

Buildings and Facilities Task Force  
Monday, March 1, 2021 - 9:00 am  
HELD VIRTUALLY

Steve McNally - Chairman

Chairman McNally called this subcommittee to order at 9:00 am with the following in attendance: Clayton Barber, Archie Depo, Stephanie DeZalia, Shaun Gilliland, Roy Holzer, Ken Hughes, Steve McNally, Jim Monty, Jeff Subra, Ike Tyler, Davina Winemiller, Mike Mascarenas, and Dan Pamer. Noel Merrihew was absent.

Also present: Dina Garvey and Lynn Donaldson.

News Media present: Tim Rowlands - Sun News

MCNALLY: The first topic of discussion, the last time we met, we had Jim Dougan run some figures on the Cornell Building and if you want to give us some information on that, Jim.

DOUGAN: Yup, as you said, Steve, last time we talked about, just so we vet everything, getting a cost to demolish the agricultural center building. So, I reached out to our term contractor, JFP and asked for a number from them and then we internally, figured it here at DPW. So, I sent out an email on Friday and one of the attachments was kind of that breakdown. If people saw that, the items that were in red would be mostly through Atlantic Testing, a term contract that we have for asbestos abatement. The items in orange would be done by Essex County staff and the items in blue would be done by JFP, as you compare the two. So, the estimated total cost for Essex County to complete the work with Atlantic Testing and an abatement contractor is \$56,303.00 and if we use JFP for all demolition and carry the same Atlantic Testing and an estimated abatement cost, we've got \$91,879.00.

So, couple of details there. We did an asbestos abatement on everything that we could without causing any damage to the building in 2020. There is one roof on one of the porches that roof coating has been found to have asbestos in it, so that whole roof panel system would have to come off and then some of the electrical wiring was noted as suspect in the ATL asbestos survey. So, what we figured is, the removal of the interior walls, the paneling, sheetrock, whatever's on the interior walls to expose the wiring to make sure that we can find anything that, that might be that old style fabric covered wiring that may be asbestos containing to have Atlantic Testing come in. So, um, any question on what we got? Any more specifics anybody needs?

MCNALLY: Anybody have anything for Jim?

MASCARENAS: In terms of timing, Jim, and we talked about this the other day, if the Committee and the Board decided to move forward with the removal of this structure, is the timing the same for you as it is the contractor?

DOUGAN: It can be. Our first steps would be to send in our staff to tear out those interior walls to exposed that wiring. Then have Atlantic Testing come test it and then if need be, write the variance to remove it. Everything with Department of Labor, who oversees asbestos, is done through a variance process. So, it could be the same. It would be, we're heading into summer months, I have more availability of staff without lost opportunity, if we did it more towards winter, but I would assume what we've got planned here for actual demo is only a couple of weeks' worth of, of our work, so we, if, if the Board wants to move forward and get this done with our folks then we'd find a way to get it done, even in the summer.

MASCAREAS: Yeah, it's my understanding and Mr. Gilliland knows about this more than I do, that the Fair is hoping to be able to run this summer and any removal of the structure, I'm guessing couldn't be done prior to fair and reseeded and all that?

DOUGAN: If we move fairly quickly, the process with the DOL variance will, without a doubt, probably, you know, eat up close to 30 days or our time. I can, I'm sure that Atlantic Testing's, initial costs to test things will be within the dollar amount that Mr. Palmer can sign off on without having to go back to the Board. So, we could move forward with some of those things. But, then when it comes down to do the actual asbestos abatement, that'll be a bid, I'm sure and that takes us 30 to 45 days to bid it. Something, realistically, JFP, even though they gave us a price, their price is higher than the bid, the contract bid that we put out, so I would basically have to bid it. So, we'd have to work really quick if you wanted to use a contractor to be done before the fair. Though, if we make a decision quickly, I do think that DPW staff could get it done and reseeded before the fair.

MASCARENAS: Okay, my interest from here is, set an acceptable solution for the Town of Westport.

HOLZER: So, Steve, I have a question.

MCNALLY: Yeah, go ahead.

HOLZER: Yeah, so, so I want to make sure as a Board Member, I'm only one Board Member, I wanna make sure that \$500,000.00 that we got through Betty Little, through DASNY, can be reused for another building. And, so, I think we need to figure that out first or if the money's even going to be available to us.

