Meriden Library Building Committee  
October 24, 2017  
Meriden Town Hall  
DRAFT MINUTES

Present: Joe Crate, Judy Hallam, Shawn Rogers, Jeff Albright, Suzanne Spencer (had to leave early), Chris Dye; Mary King, Director

Absent: Bill Knight, Leeli Bonney, Shannon Decker, Nancy Liston

The meeting began at 7pm. Upon motions duly made and seconded and unanimously carried, Chris Dye was elected chair of the Meriden Library Building Committee, and Mary King was authorized to make an application for funding for the new library from the James Tasker Covered Bridges Fund.

The committee discussed at length the type of library we want and its planning, financing, and eventual approval by the town. It was agreed that the new library would be as close to zero energy use as reasonably possible, be fully handicapped accessible, and have in addition to book stacks and a reading area, a community room, a small kitchenette, a bathroom, a small office for the library director, and a room for small children.

The Building Subcommittee and the Library Needs Subcommittee were directed to prepare a presentation for delivery at the town meeting in March 2018 asking for preliminary funding to design and plan for the construction of the new library, so that the request for funding for final construction may be presented at the town meeting in March 2019. This presentation is to be given to the Library Building Committee no later than January 15, 2018. Mary King and Brad Atwater have agreed to act as advisors to the above two subcommittees.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Dye  
(For Suzanne Spencer)
Present: Joe Crate, Shawn Rogers, Jeff Albright, Suzanne Spencer (had to leave early), Chris Dye, Bill Knight, Leeli Bonney; and Mary King, Library Director.

Absent: Shannon Decker and Nancy Liston

The meeting commenced at 7pm. The minutes of the meeting on October 24, 2017 were approved with the addition that the new library be a single story.

Shawn Rogers presented two floor plans, A and B. The plans showed a building 60x90 feet, totaling 3600 square feet. Steve Halloran said that the building footprint under current zoning cannot occupy more than 40 percent of the lot and that the plans were just short of that figure. That means that no further expansion would be allowed without a special exception.

Bill Knight described the high energy efficiency of the heating and mechanical systems. Mary King said we currently have a collection of about 10,000 volumes with adequate space to shelve that amount. For the new building, we only assumed about 10 percent in collection growth, assuming we will no longer require much space for reference materials, and that media will be received in digital formats.

There was agreement that the structure as reflected on the plans would be perfect for modular construction.

There was also discussion of the request to be made at the March 2018 town meeting for $25,000 initial funding. Steve Halloran pointed out that there will be competing demands for expensive items, including fire trucks and repair of the town garage. Shawn and Jeff will represent the committee before the trustees at their December 18 meeting, recognizing that the trustees must approve our proposed town meeting presentation. We discussed Steve Halloran's proposed warrant for the initial funding.

Our next Committee meeting will be held on January 9, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Dye
Meriden Library Building Committee Meeting  
January 9, 2018  
Meriden Town Hall

MINUTES

Present: Leeli Bonney, Terri Crane, Nancy Liston, Suzanne Spencer, Shannon Decker, Brad Atwater,  
Chris Dye

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

DISCUSSION

- We need to consult a library designer.  
- We must comply with public building regulations.

TOWN MEETING

- Bill Knight, Shawn Roger, and Mary King will make the presentation at town meeting. They 
  will request $25,000 for preliminary planning and discuss our estimate of the total project cost.  
- Someone needs to write an article supporting the $25,000 request and submit it to PlainFacts for 
  the issue that will be mailed before town meeting.  
- Brad Atwood, Steve Halloran, and Chris Dye will meet with Shawn Rogers and Bill Knight to 
  develop the total estimate for the project.  
- We need to prepare for discussion of the impact the project will have on real property taxes.  
- Someone needs to develop a picture or model of the proposed building.

FUNDRAISING

- We will need to begin fundraising after town meeting. We thought we should establish a 
  foundation to accept donations for the new building, but Steve Halloran thought this unnecessary. 
  Tax deductible donations can be made to the Meriden Library Fund that is 
  controlled by the select board.

LIBRARY TRUSTEES

- A group, to be selected, will go to the next meeting of the library trustees to brief them on our 
  progress.

NEXT MEETING

- The full building committee will meet on January 30, 2018.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee  
January 30, 2018  
Meriden Town Hall  
Draft Minutes

Present: Chris Dye, Shannon Decker, Mary King, Terri Crane, Judy Hallam, Leeli Bonney, Joe Crate, Bill Knight, Brad Atwater, Steve Halleran

Absent: Suzanne Spencer, Nancy Liston, Shawn Rogers, Jeff Albright

Meeting called to order at 7:08pm.

- Proposed agenda distributed by Chris Dye.
- Minutes of January 9 meeting approved.

Bill Knight provided updates about cost estimates. He requested a cost estimate for a modular building from Preferred Building Systems in Claremont, likely the least expensive alternative we’re willing to consider for a base cost. This cost will be available before our next meeting. The generally accepted square footage cost for schools is $200/sq ft. ($720k total for a 3600 sq ft building.) This is a reasonable number to assume for a library, because considerations are similar. This number includes no fittings or site/dirt work, but does include floor surface, kitchen, bathrooms, and full ADA compliance. They could design the building, or work from a design that we provide.

Brad Atwater reported that he reached out to Engineering Ventures about site numbers/dirt work. These numbers are forthcoming. We’ll need front end testing/analysis and hazardous waste analysis before demolition. Walkways, curbing, and storm drains all need to be considered. Asbestos is most likely the biggest issue and would have to be handled first; there could also be lead, etc. We would have an outside firm look at the entire building from a hazardous waste perspective, take samples, and come back with a report about what needs to be addressed during demolition. Packaging/hauling of hazardous materials needs to be done by specific companies. There is a state fund available for asbestos removal.

What would it cost to furnish the new building? Mary King confirmed that most of the existing wood bookshelves and the circulation desk would not need to be replaced. Library interior consultants would be helpful to advise about furniture placement, etc.

Steve Halleran reminded the group that we have about $250k in the bank for this project already. By next year’s town meeting, we want to have a bid with real numbers to present. After this year’s town meeting, if voters want to proceed, we need to hire someone to talk to firms and do the legwork — a part-time “owner’s representative” to watch out for the town’s interest. This committee may become a sounding board for the owner’s representative.
What do we want to address at town meeting?

1.) Are we willing to support a ballpark number of $1M or less? $25K from this year will be used for an owner’s representative to come up with hard numbers for next year’s meeting. Anything not used will remain in the Meriden Library building fund.

2.) In one year, we will come back with proposal to build, will have a firm selected. (Bill recommends going through the bid process before Town Meeting 2019.)

