

TOWN OF RICHMOND
NEW HAMPSHIRE
Office of the Selectmen



RICHMOND BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Meeting, Friday, August 30, 2013

Attending: Selectmen Boncal, Gillis and Jameson. Bob Coy, Emergency Management, Sandy Perry, Municipal Building Committee. Representatives of the Police and Fire Departments were invited to attend, as was the Municipal Building committee membership.

Call to order at 5:30 PM.

The purpose of this meeting was to further discuss the proposed move of the Police Department to the Civil Defense building and of the Emergency Operations Center to the Police Department space in the Richmond Safety Building, in the Richmond Fire Department, and to decide on a course of action.

On August 22nd and 23rd, Gillis and Jameson toured the Winchester and Swanzey emergency operations centers (EOCs) to get an idea of how other towns accommodate their emergency operation functions. Winchester's EOC is housed with the Fire Department, and Swanzey's EOC is housed with the Police Department. Both towns are in the Vermont Yankee radius.

On August 26th, the Select Board met with Police Department representative Lt. Wood, Bob Coy, EMD, Ed Atkins, Fire Chief, and the entire Municipal Building Committee to discuss the proposed move. At this meeting, the Select Board heard that these groups wanted more information about the costs involved and a fuller discussion of the purpose of the move. Also, at this meeting it was proposed by Bob Coy and agreed to by affected parties, that the police department could move into the CD building, temporarily sharing space with the EOC, until changes could

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be made to the former police department space to accommodate the EOC operation.

Bob Coy provided a list of proposed changes he felt were needed to make the police department space adequate for the EOC. The list was extensive, and the possibility of doing the proposed construction in phases was discussed. Coy made it clear that he did not think the proposed move of the EOC was advisable or necessary, urging the selectmen to contact the state emergency management and Vermont Yankee for their input. An email from the state, sent to the above parties, indicated that the primary needs for an EOC was steady and reliable power, and steady and reliable communications equipment.

The Police Department has occupied the PD space for years and has recently attempted to make the space more secure, creating a locked evidence room and attempting to create a private holding/interview space for suspects, especially juveniles. The Fire Department has space issues of its own, especially access and egress for the Rescue vehicle, and equipment storage. The EOC has for years allowed other municipal organizations to meet in the east room of the CD building. These groups will have to meet elsewhere, but renovations in the Veterans Hall are intended to accommodate municipal meetings, according to the Municipal Building Committee. Until the renovations are finished, these groups can use the Selectmen's office any night except Mondays.

On August 28th, two Selectmen, Gillis and Jameson, met with EMD Coy, RPD Lt. Wood and William Harper, Vice President of West Rindge Builders, for the purpose of reviewing the EMD list and proposed layout, and the changes proposed by the police department to the CD building. Mr. Harper was asked for estimates for the proposed changes. We reviewed the layout and changes proposed by EMD Coy, changes suggested by Lt. Wood, and, by report, those of the Fire Chief, Ed Atkins. Harper noted that building codes have changed since the safety and CD buildings were erected.

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Poor air quality in the PD seems to be due to leakage through the attic of exhaust fumes from starting FD diesel engines. This is a potential health risk and can be significantly reduced by sealing the attic space between the PD and FD. It was also noted that an exhaust system must be acquired for fire department personnel health. The Municipal Building Committee also recommended installation of an exhaust system. The selectmen, working with the fire department, will seek grant funding for the exhaust system.

The side door in the east wall of the PD space, is inadequate for several reasons. Its installation in a bearing wall is not to code. There is space around the door that makes it inefficient for energy conservation and security reasons. Additionally, installation of a new, compliant door will accomplish an EOC goal of allowing some daylight into this space. The EOC proposed construction of additional windows in this bearing wall, which will require engineering, can be phased-in following any move.

For lack of space in the FD, the Rescue vehicle has to exit at the rear of the safety building, a significant issue in the winter and during mud season. The fire department recommended they gain access to the front room of the PD space so they can move FD emergency communications operations out of the current FD space, which would create storage room and allow the Rescue vehicle to depart from the front of the safety building. EOC and Fire Department emergency communications operations can reasonably share this space. Construction of a door between the two buildings will require engineering since this is a bearing wall.

The PD asked that a side door be constructed on the west side of the CD building, should the move occur, to allow a second access for officers with prisoners. This door would replace an existing window. The PD proposed several other changes which can be phased-in following the move.

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Taking into account the space, security and accommodation needs of these three departments, the selectmen prioritized the various requests for changes – what was critical to be finished prior to a move and what could wait until after a move.

Acknowledging that it might be more efficient to do it all at once, the Selectmen felt that resources and need dictate that it be done in phases. The Selectmen also acknowledge that the closing of Vermont Yankee by the Entergy Corporation will have some impact on emergency management operations in the future, but the emergency operations center will continue for local emergencies. The Fire Department has a fully equipped training/meeting room, and an adequately equipped kitchen, which can accommodate EOC needs. The move would also mean that emergency workers from the fire department will not have to cross the parking lot to get from the fire department to the EOC in an emergency. There is no demonstrated need for duplication of accommodations. Further, the large room upstairs in the fire department and the kitchen could accommodate overnight stays in an emergency if necessary. Also the Veterans Hall is a designated emergency shelter.

Prior to leaving the meeting, Mr. Coy expressed his strong opinion that if this move were to go forward, the Board could not secure the Town emergency management function.

The Board acknowledged that the police department has occupied the PD space for years and felt that with the three recommended changes the EOC function would not be compromised in that space, given the resources available at the fire department. After considering the estimates, budget and other resources available for this construction, it became clear that a phased production schedule was wisest. The Selectmen reviewed estimates for the four projects we found important to complete prior to any move. Gillis moved, Boncal seconded and the Board voted to direct the move to go forward, with the police department moving into the CD building, the emergency management function moving into the police department space and the fire department sharing the front communications space with EOC.

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Boncal moved, Jameson seconded and the Board voted to accept the estimates provided by West Rindge Builders for the four separate projects, with work beginning as soon as possible. The Board recommends that the side door in the CD building be installed first because West Rindge Builders is already in place to do this construction as an add on to the work they are doing on the exterior of the CD building now. They can begin work on the three other projects within the PD/FD space as soon as possible.

Following a review of the 8/23/13 – 8/29/13 manifest, Jameson moved, Boncal seconded and the Board voted to sign the manifest in the amount of \$15,115.45.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Minutes recorded by Gillis.