The other thing is, before we just tear this building down, I'd like to see us make a real commitment for another multi-use building in the Town of Westport and also not to muddy this water, but if the Town of Westport or an organization in that community wants that building and take responsibility for the building, I say we offer it to them and go ahead and proceed with building our own multi-use building for 4H, Cooperative Extension and other uses over there.

I know I'm throwing out a lot, but I've just been really thinking about this quite a bit over the last few weeks and I took the time to go tour the building.

TYLER: I'd like to add to that, this conversation that I think we're moving too quick here to get everything tore down before the fair. I think, like Roy says, there's a lot of different moving parts here that we need to check on and if they do have a fair this year, I'm assuming the fair people can use the office for the fair and so I think we should really, you know, do our homework and making sure we are on the right direction here and like Roy says, if there's somebody here in town that can rehab that building and the \$500,000.00 is a large number we don't want to lose.

GILLILLAND: The \$500,000.00, we can't repurpose that money or ask to repurpose that money until this Board says this is what we want to do. So, the legislature has got it set up to shift over, they've already talked DASNY, you know and we probably have at least a half decent shot at getting the money repurposed. But, we can't do that until another way is decided on by this Board. So, we're not going to get that money repurposed if we're just going to sit here for another year, waiting to see what's going on. So, if you want, if we want to do it, then we have to say, yes, we're going to tear that building down, we're going to build a new one or we're going to rehab that building. So, that's got to come, you know, the cart, cart has to come before the horse, here on this. Now, if we don't do anything, we sit on it for a year, because there's too many moving parts, we'll probably lose that money.

MCNALLY: In all fairness, I've been on the Board for 7 years and this discussion has gone nowhere in the last 7 years. I think we've gone through pretty much every funding source we can for grants for that building and I don't believe there's any additional money going to come for that building. I know that a couple of times we ran scenarios of what the cost projections would be to tear it down and build new or refurbish that building. You know we can kick this can down the road another month, two months, and three months, but until we get a plan, we're not going anywhere with this.

TYLER: Right, and Shaun, I got to disagree, we're got to wait until we know exactly what we're doing. If we vote here today to tear that building down, I think that's the wrong way to go. You guys can do what you want to do.

MCNALLY: Anybody have anything? Shaun?

GILLILLAND: Beg your pardon

MCNALLY: Anybody want to say anything? Did you have something to say?

SHAUN: No, no, thanks

MCNALLY: Okay, then if we're going to research this more, let's put a deadline on this building. You're probably in the drivers' seat on this, because you have it in your town and you have all the organizations you deal with there, but we can't keep kicking this down the road. We have to make a decision on this. So, anybody that wants to participate in this decision, that has funding or has some plan for that building, better step up quickly, because it's been going on too long.

TYLER: If you want to do that today, then I say that we use the \$500,000.00, rehab what we got and put it the best we can and look for other avenues for money and use it for whatever we can use it for.

PALMER: Let me just add, again, there is an elephant in the room, it's the \$1.9 trillion, Federal Stimulus Plan that is now headed to the Senate, \$7.2 billion of that is anticipated to go to the counties, under that program you have to justify how you're spending it. Either it's got to be on lost revenue or it's got to be on economic development or it's got to be pandemic control. You may decide that you're going to tear that down and build some kind of economic development, multi-purpose building over there that you may be able to get funding under the stimulus program. I am not going to sit here and tell you that that's a given, because none of the guidelines have come out as to how we can use those funds once they come, but I do think we're about a week or so in front of what will essentially be the steps by the Feds to pass this thing. It's going to the Senate, it's already passed the House and only needs 51 votes in the Senate. It's going through, so the question is, what's in it? \$1.9 trillion is a huge amount of money to kind of be sorted through, but I just think we need to consider that before we drop the hammer on something else.

MCNALLY: Now, Jimmy, you did some research on this, on a cost analysis of building a new building and also refurbishing that building, correct?

DOUGAN: Yeah, in previous reports we've come up with a couple of different estimates, the cost to refurbish that building in the report, done in 2017, put us around \$2.3 million to, to try and get that building as it exists now. Generally, up to code, it did not include installing an elevator, and that was, it did include residential/semi-commercial kitchen, somewhat similar to what was there before, as based upon information given to us by Cornell of what they would use the building for, back in 2008. That was, again, rough \$2.3 to remodel it and then we also received an estimate through an architectural firm that was our term contract firm in the very early 2020, that had building a new building to match what exists there. Right now, meeting all code with an elevator and demolition of the existing and that was at \$2.8 million.