Steve confirmed that we don’t need a separate foundation to accept private/public money. Instead, we’ll use the existing fund.

Judy Hallam is working on a letter to the community, and would like to include that Mary is looking to recycle materials/fittings in the new building. Brad suggests quantifying that, so the public understands that there are more fittings to buy.

Selectmen will open the article at Town Meeting. Recognize Chris Dye as chairman for some remarks about what we’ve done so far on the committee, turn to Bill Knight and Brad Atwater for further details, discuss how we might use the requested money, then open to questions and discussion.

Is it clear to the public at Town Meeting why we need a new library? Explain that we have done many studies, and there are issues we can’t renovate through. There was a clear vote last year to keep the Meriden Library open, but creating a new building is a very different discussion. Brad suggests we need to be prepared to discuss the tax rate and generally how it will be affected, as well as potential operating costs going forward. Bill is confident that we can build a 3600 sq ft building with operating costs that are lower than the current building.

People will ask: Why not save the existing building? Quantify research and numbers we’ve collected so far to lend credence to the number we’re presenting. We want permission to continue the process. Highlight what the new building will offer, what the space will feel like, what works in the current building and what we’d hope to gain from a new building. Have Mary speak to this at Town Meeting. Meriden Library is well-used, patronage numbers are high. Not everyone in town uses a public library, so we need to highlight the resources and what the libraries offer the town as a whole.

Steve and Leeli reported that they attended the most recent Library Trustee meeting; the Trustees voted unanimously to support this warrant article.

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 27th, 7pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee  
February 27, 2018  
Meriden Town Hall  
Draft Minutes

Present: Chris Dye, Mary King, Judy Hallam, Steve Halleran, Suzanne Spencer, Shannon Decker, Brad Atwater, Joe Crate, Jerry Doolittle, Shawn Rogers, Leeli Bonney, Bill Knight

Absent: Jeff Albright

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm.

Judy Hallam presented her letter that will go into PlainFacts, the Valley News, and Connect Cornish, a summary of our findings and intentions moving forward. For future use, it was suggested that “Meriden” should be swapped out for “town life” or “Plainfield” to highlight the fact that a new building would be used town-wide.

Chris Dye noted that the purpose of this meeting is to nail down our presentation for Town Meeting. Steve will open things up at the meeting, give historical context on the various committees that have worked on this project, turn it over to Chris to discuss the history of the library itself (3-4 minutes), and then call upon various committee members to expand on the proposal (Bill, Shawn, Brad).

Bill received an initial proposal from Preferred Building, who said they could provide a bare bones building for $600,000. That covers foundation, essential structure (water system, electrical, fire suppression, vinyl siding). Does not include architectural exterior add-ons, extra insulation, various upgrades. He talked through this at length with Preferred Building and is confident they could provide what we need, with the extra benefit that they’re local. It would be easy to upgrade from this bare bones structure, but this basic quote helps bind us under $1M.

A key issue for the community will be: How much public money will requested for this project? Can we say we won’t ask for anything more than $400K, and that anything else we need would be privately raised? We’re aiming for a nice building at a reasonable cost, but what that cost is is still TBD (which is what we need the $25K to figure out over the next year).

Brad received some engineering feedback. The rule of thumb for site work is 10% of the total cost (once building is demolished) – paving, curbing, parking, drainage. However, there can be a wide range full of choices to consider, so this number could add up to a lot more.

Our goal at Town Meeting is to make a deal with the community – a year from today, we’re going to show up with a package to present to you that will be under $1M. (That total includes existing funds, public funds, and private funds to be raised.) Over the next year, we’ll give the public plenty of opportunity for input. We want to be ready to take the next
step after the 2019 Town Meeting. (Do we bid before next year's Town Meeting or not? This will have to be worked out.)

We need to protect ourselves from going down the road of specifics at Town Meeting – we’re not discussing what the bookcases are going to be made out of, etc. We need to steer the discussion away from that sort of detail and focus the community on moving forward. We’re not asking for permission to spend $1M at this meeting; we’re asking for permission to put together the best package with input from the community, along with options for people to vote on at the 2019 Town Meeting. At that point, nothing will be a surprise – they'll be included in the discussion along the way.

We need a maximum bond/loan number (adjusted for inflation); Bill suggests making this 50% of the total cost, instead of a specific number. That way, we can say that next year, we’ll bring you a perfectly acceptable building with options, if you want to choose upgrades that you think are worthwhile in the long run, we can add those on. Our town has done a good job of choosing wisely in the past, so we’re making them part of the process. It’s the town’s library! After we meet the minimum requirements, it’s up to the community what they want to include. Can we put a cap on the amount of money we’ll ask the public to contribute?

Joe sat on a committee during the time that PRML was planning their building, and the takeaway was that each side of town needs its own town center. This was discussed 20 years ago, and we will likely discuss it again.

We’ll need to make it clear that it costs more to fix the existing building than it does to tear it down and build it new. The Town Garage has issues, the school has issues, so we can only do what the public will support, but this is a good moment to start on this particular project. People will ask how Thom Lappin built a building two years ago for $400K. Bill noted that Thom’s will likely need significant renovation in about 15 years. A library is a public building that needs to last for more like 50-100 years. (You can build cheap, or you can build right.)

We should highlight that we’re trying to keep this reasonable, not compete with PRML or build something crazy. 3600 square feet is modest.

Over the next year, should we evaluate necessary library space vs. necessary community space? We’ll want to make sure that community space/meeting room is adequate, and that feels like a very important part of the building project. Is there functionality overlap with anything at the school? It was noted that it’s difficult to prepare food at the school, and that there’s not a good-sized room for community events (the Music Room is full of instruments, and is not available during the day). The more utility the community sees in this new building, the more willing they’re going to be to pay for it. But Mary pointed out that we need to make sure that the library has enough room for a handicap bathroom, clearance around shelves, etc., in addition to the basic library needs.
What's on the docket for next year's Town Meeting? Anything else big coming up? The Town Garage is at least 3 years down the road, probably more. Payments we've been making to public libraries by paying off PRML would transfer to Meriden Library – which would mean a net zero change to residents' tax bills. We can surely get a great mortgage rate.

Judy noted that Shelly Hatfield writes grants for a living; she's written grants for the school. Perhaps we could talk to her about fundraising.

