

Municipal Building Study Committee - 2019 annual report

The Municipal Building Study Committee serves as an executive committee that oversees development of the building project as a whole. The membership comprises expert citizens and stakeholders in the various facility locations. As resources for the Committee, the Town has retained CGA Project Management, LLC, Fall River, Massachusetts, and the volunteered services of Architect Edward Rowse, East Providence, Rhode Island.

The Committee usually conducts business meetings on Monday evenings at 5:00 pm, meeting once per month, or more frequently if warranted. Details of committee activities and planning are available at the following website:

<https://www.town.rehoboth.ma.us/municipal-building-study-committee>

The 2019 conceptual plan comprises separate structures: a new Police Station building, the existing public safety building modified to house the Fire Department/Station One, a new Town Office building, and a new Animal Shelter. Site development for a multi-building complex is proposed to be located on land the town owns around the current public safety building on Highway 118. In December 2018, the Selectmen agreed with the committee recommendation that voters will be asked to approve full architectural designs including actual bids, so all details and costs are known.

The detailed itemization of space needs by function was reviewed again in spring of 2019 for completeness and in light of new issues such as OSHA requirements for public buildings.

In order to understand what happens if the town “does nothing” to replace existing facilities, the Committee reviewed multiple existing needs assessments, such as the Russo-Barr 2018 study, to project renovation costs as opposed to building new. The “do nothing cost” is substantial at \$8.5 million, just to meet basic code requirements; adding needed new space would add significantly more cost if the Town attempts to renovate the existing buildings.

State law requires public projects with a planned budget of \$1.5 million or more use Owner’s Project Management (OPM) services to conduct the design/bids portion of projects as well as, later, to oversee construction. The cost for the design/bids phase was projected at \$1.1 million. As of December 2019, the Committee planned to recommend that the Board of Selectmen present a warrant item in the 2020 spring town meeting for the OPM services and design and engineering costs for this approach.

(Note: As of the date of preparation of this 2019 report, the plan for replacing the Police Station has been modified. The 2020 approach will be detailed in the next Annual Report.)

The Committee strives for maximum transparency and visibility. Meetings are open to the public, and agendas and approved minutes are posted along with documents and photos. The Committee conducted two public information sessions in 2019. The June presentation was held at the current Town Office to allow town employees to attend (on a voluntary basis, on their own time). A second session was held in November at the Council on Aging. A robust discussion from town residents in attendance covered many aspects and made valuable suggestions.

Respectfully submitted,
Frank Barresi, Chair of the Committee