

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING REVIEW COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2016

Session 16-02 a Regular Meeting of the Public Safety Building Review Committee was called to order by Chair Ken Castner at 5:30 p.m. on February 10, 2016 at City Hall Upstairs Conference Room located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COMMITTEE MEMBERS HOWARD, WYTHE, ROBL, PAINTER AND CASTNER

STAFF: RENEE KRAUSE, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

AGENDA APPROVAL

The agenda was approved by consensus of the Committee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes for the January 6, 2015 Regular Meeting

The minutes were approved by consensus of the Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA (*3 minute time Limit – Only items on the agenda not for Public Hearing may be commented on*)

There were no comments from the public present.

VISITORS

STAFF & COUNCIL REPORT/COMMITTEE REPORT/BOROUGH REPORT

A. Council Report – Mayor Wythe

Mayor Wythe reported the actions of Council regarding a resolution she presented on the options. Council postponed the resolution to the February 22, 2016 regular meeting and added the project to the agenda for the Worksession that is scheduled for Tuesday, February 16, 2016. The reason for that meeting was scheduled is to discuss the revenue picture and this project is part of that big picture. She added that it is frustrating when something like this takes a long time to come to fruition you have to deal with new participants.

Keeping the Council on the policy side of the project and out of the operational size which is the **committee's job will be a hard task. It is easier to speak about the size of the Chief's office.**

B. Staff Report – Carey Meyer, Public Works Director and City Engineer

Mr. Meyer was not present due to a conflict within his schedule to attend a prior meeting scheduled the same time.

C. Stantec Project Report – Dale Smythe, Sara Wilson-Doyle

Chair Castner noted that he spoke with Mr. Smythe and stated that there was no need for his attendance at this meeting. He further noted that Ms. Wilson-Doyle is no longer with Stantec and Meredith Noble will be the new contact person.

PUBLIC HEARING

PENDING BUSINESS

A. Three Building Options to Consider:

1. Memorandum from Chair Castner, PSBRC 16-01 Re: Topics for City Council Worksession
2. Resolution 16-016, Support of the Homer Public Safety Building as Presented by the Public Safety Building Review Committee.
3. Excerpt of City Council Minutes for January 25, 2016
4. Memorandum from Chief Painter dated January 13, 2016

The Committee entertained a lengthy discussion and covered the following:

1. There is no consensus within the committee on which option they prefer – the committee members expressed to different degrees the overall preference for a new 21st century facility but will accept a phased project; constructing the police station, performing necessary improvements to the existing fire station to extend its usefulness an additional 10 years.

2. Bringing the Council members up to speed on what the Committee has done. An example was to present to Council that information that the committee has vetted various locations and the reason for choosing the site that was chosen. Starting over on the project just nets them the same outcome. The project started at \$15 million, when the Needs Assessment was complete the price went up. The Fire Station is an easy fix and they have the money so they need to do it but they will not be putting the Police Station in the Tsunami zone.

3. Inclusion of a Community Gym facility located in the Town Center no matter what option they choose. In order to get residents approval for the project it was recognized that they would have to include constructing a Community Gym, not a recreation center but a facility that would provide a space for the current activities that the gym at the HERC building is providing and offices for the City Maintenance personnel since they will also be without a facility when the smaller building is demolished to construct the police facility.

4. Explaining to Council members that they are not constructing a normal building. This was specialized construction in that the HVAC and mechanical needs of the Police Department alone will run \$3 million. Current facilities present liabilities to the city and safety hazards to personnel and other occupants of the facility. The city is a regional jail. The committee needs to convey this to council.

5. It is time for the residents of Homer to pay for what they want. The time of receiving **someone else's money in the form of grants from the State and Federal governments is over.** Willingness to revisit the Public-Private Conversation but not change the location since that would add \$2-3 million to the project.

6. Attendance by the Committee at the Council worksession to address all concerns and questions that Council will have was strongly encouraged.

7. Due to the economic situation of the state this may be the best time to get this project done since the cost of construction may lower in the next couple of years. It was noted that there will be deflation for the next few years then a couple of years of hyper-inflation. There is not another time when the project will be cheaper to build due to the nature of the project and the course of inflation over time.

8. Percentage increase in population for the city over the next 20, 30 and 50 years to determine a properly sized facility. The city and residents do not want a facility that within 10 years they should **be looking at ways to fund a new facility or addition to the "new" facility in the following 10 years.**

9. Possible recommendation was to use MAPP group to present information to the Council on the community social and demographic issues that present the need for public safety now and in the future. The growing needs of the community result in something being done now, not in the future with regard to services versus costs which would include the ability of recruitment too.

10. In theory the committee is agreed that they need new facilities. Both the Police and Fire Station have been on the CIP for 20-25 years, they are not meeting the growing need of the community. The need for a police department is a fact, uncontestable. The Fire department can be extended by expending \$1 million dollars on regular maintenance repairs put off over the past 20 years. This will not provide the equipment that will improve fire services such as a ladder truck that reaches higher heights which would be a necessity for any future potential buildings in town center such as CIRI could build. The city requires equipment that can provide services 10-15 or more years into the future and a building that will properly house that equipment along with safe and proper working environment for the personnel.

11. Council needs to state what their goals are for public safety for the community. There is the possibility of changes within the needs and demographics of the community. There was point made on how far out can council get in front of the voters and the no growth supporters. The alternative is to live somewhere else. What are the limiters to them now when they are using the current resources?