This group will likely need to break in two moving forward – one group focused on discussing decisions about the new building itself (a sounding board of sorts), another focused on fundraising. (The Trustees and Friends of the Meriden Library are not interested in spearheading the fundraising efforts; the Trustees will need to appoint a committee of volunteers to do that.) These two groups will need to be communicating regularly. Judy pointed out that the Meriden Friends fly low under the radar; Suzanne noted that it's because they saw some of the things that happened during the building of PRML. Mary explained that the FOML had to start fresh a few years back, but are very active with library events. They will be champions of this project, but they don't want to be responsible for the fundraising. There are organizations in the Upper Valley that will be willing to make donations to this – it's just a matter of finding them.

Shawn noted that we're not spending wasteful money on the front end for something that's going to come in at too high of a cost; as a taxpayer, this process is much more structured. The best part is that we're going to tell them the maximum impact on their wallet – we'll cater the timeframe and scope of the project to that, instead of the other way around.

Paul will want this whole discussion to be 15-30 minutes, so this is not a huge, lengthy presentation with a detailed line of questioning. (This is Article 7, and will likely fall after lunch.)

For now, what we have is an educated guess; next year we need a hard number to take to Town Meeting. That process is tricky, but we don't want to show up at Town Meeting with something significantly higher than what we initially promised. The real goal is to tell the town that this is an investigation – we're in the process. If you want us to stop, vote no. If you want us to keep going, vote yes. If you vote yes, we'll bring you something within these parameters next year and we expect that you'll likely approve it.

Bill suggests that what's worked well with the school meetings is a give-and-take discussion – that's where we'll go at Town Meeting once the ball is passed to Bill, Shawn, and Brad. They'll discuss specifics, numbers, and open it up to dialogue. A question and answer format is the easiest way to get to a yes. Shawn says we should steer the conversation toward the process of how we're going to move forward figuring out the building design. Steve will help lead a financial discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 8:19pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee

April 10, 2018

Meriden Town Hall

Draft Minutes

Present: Brad Atwater, Shawn Rogers, Bill Knight, Leeli Bonney, Judy Hallam, Terri Crane, Chris Dye, Suzanne Spencer, Steve Halleran

The meeting began at 7:00 pm.

The committee discussed Brad’s progress in the design and agreed to the simple rectangular design. The committee discussed the need for public outreach and would like to have scale models of the proposed building in both libraries and the town office if possible. The building committee will meet twice monthly going forward.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee
May 1, 2018
Meriden Town Hall
Draft Minutes

Present: Brad Atwater, Chris Dye, Steve Halleran, Mary King, Shannon Decker, Judy Hallam, Bill Knight, Suzanne Spencer, Terri Crane

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm.

The Finance Committee met today at 12:30. The takeaway is that we need to move forward quickly with establishing a foundation, so we can accept donations from other foundations and groups. Chris is the point person for getting the application filled out. Five people have been identified as Finance Committee officers, and the group will meet again in two weeks. They will continue to search for people to serve on a fundraising steering committee, which will be separate from the Finance Committee appointed by the Trustees.

Mary offered clarity on the need for a foundation. Trustees and town can accept funds, but not all funds. Certain grants (ie Claremont Savings Bank grant) will not donate to municipalities; donors also cannot give anonymously to the town, so we’d need a foundation to accept anonymous donations. It needs to be a priority to establish this foundation quickly, without spending any money (reviewed pro bono). This is generally a cleaner way to raise money, and very little maintenance once it’s up and running. By June/July, the Finance Committee needs some fairly firm building costs to present to people as fundraising amps up.

The Outreach Group is currently very small (Chris Dye and Terri Crane), but will probably ultimately team up with the Finance Committee to distribute brochures, etc. Webmaster Mike is back in town, so he can build a page when we’re ready.

Brad had RFP take samples for hazardous waste assessment last Friday; he should get a verbal report this week and a written report next week. This process will identify what materials in the existing Meriden Library are hazardous, which leads to how they should be handled. So far, nothing alarming or unexpected has popped up.

Brad is also trying to figure out who in town is willing to volunteer for what, to keep costs down. Could we build this project using local resources? We would like to have an architectural firm on hand that we would use a la carte, only when needed. Brad had a conversation with Chris Kennedy from UK Architects and is waiting for his feedback/numbers, so we can make a decision about whether or not we’d like to go that route. Brad also met with Jeff Albright about the arced driveway in front of the building and whether or not that was a good idea. Jeff’s feedback was that the arc could work and be made reasonably safe.
Brad and Mary have been calculating what space they need in each category of the library, and analyzing the current space and how it’s used. Now they have a spreadsheet that gives them a template for space needs. (The calculated need comes in very close to 3600 square feet, based on specific data about how many books we have, periodicals, etc.) Much of the furniture and bookcases can be reused. Very soon, we need to look at the basic shell/site and know that the vision for the building lines up with location, site. That way, we can draw up a model and get feedback from the public before moving further.

Judy asks if the meeting room could be dual purpose, with stacks along the walls or rolling shelves (since we'll be losing storage space by making aisles ADA compliant). Mary would like the meeting room to be as flexible as possible, with minimal furniture so we can rotate in toddler tables, adult tables, open space for events, etc. We also need a storage closet that can house all of those materials when not in use. We’re planning to remove the full-size kitchen concept in favor of a kitchenette and more functional library space.

Who tells us how to situate the building on the site? Bill and Brad have both sited buildings on lots, but architects do it, too. It’s also important to consider orientation for possible solar panels. Steve points out that it’s a fairly small lot, so there aren’t many options for orientation. Brad would like to meet with the MacNamaras (who live in the house next door to the lot). Possibly add a row of trees or shrubs to separate the lots? This discussion is on Brad’s to-do list as a place to start when thinking about siting.

Shawn wants to get the existing topography modeled, but there is also the option for recontouring tailored to the new building.

We’ve advertised to the public that this is a very modest, simple project in keeping with the Village of Meriden, so it’s important to keep it that way – a simple rectangular building with simple systems. The town doesn’t want a complex building. Aesthetics are important so that it fits into Meriden. When we see a model, it may feel too big, so we need to be prepared to make adjustments.

We need to move ahead with public outreach. It makes sense to have the first public event once 3D models of the new building are available. By the end of this week, we should know when we’ll have a model. The outreach group will come up with a plan for this kickoff public event, community-wide – we need to find a way to engage the town. We want to give the public a chance to see what we’ve done before we go too far down a road. We’re close to having something to show the public, but not quite there yet.

The library’s current utility bill is high, so it’s going to be easy to improve upon it. When a shell design is available, Bill can fill in the details about windows/insulation/heating – an energy budget.

Mary is making a spreadsheet of what we have that could be reused (with dimensions); then we can make 3D objects to drop in the drawing. It’s important not to block daylight with tall bookcases. She’ll get these dimensions to Brad in the next few days, and that will give us a good sense of whether or not using this furniture will work. It will dictate window
placement, etc. We’d like to use casework to delineate spaces, rather than building in partitions.

