

**Town Of Needham Board of Selectman
Minutes for September 15, 2008 – Special Meeting
Needham Town Library**

7:00 p.m. Call To Order

A special meeting of the Board of Selectmen was convened by Chairman James Healy at 7:00 p.m. Those present were: John Bulian, Daniel P. Matthews, Gerald Wasserman, James Healy, Denise Garlick, Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick and Recording Secretary Greg Cooper.

7:00 p.m. Town Hall Renovation Project

Mr. Healy opened the meeting to discuss the Board's recommended action on moving forward with a Town Hall renovation project. Mr. Healy started the discussion by providing some history on the efforts to date. He stated that the project has been considered for nearly a decade and the Town has performed specific studies on the project and the project has been included in town-wide facility studies. Mr. Healy stated that the cost to renovate the historical building is far more than building a new building, but that Town Hall is a symbol of the Town. He stated that some have accused the Board of not valuing history, but that is not the case. Mr. Healy stated that people often complain about the process when they don't get what they want. He stated his satisfaction with the process to date.

Mr. Healy stated that he revisited renovation Option #1 and determined that, although it dressed up the building, it did not add needed space for growth. He also stated that putting cubicles in the Great Hall should not be a desired component of the project. Mr. Healy reflected back on past studies that recommended better office and meeting space for Town operations. He stated that Option #4 provides this space and preserves both internal and external historical elements. This, combined with the Town Manager's financial analysis which confirmed that the additional cost of Option #4 could be done within the levy, convinced him that Option #4 was the most preferred option.

Mr. Healy stated that the major impact of the project is the delay of approximately a year in pursuing a new senior center. Mr. Healy closed by saying that he was upset that people felt the process was not working and that the PPBC, Finance Committee and Community Preservation Committee were not doing their jobs. He stated that these committees did great work and the Board remained objective throughout the process. The end result is hopefully a recommended project that all can support.

Ms. Garlick commended all the people involved in the process. She thanked the Board members for being open and transparent. She expressed her support for Option #4 because it is a better product that satisfies operational needs, desires of the community and preserves the historical importance of the building. She stated that Option #4 is a better investment for the Town.

Mr. Bulian stated that he prefers option #4. He stated that he initially was concerned about the cost of such an option but the Town Manager's financial analysis proved that the project was possible. He still has concerns about parking in the downtown and feels the town needs to begin to think about how to solve this problem. He stated that a senior center is high on his list of priorities moving forward.

Mr. Wasserman stated his support for Option #4. He thanked everyone involved. He stated that the issue got very contentious and that there is a need for the Town and residents to work better together moving forward. He stated that the additional \$2.8 million results in a much better building that will save the Town money in the future.

Mr. Matthews agreed with the other Board members in supporting Option #4. He stated that he has been concerned about the cost for some time but that the Town Manager's financial analysis supported the potential to fund the project within the levy.

Motion by Ms. Garlick that the Board of Selectmen vote to support Town Hall Renovation Option #4.

Second: Mr. Wasserman. Unanimously approved 5-0.

Mr. Healy wanted to remind residents that Option #4 is estimated to cost \$18.5 million dollars with roughly \$14.5 million proposed to come from the Community Preservation Fund. He stated that no override will be necessary.

8:00 p.m. Sewer Rate Relief:

David Davison, Assistant Town Manager/Finance Director, appeared before the Board to request the Board execute an application for sewer rate relief from the MWRA. He stated that the Town received \$44,000 last year.

Motion by Mr. Matthews that the Board of Selectmen vote to approve and execute the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Sewer Rate Relief application.

Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0.

8:00 p.m. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Wasserman that the Board of Selectmen vote to adjourn the September 15, 2008 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

Second: Mr. Bulian. Unanimously approved 5-0.