TYLER: Jim, that cost was also, you said, was for using the upstairs, which was a very high, we all know that, that's probably over half of the cost, right there.

DOUGAN: I don't recall the specifics of breaking it down that way, but, yes, we have talked about that. If you were going to use that, if you're going to remodel the existing building and use the second floor for the public, then you would, you would have a lot of cost there. Again, the \$2.3 million didn't include an elevator, but it did include redoing those upper floors, for example, the hallway, the width of the main hallway on the second floor, does not meet code width to even have people housed in it or the staff, Essex County working up there.

MCNALLY: Okay, does anybody have anything else?

HUGHES: Can I ask a question, I'm not on the committee.

MCNALLY: Yeah, go ahead.

HUGHES: Thanks, Steve, my question is, do we need an elevator? Because my town hall, we just redid our second floor and we did not put in an elevator. I have a building that was built in the late 1700s. We used fire rated sheetrock to get around the need to put in an elevator, and we have office staff on the second floor of this building.

TYLER: Ken, we use a lift here in Westport and it's about, it was like, it was between \$20,000.00 and \$25,000.00. It wasn't expensive at all.

HUGHES: I just know that we do not have an elevator to our second floor. I just wanted to put that out there. There are ways around it, I think.

HOLZER: Steve, I have a question for Ike.

MCNALLY: Go ahead.

HOLZER: Okay, Ike, do you feel that the Town of Westport or an organization in that town would want that building? Because I can't see putting in over \$2 million into an old building like that, that was built on piers. I'm just, I know the concerns that you guys have in that community tearing it down.

TYLER: Yeah, yeah and I think that figure is way high. I've seen, for instance, our building here in Westport, was \$1.5, and we did it for \$800,000.00.

HOLZER: No, what I'm saying is, if the County wanted to deed just that building over, the agricultural building over to you, would you take total responsibility for it? Is that something you want to do?

TYLER: I don't know, I would have to discuss that with the Board.

HOLZER: Okay, so we'll go with Steve's lead, that we'll give you a month to figure it out and then we're going to have to move ahead. I'm not sure we're going to make the timeline for tearing the building down before the summer fair, anyways. That's only my opinion.

TYLER: Why don't you guys sell me the fairgrounds for a \$1.00 and we'll take it. I've been told ever since I've been on this Board that the County wants to give it to Westport, give it to us.

HOLZER: I would, I would probably support that. If your town wants that and we don't have to spend anymore Essex County tax dollars on that, that property, you'll probably maintain it better than we do anyways. I'm open minded to it, come up with a proposal.

TYLER: Sell it to the Town of Westport, no strings attached.

HOLZER: That's certainly something that we can talk about.

GILLILLAND: There is one string attached and that's the covenant on the deed about youth activities. So, just be aware.

DOUGAN: Just whenever you guys are ready to get into the, the other document that I forwarded to everybody.

MCNALLY: I mean we're sitting here, we've been here 17 minutes and nothing's more clear to me now that it was when we started this conversation, except we should have a plan and we should have a timeline, but I would like to get something established so we could keep pushing this agenda on the building. If anybody wants to set that timeline or set that plan, I think it's time to do so.

HOLZER: Steve, can we go one more month to talk amongst ourselves?

MCNALLY: Well, I think we got to put a timeline on this. I really do, I've been doing this for 7 years on this building and it's not getting better by the day. So, everyone in agreement, we'll wait one more month and make a decision on this?

HOLZER: Yes

MCNALLY: Is there anything we want Jimmy to research for us on this?

HOLZER: Not for me.

MCNALLY: Any cost analysis or cost figures?

HOLZER: Not for me.

MCNALLY: Okay, Ike? What about you, Ike? What do you want, come with your Board recommendation next month? What you want to do?

TYLER: I have a board meeting on, a week from tomorrow. We'll discuss then. I'll contact the main group of people that want to keep it and have a conversation with them, see what they would like, give me a month

MCNALLY: Like I said, I built a building two years ago, it would be a perfect Cornell building for one million dollars, under one million dollars and anybody's free to come look at it with a commercial kitchen and the whole nine yards, two stories and that's something to think about. You know, new technology is very nice, insulated basement, spray foam insulation, heating/air conditioning and anybody's welcome to come see that.

Alright, so we'll wait one month on that.

Do you have anything else on that? Jimmy, do you have anything else on the bus garages?