A rectangular building is best (40x90), but Bill pointed out that there are ways to break it up aesthetically (three boxes, with the center one set back, for example). Once we see the model, we’ll have a better grasp on if the rectangle looks too big for the lot.

OPR is posted to the website, will be updated with feedback from Select Board. This is the first chance to build a town building in alignment with the Ready for 100% energy statement. Bill can spec lighting design, but we have to focus on getting it right aesthetically before we can work on those details.

The Grange and TDS are both unknowns and will change in the future, but we'll keep them in mind in the hopes that the adjacent library will be part of the discussion when those buildings change.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee  
June 5, 2018  
Meriden Town Hall  
Draft Minutes

Present: Brad Atwater, Shawn Rogers, Mary King Shannon Decker, Terri Crane, Leeli Bonney

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm.

Brad and Shawn presented a topographical model of the library site to the public (in order to show the magnitude of the building and how it works on the site), along with a summary of the building committee’s work to date.

The current library sits high on the site and therefore has no water issues. Where do you site the new building? Property is approximately 200’ x 200’ (just slightly off square). Town zoning ordinance specifies a specific ratio of permeable to impermeable materials, and a certain number of parking spots. The amount of space we have to work with for a building is pretty clear; the only variant is the shape the building might take. Current idea is for the building to be closer to the front of the lot, with parking on the side and/or back.

Have discussed access with TDS, and using their driveway as a secondary access point may be a possibility, but we’re planning preliminary access from Bean Road.

The shape and exact dimensions of the building are still changing as we determine what we need in each space, but in 30-60 days we should have that solidified.

At this point, the floor was opened to questions from the public.

Q: What’s the necessity for another community room?  
A: That was asked and answered at Town Meeting. This began as an ADA compliancy issue, but has evolved from there over many years of study and committee work. Right now, we’re looking at meeting our objective of bringing a building package to Town Meeting. At that point, the community will have a chance to vote on it. Tonight is about “how,” not “if.” Steve Halleran can speak to when the different votes were made to get us to this point.

Shawn mentioned that the meeting space has been discussed in detail. It would have separate entry, making it accessible by the public during the library’s off-hours, which could hold approximately 40 people. Meeting space at PRML is getting a lot of good use, and we’d like something similar at the Meriden Library.

It was also noted that the library space would be mostly used for stacks, and the meeting room could be used to accommodate large numbers of kids for story time, after-school programs (Mary has had to turn kids away because of space constraints), summer programming in case of poor weather, etc.
Q: Do you have an idea of what this will cost?
A: At Town Meeting, we said that we would bring a package to the town for $1M or less. ~$250K already exists; remaining funds will be split between fundraising and town commitment. Community will have a chance to speak on the details at Town Meeting 2019.

We're looking at a simple, rectangular construction, trussed roof, heating systems in the roof, ADA accessible. Square footage of this building is what we already have, plus a few extra things (for a total of 3600 square feet with 24 parking spaces). We're being very prudent about making sure that this is not overdone.

Q: Have you looked at builders/builder costs?
A: We're fortunate to have a lot of very qualified volunteers in town. We will have to use architects and engineers, but we'll use them a la carte. We'd love to possibly take this on with all Plainfield folks running the job; Brad is having conversations to gauge the interest level in this.

Vicki Ramos-Glew mentioned Geo Barns as a wonderful, cost-effective company that would be worth considering if we wanted a barn-style building.

Fire safety review comes after the schematic design plan. It all starts with what we want. The world has evolved, and we expect different things from our public buildings than we did in 1966.

Q: Does a new building need a sprinkler system?
A: This size building on grade does not require that. Over 4000 square feet might require one. Brad has had preliminary discussions with fire marshals and so far, so good. Some members of the public expressed concern that leaving out a sprinkler system would be a mistake. Brad and Shawn spoke to the logistics of adding sprinklers (water tank source, generator backup, large expenses). The fire marshal has suggested keeping things simple.

Shawn spoke to the idea of bidding on work and what builders we might use. We're going to take packages and put them out to preselected parties, rather than letting builders bid on a more vague plan and return with a wide range of bids. We're planning to use taxpayers’ dollars in a way that will get us the best deal. We'll be getting competitive numbers, known on the front end and visible to the public. We need to figure out the “what” before we determine who will be doing it.

We'll have full control over the building components to get the high-efficiency heating/cooling system that we want, rather than trying to fit that system into an existing building. This process is the best of both worlds; you get to design the building and have control over exactly where you spend your tax dollars. Operational cost of the new building will be pennies on the dollar compared to the existing building. We're designing it to be a very energy-efficient building, and the community will be the beneficiaries of that. This building should easily be current and serviceable for 50-100 years; we're not looking at a 5-10 year scenario.
Q: Will Betty Ann Dole’s memory bench have a place of honor on the new site?
A: Yes, that will absolutely be taken into account.

Q: Will parking be all paved or gravel? Is gravel considered permeable?
A: Gravel is technically considered impermeable per our ordinance. We’re looking at gravel for most, possibly all vehicle travel surfaces; there are also asphalt mixes that might work in the front arc. It’s important to have some hard surfaces for wheelchair accessibility and curbing so people know where to walk and don’t walk in vehicle travel paths (especially with kids at the library frequently).

Q: Does TDS own that driveway, or do they have right of way?
A: Brad believes that their property has frontage on the street, so they own the driveway. One idea is to have the library’s driveway on the other side of the building, to avoid parallel driveways and to keep headlight arcs away from the property next door, but the final layout has not been decided.

Q: Most of the Meriden Bird Club artifacts are out of the Meriden Library basement, but have been moved from place to place. They’re wonderful historical artifacts, but aren’t being utilized or displayed. Bird Club may be in a financial position to contribute to a portion of this library.
A: There are transition spaces in the library where we can display things of interest to the community. Maybe on a rotating basis? A 6’ x 6’ glass case wouldn’t be big enough; would want something more like an alcove. Would this be encroaching on the library? If the new building is almost too small to begin with, can we accommodate something like this? The storage issue is a separate need. Brad and Mary would need more details to understand whether or not this could be accommodated. What the Bird Club really wants is for the public to see the valuable things they have to offer; Steve Taylor would have to speak to storage of the rest of the items.

Q: Will there be adequate space out back for the kids to play outside/summer programming?
A: Brad has rearranged parking to preserve the backyard, but these are just the kind of things we need to hear at this stage so we can tweak the design to fit.

