

TOWN OF BEDFORD
March 16, 2023
BEDFORD FACILITIES INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the Bedford Facilities Information & Communications Committee was held on Thursday, March 16, 2023 at the Police Training Conference Room, Safety Complex, 55 Constitution Drive, Bedford, NH. Present were: Robert Buxton, Kevin Glenn, Joseph Hoebeke, Bill Jennings, Sue Mullen, and Peter Stillman. Also present: Dave Gilbert (Town Council Rep), Sue Thomas (Town Council Rep), Rick Sawyer (Town Manager), John Byfonski (Police Chief), Scott Hunter (Fire Chief), Jeanne Walker (Assistant Town Manager) and Coleen Richardson (BCTV, Asst. Station Manager).

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 pm.

New Business

1. Introductions – Jeanne Walker welcomed everyone to the first meeting and thanked them for being there. She explained the intent of the meeting was to provide everyone with a common understanding of the need for the project and that subsequent meetings would establish the communications plan.
2. Rick Sawyer explained that the project is vital to the Town’s long-term success and provided some of the history of the process including the “Harriman Space Needs Assessment” in 2018 and the hiring of Fulcrum Associates (with Lavallee Brensinger Architects and VHB Engineers) to assist with pre-construction services.
3. Chief Byfonski reviewed the Executive Summary from the 2020 Bedford Police Department Facility Report. He explained how the department has doubled in size, yet the facility has remained the same. He explained that this has led to operational and functional deficiencies including issues with the Booking and Detention areas, storage of evidence, vehicles, records and bulky equipment, lack of public spaces and interview rooms, and problems with the sally port. He also spoke about problems with the Emergency Operations Center (area to be used as a command center in case of an emergency).
4. Chief Hunter then explained that while there are certainly space issues with the Fire Department’s current offices, his primary concern was response time. Since 2000, it has been recommended that fire substations be established within Bedford. The Bedford Fire Department has one station that is responsible to cover 33 square miles – other neighboring towns typically have roughly half of that area to cover. He noted that the Fire Department is not forward deployed so the amount of time it takes for help to get to the location of the emergency is of utmost concern. Their focus is on the outcomes and the highest concentration of their calls is in the South River Road area. Faster response time improves life safety, health, wealth, security and quality of life.

5. A discussion regarding the overall approach and tasks of the Communication Committee was held. Items discussed included what is needed for a proper facility, what happened in 2014 when proposed fire substation warrant article was not approved, how does Committee explain what is the benefit to the entire town in improving response times to the South River corridor. The current plan is to bring a warrant article to the voters in 2024 that would fund the construction of the new police station/fire substation, retrofit the current safety complex to accommodate the fire department's needs and relocate other departments to the building and then improve the current Town office. It was asked what is the life expectancy of the new Police/Fire Station? The design process was for 30 years but it is estimated that it will sustain the town for 50 years, given current growth projections. The Town has a proposed site but more details will be provided at the next meeting as a purchase and sales agreement has not yet been signed.
6. There was a preliminary discussion on potential next steps including the use of a survey of residents, flyers, social media posts, BCTV informational program and/or other means of communication.
7. The next meeting is scheduled for April 6, 2023 at 5:00 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Walker, Assistant Town Manager

Town of Bedford
Public Safety Building
Communications Committee
March 16, 2023, 5:00 pm

- 1) Introductions and Election of Chair/Vice Chair and/or Co-chairs
- 2) Project Background and History
 - a) Police
 - i) Existing/Proposed
 - ii) Personnel Impacts
 - iii) Community Impacts
 - b) Fire
 - i) Existing/Proposed
 - ii) Personnel Impacts
 - iii) Community Impacts
- 3) Communications Plan
 - a) Project Ambassadors
 - b) Social Media
 - i) Management
 - c) Town Boards and Committees
 - d) Neighborhood Meetings
- 4) Message
 - a) Positive
 - b) Factual
 - c) Bring concerns, suggestions, and questions back to the committee
 - d) Avoid propaganda and electioneering
- 5) Materials
 - a) Boards
 - b) Flyers
- 6) FAQs
 - a) Why do we need a new PD and Fire Station?
 - b) Why this Site?
 - c) How much will this cost?
 - d) Why is it so expensive?
 - e) What is the tax impact?
 - f) What other alternatives were looked at?
- 7) Target Dates
 - a) October 2023 Submittal of Town Manager's Budget
 - b) January 2024 Budget Hearing
 - c) March 2024 Warrant

Town of Bedford
Public Safety Building
Facilities Information and Communications Committee

Members:

Claudia Barrett

Rob Buxton

Kevin Glenn

Joseph Hoebeke

Bill Jennings

Ray Lessard

Sue Mullen

Dave Quick

Peter Stillman

Town Council Liaisons:

Dave Gilbert

Sue Thomas