12. Further comments made by the committee on previous fire stations built by the Borough and various other communities and those costs; the Skyline Drive Fire Station #2 capabilities; the issue with the having the ladder truck and requirements and limitations imposed by the existing facility on Pioneer Avenue regarding costs.

13. Tuesday Council meeting will be in a worksession format so no formality and they can call the committee up to respond to questions of the Council members. Be prepared to go through the land selection process, growth of the community. Add to the options, What can Council do today? General response from the public is that a new police station is supported. Removing the side issues by addressing them head-on, some of them being the Skate Board Park, and demolishing two buildings.

14. If they don't do something this year then with new Mayor and Councilmembers they may not receive the support they have now.

15. Costs for disposal are high due to city ordinance not allowing construction debris to be used as fill materials.

16. The Committee performed a brief role playing to respond to possible Council reaction and questions on the costs of new public safety buildings. They are getting the building to house the personnel that they need today because currently they are crammed into space they do have. The actual costs cannot be determined because of the very nature of the requirements. But it will definitely be more than \$5 million but less than \$14 million.

- a. HEPA Filtration
- b. Mechanical and Electrical will be \$3 million
- c. \$1.8 civil costs for site
- d. This is not a school they are building, the harbormaster office \$406/sf
- e. There is money in the bank
- f. The city will have to bond for the remainder
- g. The current state of the state and possible additional taxes residents will be paying
- h. Residents of Homer do not currently pay high taxes
- i. Steps already taken by using the CM/GC process

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j. The cost of doing nothing is increased costs, personnel recruitment and retainage, liability concerns with prisoner/staff interactions, potential for State cancellation of city services, social costs, and that the requirement to remain open as a regional jail.

17. What can the committee do that will educate the Council members.

a. One on one interaction with Council

NEW BUSINESS

A. Next Meeting Date and Deliverables

The committee established March 9, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the conference room as the next tentative meeting date.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Resolution 14-20 Creation of the Committee and Scope of Work

B. Contact List as of December 21, 2015

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

Mary Griswold, resident, she listened to the presentation made by Mrs. Howard and commented that the committee should have a recommendation. The committee should recommend something. She opined that the committee should present at the worksession a brief description of the Police Station the design features, what is necessary to meet the needs, not all the options. Include short straight forward reasons why it is necessary to have those needs such as the 8 jail cells. The committee should include the mil rate that is needed to meet bonding. Then the Council will have to figure how that works in the revenue plan because then there is the potential for another 1.5 mils to meet revenue requirements. The memo from Chief Painter was great. The city is not going to buy a ladder truck in the next 8-10 years and it money for the repairs to the fire hall will not be wasted. It would be great to do a whole public safety building but the fire hall is still good.

COMMENTS OF CITY STAFF

Deputy City Clerk Krause commented on the unrealistic opinions expressed by the residents and general public on the costs necessary to construct a police station or even fire department to meet the necessary requirements. These are specialized buildings. They could even compare this project to others in the Lower 48 and find the same higher cost over other projects.

Chief Painter added the points the Chair had pointed out regarding the durability and longevity of these buildings. He then added that the city recently escaped from the recent 7.1 earthquake because it was so deep. Earthquake standards are that the building is built so that you can get out of the **building so it doesn't fall on you. The current fire department was built up to that in 1994. You** want that for your public safety building. He referenced Taiwan and the damage from a 6.4 quake that was only 6 miles deep. Homer got lucky.

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCILMEMBER

Mayor Wythe noted that the only debt to the general fund is the Library.

COMMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Castner commented that he has always tried to do right by the city and somewhere along the line our priorities got skewed and all of sudden it is more important to accumulate \$7 million dollars into the roads and trails fund than it is to address public safety issues. He would welcome having the discussion on how the city is allocating its money. Since they have had the HART fund it has become a priority over other things and he believes they should address how they funding things. In the past how they did things was never disclosed but now with the open budget process his confidence is restored on how things are done. He has spoken with the City Manager and her fears are costs digging **into operational budget. He doesn't want to muddle** it up but believes it is time to draw up the big matrix. Diverting the funds does not affect anything else and they only thing it did was cease the growth of the HART Fund. As far as he knows the \$7 million is still sitting there. He thanked Mrs. Howard for making the presentation.

COMMENTS OF THE COMMITTEE

Ms. Howard and Chief Painter had no comments.

Chief Robl stated that he has no political skills and he is not very good at making long persuasive speeches. He has been running the police station for 17 years and knows what works and what **doesn't. He knows dangerous situations and believes they work in them every day. It is hard** to understand his world and explain it to the general public to make them understand and that is where his concern lies.

Mrs. Howard responded that he has the respect of the residents and Council. She went on to comment **about the Chief's doing so much with so very little but are now able to do anything more with the little** they have. She also commented on the knowledge of the public on what the CIP was, they do but the **average person doesn't.**

Mayor Wythe added that the responsibility of Council as the employer to provide for the proper housing for their employees. She believes in that passionately, OSHA states it as rule number one to provide a safe and healthy working environment and if the Council is not willing to put their political necks on the line to tell the community then we are a bad employer. That is what is most frustrating for her.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Committee the meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m. The next regular meeting will be WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2016 AT 5:30 P.M. at the Cowles Council Chambers, City Hall located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, and Alaska.

RENEE KRAUSE, CMC, DEPUTY CITY CLERK

Approved: _____