Shawn mentioned that this building project will not increase taxes; this project will take over the bond payments for PRML, which just ended this year. This seems like the most ideal, least painful time to do this, and our scale for this project has been determined with this number in mind. We already have $250K, waiting for this kind of project.

Moving forward, you’ll be able to see real, tangible models, 3D digital models, and files/plans on the website once the design is more finalized. We’ll have two more of these kinds of meetings over the summer, and beyond that we’ll be pricing things out. Warned meetings are the first and third Tuesday of every month, and are open to the public.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee  
6.19.18  
Meeting Minutes

Present: Brad Atwater, Chris Dye, Judy Hallam, Steve Halleran, Shannon Decker, Terri Crane, Mary King

Meeting called to order at 7:04pm.

Brad noted that the intention of this meeting is to review the new building plan, check in with different subcommittees, and look at our meeting schedule for the rest of the summer.

(If the new building layout looks good to the group, Brad will check in with Bill about the energy plan and how this layout affects that. Bill is unable to make this meeting.)

By the end of June, Brad wants to have a confirmation of our budget range; building layout needs to be confirmed in order for that to happen. This new building layout was a result of Brad, Mary, and Terri discussing shortcomings of the old layout (ie. not a large enough children’s room) and coming up with a fix. We don’t want to go too far down this path before confirming that we can come in on budget with a contingency fund. We’re close to having the data to confirm that now.

Do we think that 24 parking spaces was based on only one flavor of looking at our ordinance — are there other ways to look at it? Is 24 spaces the max we’ll ever need? If we have room to expand, maybe we don’t have to create all of the parking right now. In theory, we could keep going back as far as we need to parallel to the TDS parking area. Steve thinks, at a minimum, we’d build a lot that meets whatever the largest event is that the library holds. This would be a guess, since we don’t have a meeting room now and we don’t know how many people would show up to an event in that room. We’d have to come up with an average, based on a variety of events. Guidelines say we can look at the maximum capacity of the meeting room, divide that by 3, and that’s the number of parking spaces we need.

Brad had put some feelers out to UK Architects about getting some services a la carte. It’s hard to ask them to operate differently; they like to control the process, both creatively and organizationally. The a la carte they provided included more of a whole picture, rather than individual pieces. Their price for the management of this project came out between $73k-$76k, which is high. Brad also talked to someone about site work. They gave a wide range of $30k-$120k, depending on a variety of factors.

Mary and Terri have existing furniture pieces cut to scale, which they can move around the design layout and make sure everything fits and is functional. They should be able to give the OK on the footprint (or request tweaks) within a week or so. Then we’ll have a lot more
to go back to contractors and suppliers with. We can fine-tune our material list and get more specific with the numbers.

We’ve spent some money on the hazardous waste analysis, and they’re putting together a package for what that would cost and how it would be done.

We have the support of the Selectmen and the Trustees, but it’s this committee that makes the decision about the size and shape of the building. By the time we get to Town Meeting, we’ll have a building we believe in. And by then, we’ll have bids and proposals in hand. Pretty soon, this is going to have momentum and the pieces will start fitting together.

Mary and Terri are excited about the new layout and things are looking good, in terms of fitting furniture/function in the new space. They’ve had the plan on display in the library, and patrons have been asking questions. The overall feedback has been very positive. If Mary wants to sit down with a professional about the interior design, there are library design firms that consult for free (Tucker Interiors), but expect that we’d be purchasing necessary furnishings from them once the plan is approved. Mary would be completely honest with them up front about what our purchasing needs might be.

July 18 Selectboard Meeting: Should have a summit with the Selectmen and Board of Trustees, give an update and get the layout approved so Brad can keep moving ahead.

Bill’s experience with the energy retrofitting of the school will be extremely useful as we start from scratch with this building. We want to put the materials in that will reduce our energy bill. There’s a simple way to approach the basic shell of the building (LaValley bringing in wooden frame walls, having a company come in to spray foam, wooden truss for the roof), unlike what was done at PRML, since that involved adding on to an existing building. If the shell is basic, maybe then we can invest some money in hiring someone to dress things up aesthetically — stonework, etc. The set of contractors that’s used to setting steel is different than the set of contractors that’s used to building with wood. Nothing in the design so far has driven us to another construction method; wood is the cheapest, so that’s where we plan to start. This looks like a big house, so maybe we can build it like a big house unless we’re told otherwise. Brad did speak to the state, and confirmed that an architect isn’t required on a building of this size and scale overseen by design professionals in the community. Brad’s expectation is that we could spend a few thousand dollars with a few different design professionals to make sure we get what we need (site work analyst, structural engineer, etc.).

Would we be required to have an automatic push-button entry door? Judy noted that this is required if the building is over 5,000 square feet. She also pointed out that the push-button at APD is not in a location where someone in a wheelchair can actually reach it. This is something we’ll want to keep in mind as we move ahead, depending upon whether or not we include a push-button entry.

Mary wonders if this is the time to talk with Tucker Interiors to make sure we’re using the space appropriately and not missing anything important. This feels like the next step, and
Brad agrees. Mary also plans to talk to other librarians who have done this recently, to find out who they used. It would be nice to use a space planner who is experienced with working on libraries. Mary has more concerns about making sure the storage space is adequate, but the furniture looks like it will fit in various different formations. When we get to the lighting stage, perhaps Tucker Interiors would have someone to recommend that they’ve used before. Our libraries have just switched to the Massachusetts Higher Education Consortium, and they have an extensive list of vendors we could reference when we reach that point.

We hope to have greenbelt/shrubbery along the boundary between the library and TDS driveways. Brad left the arc for aesthetic reasons; it keeps a connection to the street. It’s wide enough that cars can park right there and get out easily. It’s the everyday parking, maintains the flow with a sidewalk next to it (on the building side). If we did gravel in the parking lot, we might consider doing asphalt in the front arc. And if we ended up liking the asphalt, it’s something we could add to the parking area later.

Can we look at changing our schedule for the summer? First Tuesday in July is July 3rd, which most people won’t be able to make. We’ll meet on July 10th and July 24th; the week between, we’d have the Select Board meeting on July 18th. That gives everyone three weeks to do homework, get our ducks in a row on the 10th, and go to the Select Board on the 18th. We’re going to meet with the Select Board to update them on our progress; at that time, we hope to be able to say to them that this is our vision for the building, we’re in the process of a second pass at the budget. After talking to the Select Board, we will have committed. Then we can ask Shawn for an updated model to put on display, advertise that in PlainFacts.

Outreach committee is waiting for building layout to be finalized before they make their next steps. Do we know what sequence of outreach events we’re going to do? Not yet, as the committee is very small.

