

## Energy Committee Meeting, Monday 3/16/20

Minutes recorded by Tony Rogers

Present: Tony Rogers, John Larsen, Stan Swiercz, Randall Spalding-Fecher

Guest: Michael Bianchini (from R.W. Hall)

### Meeting agenda

- The primary agenda was to discuss the recent submittal from R. W Hall, including bid-ready documents for the installation of a new HVAC system in the community center and cost estimates for that project.
- Specifically, the purpose of the meeting was to make sure energy committee members understood the details of the documents and anticipated costs
- Finally, the meeting included a discussion about the possible implications of the new cost estimates on town financing, the implementation of the project, and presenting this information at the select board meeting

### Meeting date and time:

- Time: The meeting occurred at the legally posted time for the meeting.
- Place:
  - As 1) the governor approved the emergency use of on-line meetings to conduct town business due to the coronavirus and 2) the Pelham Board of Health and the governor encouraged minimizing in-person contact and meetings, the meeting was a call-in meeting.
  - There was inadequate time between the governor's announcements and the previously scheduled meeting with R.W. Hall to post the call-in details. The HVAC installation schedule and access to available funding are extremely time-sensitive. It was decided to proceed with an information-collecting meeting so we could answer questions at the Select Board meeting two days later.

### Meeting actions

- No deliberations or decisions on behalf of the town were made. No deliberations or decisions for a recommendation to the Select Board about how to proceed were made.

- These minutes are an attempt to present as clearly and completely as possible the meeting discussion to keep residents of the town informed about energy committee actions in these times of ambiguous guidance of how to conduct town business.

Meeting convened at 11:15 AM

## **Site visit**

The site visit by R.W. Hall will be rescheduled for another time soon.

## **Summary of HVAC bid documents**

Mike Bianchini of R. W. Hall summarized what was in the bid package.

- The bid package includes specifications for equipment, details of the demolition and installation work to be done and drawings related to equipment placement.
- The work would include demolition of current cooling equipment, installation of the new heating and cooling equipment, a Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) system, and retention of the current oil-fired boiler for emergency backup heating.
- Mike explained that there would be about the same number of ventilation ports in the building and that the oil burner would be operated about an hour a week to ensure that it is ready for emergency operation, if needed

Mike explained what the drawings covered:

- Drawing L1 – Demolition to be done
- Drawing M2 – New piping installation
- Drawing M3 – New ductwork installation
- Drawing M4 – New equipment schedule
- Drawing E1 – Electrical system demolition and equipment schedules
- Drawing E2 – Installation of the new electrical panel, PPQ

Mike explained that there would also be new manufacturer-supplied controllers for the VRF and the ventilation systems

## Questions for R.W. Hall from the Energy Committee

- **Why, in this new redesign, are there 4 separate ventilation units as opposed to 2?** Mike explained that this current design iteration keeps all of the current oil heating components. This leaves inadequate space for the ducting that would be needed if only two ventilation units were used. The new design would have 4 smaller units distributed about the building.
- **Why have costs increased so much, compared to the earlier design which included more electrical work and a new generator?** Cost increases included:
  - Costs for heat pump technologies have increased significantly over the last year as demand has increased
  - Costs for demolition and re-construction of impacted non-HVAC-system building components were previously included in the contingency numbers and have now been calculated in more detail and included in the overall costs
  - Costs per pound or per foot of a variety of items have increased due to inflation (construction and materials) and materials and labor have increased due to the increased complexity of piping, ducting and wiring to be installed among existing oil system components
  - Costs for ventilation equipment and associated wiring have increased due to the need for four ventilation units.
- **Given these costs, could we, instead, eliminate the boiler and find a way to get along with the current generator?** No, the current generator could not run the HVAC system in an emergency
- **How much will the boiler be running?** R. W. Hall recommends running the boiler once per week during warm-up of the building. Thus it might run for two hours on one morning per week in the winter but zero hours per week in the summer. Running it in this manner would mean the boiler could run at close to full load, minimizing issues of running it at part load too often.
- **It looks like the specified system operates only down to -4F whereas we understood it was to operate down to -25.** Mike clarified that the VRF he specified was to operate at rated capacity at -9F, but continue operation below that at reduced efficiency. It would shut down at -29F.
- **This triggered a larger discussion about how the VRF system operation is specified in the bid documents.** Mike explained that he had taken the approach of describing a specific system and manufacturer and saying that proposed systems must have the same material specifications (related to durability, with a 10-year limited liability) and equivalent performance. He said we should read over the documents and if there is any ambiguity, he would be happy to clarify our desired specifications in more detail.
- **What, from his side, is still needed to complete the bid documents?** He is awaiting drawings of a few architectural details of the soffits covering the new ductwork in the library. He has yet to include the recently received contractual language from the town lawyer.

After this discussion, Mike Bianchini left the meeting.

## **Discussion of attending select board meeting**

- The Select Board meeting is Wednesday evening at 6 PM. Most likely John Larsen and Tony Rogers would call in to answer questions about this new information.
- There was some brainstorming about how the new costs and coronavirus risks might affect the schedule.
  - Coronavirus – There are any number of risks of delays due to possible impacts of business disruption on suppliers, installers, personnel, town personnel, etc.
  - Additional costs will require about \$136K from the town. The Capital Planning committee has allocated enough funds for this project but those have yet to be approved by the town.
  - Any delays will make it harder to use up the MVP grant, thus we need to move as quickly as possible. If the town needs town meeting approval to proceed, we would need a special town meeting asap.
  - One possibility to address these concerns is to push the state to extend the MVP grant expenditure deadline.
  - Should the town proceed to spend as much of the MVP grant as possible, using our efforts, in spite of issues encountered, as leverage to get an extension?
  - How far can we go before any TM authorization? We think the town could go as far as issuing an RFP and interviewing prospective contractors.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:28 PM