DOUGAN: Yeah, I forwarded to the Committee, just like with an aerial imagine with the proposed bus storage facility. This would be up at the landfill site, in Lewis.

Back in 2017, when Transportation was its own department, Nancy Dougal began working with DOT to set aside some money, basically for bus storage to keep busses uncovered during the winter, partly for safety, you know with snow up here in the North Country, snow builds up on the top of those buses and then it's a safety concern going up and down the road. So, she started that, again, I think it was 2017 and since 2017 DOT and transit funding has built up a little bit in Essex County's account and we're up to \$127,000.00 worth of funding from DOT towards this. So, what I have shown in the drawing is, what would eventually be a five bay structure and the first part that I'd like to do, the first \$127,000.00 is the first two bays, get electrical service there and then, if DOT continues to fund us, like to appear they're going to, then we would build off of that in the future. But, before I actually send up a proposal for engineering and everything to DOT for approval to really start this process, I want to make sure that the Facilities Committee or the Full Board was at least in general agreement that we should move in this direction.

MCNALLY: Okay, does anybody have anything? Jimmy, are we going to have any issues with the APA on this?

DOUGAN: Well, we've looked at it, we will have to go get a full APA permit for it. It appears that we have the building rights. It shouldn't be taller than 40 feet, so it will be an APA permit, but I don't think it's going to stop us from doing work.

MCNALLY: Okay, no wetlands?

DOUGAN: There is wetlands just below where I propose this right now, but we're far enough away from those that we're meeting their restrictions. We're not subdividing any wetlands. So, again, we'll need a permit, but I don't, I don't expect it to be unachievable.

MCNALLY: Okay, does the Committee want to move forward with this project and see what we can do?

HOLZER: I do

MCNALLY: Everybody in agreement with that? Alright, we'll move forward with that. Anybody else have anything for Facilities?

MASCARENAS: Steve, I have a couple of things. You asked me to look into some finance stuff at the last meeting.

MCNALLY: Okay

MASCARENAS: So, in terms of the Stewart's account, Linda did pull an accounting of that and to date, we've used \$83,000.00 of that original \$630,000.00 sale on that building to Stewart's. So, we have \$547,000.00 left in that account. Any questions on that before I go on to the next?

MCNALLY: I thought we were going to use that money for the heating up at the courthouse or Public Safety?

MASCARENAS: That was the original plan. We had got approval for some of that, but and Jim, if I'm wrong, correct me, but he was able to do that with the funds he has budgeted.

DOUGAN: Yeah, with last year being, with COVID-19 and, and the request from Dan, Mike, Shaun, everybody to determine what expenditures we could hold on. We held on to some building type expenditures and did not hold on the rooftop unit on the courthouse project. So, by the end of the year, I was able to move enough of those things that we didn't move forward with, into the rooftop project, so we did not have to go into that Stewart's money to pay for it.

MCNALLY: Okay, so that building, that work's been done?

DOUGAN: That's correct

MCNALLY: Okay, what about the Public Safety Building? Do we have something coming up on that now? Some type of plan or are we good there?

DOUGAN: We are working on the Public Safety Building. We are meeting with a state contract vendor for rooftop units and are starting to plan a more staged project instead of doing all of the building at once and eventually there will be a roof on that Public Safety Building that needs to be replaced, as well.

Back to the Courthouse, we are doing a roof replacement project for the Courthouse. It's now 26 years old, I believe, is the date and we're doing that with budgeted funds for this year.

MCNALLY: Okay, now, does anybody want to, with that \$547,000.00 does anybody want to talk about removing the old jail. That's always a bright topic for everyone.

MASCARENAS: I still think we need a price on that. Is where we need to start. We don't have an estimate on removal yet.

MCNALLY: Jimmy, do you think you can get a cost on jail removal?

DOUGAN: Yeah, I believe I can get you an estimate on that by the time we have our next meeting. We're going to include the pod in that?

MCNALLY: Is everybody in favor of getting that cost?

HOLZER: I am

DEZALIA: Yes

MCNALLY: That's another subject that we've been kicking down the road a long time and we do have that \$547,000.00 and with Jimmy using budgeted funds for the heating and air conditioning at the courthouse and the Public Safety Building, that's great, that's great Jimmy, thank you. Anybody else have anything for Facilities?