Mary gave an update on the establishment of a Meriden Library Foundation. It has been formed and registered with the state of NH; we have five officers; application to the IRS is in process; need to open a bank account and register with division of charitable trust. Tomorrow they will be putting a letter in the mail to the Byrne Foundation asking for $50,000. We will likely have to match that in the community. We have one family in town that has made a significant pledge. People who are supporters are starting to come out. No one on the Foundation is able to head up the Fundraising Steering Committee; we need one or two people to step into that role by August 1st. Foundation and Fundraising need to work closely together to determine how much money is coming from each branch. We need a substantial showing of funds by the time the warrant article is brought forth. The fundraising trajectory will determine the timeline. We have 9 months; can we lay out the plan for a trajectory that will get us there in time? That helps determine when we need brochures, artwork for brochures, etc. The Foundation will look at a plan/timeline at next week’s meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00pm.
Present: Brad Atwater, Steve Halleran, Chris Dye, Judy Hallam, Leeli Bonney, Shannon Decker

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm.

The Meriden Library Foundation’s work is to establish itself, so they are currently pulling together a list of things to apply for. Tomorrow, an application will go to the IRS and Attorney General’s office. A letter has gone to the Byrne Foundation; Dorothy Byrne will give us $50,000 if we raise $200,000. One other family has made a significant pledge so far. We have about $250,000 already, so we need $200,000 additional and then will accrue that $50,000. We’re asking for pledges instead of donations right now; if this doesn’t go through, we don’t want to be in a position to have to hand back money. None of the Foundation members wants to lead the fundraising; Mary has been working hard to find and identify who that person will be, and is getting closer to finding someone. How close can we get to 100% participation within Meriden? The major push is going to have to happen between September-December, once people are back from summer plans. It would be useful if we had people on the Plainfield Village side of town showing support, too. We don’t want to lose momentum or bump up against other upcoming town projects, but making this a two-year project isn’t out of the question.

The Outreach Committee needs manpower; a few people have been identified who might join the group. There will be overlap between Outreach and the Foundation. Why can’t they be the same thing? The Outreach Committee is more about supporting the project, focus groups, having input in advance of Town Meeting, etc. – not just fundraising. What are ways of communicating with the public? PlainFacts, Facebook, Cornish Connect, mail. Mary does have $500 from the Tasker Foundation to be used for fundraising/outreach – it could be used for mailings. We want this to be a community effort, and to really highlight community involvement.

There have been some tweaks to the building design layout as Brad, Mary, and Terri have discussed details. For example, all tables and chairs can fit in the meeting room or all fit in the storage closet. There would also be a separate closet for craft supplies/kid items. They also made the bathrooms slightly larger to accommodate doors swinging in, instead of out, at the suggestion of UK Architects. Is it also worth looking at pocket doors? The logistics of that could be tricky. There’s still an entry vestibule, and a lobby space separating the library and the meeting room with no vestibule. Now the layout is slightly over 3600 square feet, but still works on the lot and meets all requirements, and all furniture fits fine so far.

In August, there will be tests to do soil analysis (necessary for main structure and foundation). Brad is proceeding with gathering the other base data that we’ll need going
forward, and this will also inform real numbers in the budget. Brad met with Bill Knight about shell design. Brad will give Bill details about walls, windows, doors, and Bill will be able to determine mechanical numbers and operating costs. Brad and Mary have been discussing the look and feel of the building – start looking at buildings we like, determining what we like about them, and bringing that back for discussion. Do we reach out to the community for feedback about the look?

Brad, Bill, and Thom Lappin discussed the existing building, and Thom expressed interest in taking the building – picking it up and moving it elsewhere. You can move the building without disturbing the hazardous material. Is it worthwhile to offer this to the community and see if anyone wants the existing building? lot between Bean Road and the Deli Mart. Would they want the building for that land?)

Shawn is working on the model based on the latest scale drawings. We’ll have that for the Select Board Meeting on July 18th, along with the Trustees, a fundraising update from the Foundation, and a building/budget presentation from Brad. Bill suggested that modular installation could meet our energy-efficient requirements and still go up quickly. This is the first town building of the Ready For 100 plan, and will carry lower operating costs in the future (on a per square foot basis). We’d like to get to lower total operating cost for this new building, even though the footprint will be 3600 square feet instead of 2400 square feet over a 1200 square foot, two-story footprint. Can we get Norwich Technologies to donate solar panels to the project? They have many connections to this community.

At this point, the current plan is what we’re going with, unless Mary and Terri discover that something won’t fit. On Thursday, the woman from Tucker Interiors is coming to meet with Mary and Terri and consult, based on our current furnishings.

Current trees on the lot might have to go, based on where the building will sit. One option is to take the wood from those trees and turn the lumber into benches, countertop, or some other fixture for the library building.

We want people to come to the Select Board Meeting, and are reaching out to the community to attend and comment. The library portion of the meeting will start at 7 at the Meriden Town Hall. Perhaps give the board a few-minute break to circulate and look at the materials, generate questions, and so on.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee

July 18, 2019

Meriden Town Hall

Draft Minutes

Present: Brad Atwater, Shawn Rogers, Bill Knight, Chris Dye, Joe Crate, Judy Hallam, Leeli Bonney, Suzanne Spencer, Mary King, director

Absent: Shannon Decker, Nancy Liston

The Building Committee began its presentation at 7:10 pm.

As a way of updating the Board of Trustees, the Selectmen and the public the Meriden Building Committee made a presentation on their progress. Brad Atwater explained the conceptual design process that has been followed and has led to the chosen shape. As previously discussed, the new building will be on a slab and will include a meeting room; total size is 3,700 sq ft. The current building is 2,400 sq ft. but does not include a meeting space. Brad’s next phase is to begin to really drill down on costs for the complete project. Shawn Rogers showed the group a three dimensional to scale model of the new building that he has developed. The model is a great tool to see how the new building interacts with neighboring properties.

Joe Crate provided the group an update on the fundraising efforts to date. A private foundation has been set up and the group has received several donations and pledges. The group continues to feel it can meet its fundraising goals for the 2019 town meeting.

Plainfield resident Diane Rogers addressed the group to remind them that the Plainfield library is fully ADA accessible. She complained that the Friends of PRML weren’t receiving the recognition she felt the group deserved for raising money for the library.

Diane Rogers turned to Judy Hallam and demanded to know why she didn’t use PRML. Select board member Ron Eberhardt told Diane Rogers that she can make a comment about any issue, but it was not appropriate to make it personal.

Joe Crate stated that the town approved and paid $400,000 for the renovation of PRML.

