. Healy and the vote passed unanimously.
8. K. Hurst made the motion that the Building Committee move forward with the Construction Documents phase. The vote passed unanimously.

**D. Adjournment:** Kevin Hurst adjourned the meeting at 7:22 PM.