MASCARENAS: Just one more thing, Steve, in terms of finance. We talked about the bonding of mortgage tax and what funding projects would look like, that was part of your potential solution for Cornell without having to increase the levy. So, here's what we're looking at. We get between transfer and mortgage tax. We get approximately, looks like \$1.3 million a year, the revenue from those two taxes that are used to offset some of our cost to our local taxpayers. Those bonds will be paid off in 2024 and 2025. So, we wouldn't be able to reallocate those funds until 2024, at the soonest for one of the bonds and in 2025 for the other. With that also comes local share, so the mortgage tax and the transfer tax, don't pay for the entire amount of those bonds. We contribute almost \$2 million a year in terms of our local levy on those two different projects. But, those will be totally gone in '24 and '25, just so everybody's aware of that.

One other thing that I want to Committee to know about and think over, I don't need an answer today, is Jim and I has got an estimate for a bathroom at the Public Health Building. There's no bathroom at the basement of that facility. It houses about 10 to 15 people, depending on the time, right now, more so, because of COVID and we're trying to spread people out between the first floor and the lower floor. So, down in the basement is Adult Protective and Office for the Aging, right now. The cost estimate to put in a bathroom, because it's difficult to tie in is around \$20,000.00. So, it's something I wanted the Facilities to just think about, consider, it's nothing that I need a decide on today, but people do have to go up a couple of floors, flights of stairs to use the bathroom up there and probably, 60-70 people in that building, as a whole. Just so everybody knows. I don't know if anybody's been down there. If anybody wants to come look, I'm more than happy to take them through the building and I, Jim and I have had some conversations, long term are we going to have people in that facility? Are we not going to have people in that facility? I think you're always gonna in terms of Public Health, and the basement you could potentially down the road, move people out, but realistically, I'm not sure that's going to happen in the next 3 to 5 years anyway. So, do you have any thoughts? Let me know what you think and again, I'm happy to take anybody through it and see, kind of what we're talking about.

MCNALLY: Alright, thank you. Jimmy, you would be able to take care of that project, with budgeted funds?

DOUGAN: I have nothing specifically budgeted right now for that. I think that the contractor may have estimated a little bit high and but, \$20,000.00 is a lot to pull out of budget, unless I cancel another project. So, the reason why it's so expensive is we have to put in an upflush toilet system in. There is no sanitary sewer at the basement floor right now.

PALMER: Steve, I think taking that money out of the Stewart's money probably makes sense at this point. Additionally, and Jim and I have talked about this, we really need a handicapped bathroom here on the first floor of this facility, as well. When the public comes in, they essentially have to use that little tiny bathroom in the hallway there. I think, we had talked about a place for that, Jim, at one point. So, if you could get us those costs for both of those, I think that's probably appropriate to take that money out of the Stewart's money. It makes more sense and long term it gives us a bathroom down there, but it also would look at giving us a bathroom up here for handicap purposes.

DOUGAN: Yeah, yeah, we were talking about putting a handicap bathroom, kind of right across from where Personnel, the door that goes into Personnel is. There's a closet space and a little bit of wasted space there that's immediately adjacent to the Board of Supervisors' conference room and we felt we could get a gravity sewer line that ties into the rest of the sewer in that space, but got a little bit of coordination with the tank room down in the basement, but we thought that would probably be the best place.

MCNALLY: Alright, great. Anybody else have anything?

DEZALIA: Yeah, so, Mike, were you saying there is only one bathroom in the Office for the Aging/  
Public Health Building?

MASCARENAS: I think there are two, but I will get an exact count, but I think they are both upstairs, on that first floor.

DEZALIA: Okay, thank you.

DOUGAN: There are two.

MASCARENAS: Yeah

DOUGAN: There are two, Mike, but one is in the newer part of the building and one is in the older part of the building, but nothing is in the basement. They are both on the first floor.

DEZALIA: Okay and how many employees are in that building?

MASCARENAS: I'll get the exact number for you, Stephanie, I think there's probably around 60 people in that building.

DEZALIA: Okay, thank you.

MASCARENAS: But, let me get you that number.

MCNALLY: Okay, anybody else have anything? Alright, great. I'll see if I can get that, the next meeting scheduled for the 29<sup>th</sup> at 9:00, if that's available and someone will get an email out to you. Alright, anything else? Alright, we are adjourned.

**AS THERE WAS NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THIS BUILDING AND FACILITIES, IT WAS ADJOURNED AT 9:39 AM**

Respectively Submitted,

Dina Garvey, Deputy Clerk  
Board of Supervisors