The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee
9.4.18
Meriden Library and Meriden Town Offices

Present: Brad Atwater, Chris Dye, Joe Crate, Terri Crane, Mary King, Nancy Liston, Judy Hallam, Suzanne Spencer, Leeli Bonney, Steve Halleran

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm at the Meriden Library. The group reviewed the site plan as it relates to the existing library building and looked at it on the site itself.

Meeting moved to the Meriden Town Offices at 7:30pm.

Mary gave an update on the Meriden Library Foundation. They’re putting together outreach materials, brochures, etc. They had a good meeting with Jill Marshall, and now are kicking into high gear with the fundraising.

Nancy Liston asked why building a new Meriden Library has to be a vote at Town Meeting. Brad explained that it’s because of the appropriation, and all money issues are historically a ballot vote in Plainfield.

Brad has reached a point where we have a plan we like, have verified that it will work functionally, and it meets feedback we’ve gotten from the public. Now, to complete our mission by Town Meeting, we’re getting into a crunch period — we can’t put off more detailed design/contracts much longer.

There are four paths we could choose from right now:

1.) Full speed ahead: We have every reason to believe that we can meet our budget, no reactions from the public are deal-killers, nothing is telling us to stop. If we follow this path, the next step is to start getting more detailed design ($17-20k for the complete design package up until just before the shell is erected; would also need a contract for site engineering) and signing contracts.

2.) Cautious advance: Brad continues to tease out the numbers on his own to try and solidify them more before entering into any contracts.

3.) Take a break: Pause for 30-45 days to let the fundraising ramp up before moving ahead.

4.) Stop completely: We have received some feedback revisiting the original question about wanting a second library at all; how much weight do we give it? Or are we a subset that has been given a mission, and we need to focus on our mission?

We would have bailout clauses for any of these paths, to stop spending money if it becomes clear that the budget is going to be exceeded in the long run.
We're creating our own novel approach by teaming up with a design-build firm for the things they do particularly well (the building shell), but using other resources for those activities that are outside their normal scope, like site work.

Following our current path at the necessary rate, we could be pushing $60-70k total to have a firm package ready to pitch to a contractor before the holidays, in order to get a response before Town Meeting 2019. This is a big expenditure up front, but would also give us the highest amount of confidence in our numbers moving ahead.

There is some volume of questioning the basic idea of creating a new library. Judy Hallam mentioned that she has been here for 26 years and those voices have always been present, so she would vote for moving full speed ahead. Suzanne Spencer recalled that no one spoke out at the 2018 Town Meeting against the $25k vote, and it passed overwhelmingly. Joe Crate has been involved in this process since 1996. There will be dissent no matter what we do; the last two Town Meetings told us that the Meriden Library is important to the town as a whole. It is now time to just do it.

Steve explained that we don’t have enough money to do what Brad needs to do before Town Meeting. The Plainfield Library Trustees need to vote to release $25-40k of their funds to keep this moving full steam ahead. These are Trustee-designated funds; at least three Trustees have to approve this. The next Trustee meeting is on 9/17. Suzanne doesn’t think this would need to be a public hearing, but will confirm.

This is a process, and we have to continue it one way or another if we’re going to bring this project to Town Meeting next year. We have to spend the money in order to have a chance of succeeding at Town Meeting. Joe and Chris both spoke to the fact that the Fundraising Committee feels optimistic about the ability to raise the necessary funds to reach our $500K goal.

We hope to work with a design-build team that will put the building together; when they give us a number, that’s what it will cost. We’re not going to Town Meeting with a soft number. We’re going to avoid that, but we need to spend some money to avoid it.

The group consensus is to keep going, by means of a Trustee vote on funds. Brad will firm up contract fees in the meantime and give the Trustees his best estimate. This is planned to be part of the $1M total, not an additional cost.

When will fundraising letters go out? The Foundation is working to get some larger donors, and already has a few. The letter and brochure is being worked on as we speak. A community-wide letter from the Meriden Library Foundation is planned to go out in October.

The idea here is that you’re always investing in your community. For the last ten years it was Philip Read, for the next ten it could be the Meriden Library, then maybe it’s the Highway Garage, etc. Steve noted that some people are of the opinion that two libraries are
not necessary, which is a defensible position. It is the position of this committee, however, that we have a mission, and the next step is to get the detailed design necessary to increase the accuracy of the budget. This requires outside assistance, which will cost money, but it is the appropriate next step in our process.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38pm.
Present: Brad Atwater, Mary King, Chris Dye, Terri Crane, Leeli Bonney, Suzanne Spencer, Judy Hallam, Bill Knight, Shannon Decker

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm.

First, Mary offered some updates. The Foundation has been moving ahead with fundraising plans. A fundraising committee has been formed. The Foundation is not yet officially approved by the IRS as a 501(c)(3). Approval was due, but we’ve called and it’s listed as “in process.” This isn’t an obstacle right now, since we’re only asking for pledges and not money. A fundraising letter will go out to a mailing list by late October, followed by an open house at the Meriden Library. Suzanne called an administrative Library Trustee meeting for next week, so the Trustees can approve and cosign the letter.

A group of volunteers is working on an informational brochure, which is getting closer to completion. A lot of work has been happening behind the scenes, producing informational material!

Brad filled the group in on what’s happening with the building and site. We’ve now entered into a review contract with Pathways Engineering. Yesterday, a wetlands scientist reviewed the back area behind the library and is writing up a report so we can do our due diligence. Brad, Steve, Mary, Terri, and Alan from Pathways Engineering had a kickoff meeting. Alan pitched a more street-friendly site plan without the front arc.

Brad also met with the Bensonwood architects. They like Pathways’ plan and had other ideas for the building that would cut costs, including lopping off the front entry, changing the roof lines, etc. Their first pass design should come in the next week or two. We’ve asked them not to exceed $800k, since we’ll need up to $200k for site work. They’ve proposed some options like cathedral ceilings, and we’ll see what kind of New England architecture they can include within our budget. We may want to explore options like a brick exterior and simpler interior finishes.

What’s the view on the new proposed site plan? Do we want to move all parking to the side and do something different with the front yard? In that case, the main entrance would move to the side, too. If it’s practical and saves us significant money, will that work for us? Originally, the arc was included for ADA parking, to mirror what we already had, and to recognize vehicles as the primary mode of accessing the library. Bill recommends keeping the arc or having NO parallel parking. How important is the front door? There’s a benefit to having a front entrance – security, keeping the circulation desk near the entry. How does the dropbox work if there’s no front arc? People like accessing that from their car without getting out; we’ll also want to make sure it’s not too far from the building for staff carrying books inside. If there’s no front arc, could we put a dropbox just inside the parking lot entrance?
Would we create a minimized door that led to a courtyard with seating, meant for using library materials? Or a porch look on the front, covered with sitting space and a minimized door? That’s something we could add down the line to keep costs down right now.

