

**Property Committee Meeting
December 5, 2019**

Present: Councilor Michael V. Frett (Chair); Councilor Maureen Aucoin;
Councilor Diano Circo; Chief Eric L. Nason; Sgt. Jordan Gaudet;
Public Works Manager, Chris Buck

AGENDA:

Prior to undertaking agenda items, Councilor Aucoin presented committee members (Councilors Frett and Circo) with a memo she'd composed "informing" us that she planned "to host a community discussion regarding potential future options for the Second Street Fire Station." (See Attached) Neither Councilor Circo or myself had prior notice of this memo. However, as the memo touched an item that was on our scheduled meeting, I thought it prudent that we read and discuss the document with Councilor Aucoin.

After reading the document, a spirited discussion ensued concerning the need, appropriateness, and efficacy of Councilor Aucoin's contemplated action. Councilor Circo and I pointed out that the Council voted to accept that, further action on the Old Fire Station would require an appraisal of the property, and an engineering RFP for rehab/retrofitting of the building, as a possible site for relocating Hallowell's Police Department. That appraisal was received two days prior to our meeting and scheduled for review, as the first item on our meeting agenda. Councilor Circo also noted that, in the absence of the results from an engineering RFP, the City would still lack the second prong needed to consider the building's future, i.e., sale or rehabilitation of the structure. Consequently, any public hearing/forum at this juncture, could easily leave the general public more frustrated about the fate of the building than they were before. We next moved to the scheduled agenda items.

Item#1:

The appraisal report appears highly informative and thorough. Councilors Circo and Aucoin found minor errors (not particularized), but none detracted from the report's bottom-line. In it's current condition, the Old Fire Station is worth approximately \$300,000.

The committee next considered an RFP as outlined by the City Manager, "to determine the suitability for the garage/ground floor of the building to serve as a police station," and found that approach completely acceptable. However, we determined that, as a cost saving measure, the RFP should call for a review of the second floor space, to meet general municipal building requirements for "open space." Further, the RFP should entail a liaison relationship with Hallowell's Police Chief and, possibly, a security consultant. Chief Nason reiterated how the building doesn't currently, conform to the needs of a police station. He noted, in particular, the building's entrance which is broadly open and lacking in security. He feels there is also an issue of providing safe parking for police officers' personal vehicles, so they would not be subjected to vandalism. However, the Chief said a rehabilitation of the building's ground level as a police station "could work , if done correctly."

In addition, the committee recommends that the Council direct the City Manager to draft an RFP within two (2) weeks, and that the Property Committee give the document an expeditious review before it's issued. Finally, the committee believes that applicants should be given a 30-day turn-around time for responding to the RFP, and that their response contain a statement of the projected time needed for completion of the RFP's requirements.

Item#2:

The City is presented with an opportunity to pursue a new location for its public works (PW) operation, through a “ trade” of its current PW Water Street property, for a section of property located west of I95, off Central Street, referred to as the culvert & tank (C&T) property. This C&T property contains a standing structure which may be suitable for rehab/retrofitting. Public Works Manager, Chris Buck, described the C&T property as being more than sufficient to handle the needs of PW. The property has a well, needs a sewer line connection, and contains adequate road access. Committee members viewed a map of the location and agreed it was a suitable location for PW. The discussion continued around various aspects of the C&T and surrounding properties. Committee members agreed that the following issues should be resolved:

- a. What is the dollar value of the C&T property?
- b. We should obtain a survey description of the C&T property.
- c. Would the seller of C&T consider a sale “subject to” the City's sale of it's current PW property.
- d. We need a cost assessment of what it would take to rehab/retrofit the on site structure for PW's needs.
- e. We recommend that \$2,500 be set aside from the \$10k appropriated for exploring a new PW facility, to determine the structural suitability of the facility on the C&T property and the projected cost to build-out that space for PW's needs.

Respectfully submitted, _

S/

Michael V. Frett, Chair

Memo:

Date: December 5, 2019

To: Property Committee, City of Hallowell

From: Councilor Maureen AuCoin, Councilor At Large

Second Street Fire Station Community Discussion

This memo is to inform you that I plan to host a community discussion regarding potential future options for the Second Street Fire Station. I welcome your support, input, and involvement. Throughout the past 2+ years, we have been grappling with the decision of “best use” for this property. This has led us to recognize that we need to make the most educated decision possible. As such, this committee and Council requested that the City Manager *arrange a commercial appraisal and engineering/architectural study*. These first steps are extremely beneficial in assessing the potential costs and benefits associated with any future outcome.

With the recent receipt of the commercial appraisal, I am eager for us to continue advancing towards resolution on this matter. As such I plan to proceed by inviting public input concerning the building’s future. It’s unfortunate that the appraisal and engineering study were not conducted concurrently, but I recognize the RFP for the study will be distributed soon. I believe that input from constituents will also provide invaluable information. It is important that we as a council understand the priorities of our constituents.

Over the past couple of years, numerous individuals have approached me directly about this building and the City’s process in deciding it’s future. A public forum would welcome their input and also offer some clarity regarding our process. While these discussions could wait until the engineering study is complete, I feel that would just belabor an already prolonged process. Many of these discussions are already happening. It would be beneficial to bring them all together and give them an avenue to express their thoughts and ideas effectively.

I plan to hold this forum in mid-January, exact date and location to be determined. I will invite those who have conveyed interest in this property and encourage extending invitations to other individuals, organizations or businesses that have ideas or have a vested interest in the future of the Second Street Fire Station.