Chris suggested possibly moving the building back on the lot and putting the parking lot out front. The group wondered if people really want to see cars, or if they want to see the library itself from the road. What things do we care about most? This conversation is all about looking at the cost benefit of alternate options.

In terms of parking, what is most efficient in terms of winter snow removal? Keeping things straight-lined is helpful for quick plowing. Pavement is preferable because it doesn’t have to be fixed/raked in the spring. Brad suggests paving 6-8 main parking spaces and making the rest of the lot gravel.

The group discussed making sure there’s an easy place to drop off children/elderly patrons in rain or snow. We’d also like to consider walkways from the road to accommodate early dismissal bus dropoffs and preschoolers walking down from KUA.

If we change the site plan, is the building putting its shoulder to the road instead of its face? Or does it not matter, because we’re car-centric and see the face as we pull into the lot? If we leave the entryway but eliminate the front arc, we’re looking at approximately $75-80k in savings. Taking that front vestibule out could be an additional $20-30k in savings. So with approximately $100k in savings, we may have to alter some other things, but could end up with something like $50k back in our pocket.

Now that we’ve established our initial vision of the interior, it’s easier to visualize different interior arrangements and feel confident that everything will fit. Bensonwood may be optimizing the interior layout for efficiency. They’ll video conference with us to present their plan. Pathways can’t move much further ahead without seeing Bensonwood’s pass. We’ll likely have a few iterations with Bensonwood. Within three weeks, we should have seen the first pass of Bensonwood’s plan and know when the final will be available. They can also provide marketing materials for the brochure and website within 30 days or so.

Mary noted that she’s excited about possible cathedral ceilings. It’s not a big building, so tall ceilings would give it a more expansive feeling, as well as more natural light over the shelving.

Brad mentioned that everyone is required to make new buildings energy efficient to a certain base level. If you go beyond that, the utility companies offer serious benefits. Brad has a meeting with Liberty Utilities penciled in.

What amount of money should we be setting aside for the move? TDS may be willing to let us store materials. Would we also have a satellite area in Meriden with a small collection for the time when the library is unavailable? Mary will look into the costs of rental containers for storage.
Brad will pass around Bensonwood’s plan when it’s available, and we’ll discuss it at our next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee Meeting  
12.4.18  
Meriden Town Office

Present: Brad Atwater, Terri Crane, Mary King, Steve Halleran, Leeli Bonney, Suzanne Spencer, Shawn Rogers, Shannon Decker

Meeting called to order at 7:08pm.

Bensonwood sent a new version of the design that addresses some of our concerns a few hours before the meeting. Brad distributed printouts to the group and displayed the design via projector. Changes to the exterior include: removed brick from the corners, added panels above and below the windows, siding is wider, added a break over the central window, columns near entryway are wood, lopped off pergola behind the meeting room (which gets us down to $800K). Changes to the interior include: Broke up the entryway lobby, added an airlock which we may not need (Shawn mentioned working on a Bensonwood building in the past; it was built so tightly that even without a heating system the temperature inside never dropped below 58 degrees).

We looked at our previous interior layout, in which the closets/bathrooms were in different locations. Having the closets outside the meeting room makes it harder to access the things that are stored there; having bathrooms adjacent to the meeting room presents a noise issue. We’d prefer the bathrooms adjacent to the children’s area. The kitchenette doesn’t require a whole room, and shouldn’t be right inside the meeting room because then staff can’t access it during meetings. Our previous interior layout is compatible with the Bensonwood design, so we’d like to go back to that. Shawn asks if we can redline the current Bensonwood design, mark it up, and request the handful of remaining things that need to be part of the design. The group agrees that this is a good idea at this point.

Are we confident that we’re getting what we’re paying for? Are we OK with the direction we’re headed? Yes, generally, but there are certain system requirements coming from Bensonwood that incur costs (ie sprinkler system for wooden cathedral ceilings). Brad wants to know exactly what $800K gets us. We need to get to a building floor plan we’re comfortable with – then we can change things like siding, etc. The value of going to Bensonwood is to get a real product with a real price on it that we can take to Town Meeting. We’re getting close to that comfort level. They’ve billed us $8K, and provided three versions of the design that aren’t quite right yet. One of our missions is to tell them clearly what we like and what we want.

Shawn sees a variety of things we could tweak (pane-glass windows vs. tilt-turn windows, clapboard shingles vs. siding, steeper slant on the roof to make it look more like a cape and less like a ranch). Mary pointed out that we’ve told Bensonwood that we want a highly energy-efficient building, and that’s what they’re providing. With this last iteration, Brad feels more comfortable giving them the list of things we feel are important to
answer/include in the design. If they object, hopefully they have a really good reason for doing so so that we haven’t heard yet.

The number from Bensonwood is for a finished product. They seem to really have the sense that we can build this for $800K. Brad would like their proposal to stand on its own merits; then we can determine if there’s local interest in doing some of the work for less. It’s easier to present a site number and a general contracting number at Town Meeting; presenting a menu of options is going to invite a lot of questioning from taxpayers. Brad and Shawn need to discuss a list of line items with Bensonwood to confirm that everything is included in the total package; it hasn’t been the right time for that yet.

Mary updated the group on the ongoing fundraising efforts. We have a goal of at least $200K (plus we have $50K from the Byrne Foundation); right now we have over $100K, so we’re more than halfway. We need the rest of the pledges in the next six weeks. Mary is optimistic that we’re going to get there. We have the ability to raise more money even after the warrant article goes up. The more money we can raise, the more likely we’re going to get a 2/3 majority vote at Town Meeting. Is all of the fundraising going to offset debt, or will fundraising go toward additional things that are not included in the current plan (ie solar panels)? If we continue to fundraise beyond Town Meeting, do we say 50% goes to offset debt, 50% goes into additional features for the building? Steve noted that anything we can do to shrink the debt before Town Meeting will help, so that should be our focus.

How much is in the budget for removing the Meriden Library? $40-50K. There are still a lot of moving parts; can we sell the building and move it to a new site without abatement? In that case, the new owner would likely be responsible for the abatement.

Brad is interested in a clear coat to use in place of sprinklers; Shawn and Steve mentioned that paint stores have special paint for this purpose and can advise us. There’s also a foam sprinkler option that is used in museums that we can explore.

In terms of design specifics, on the next round we’d like to see 4-5in narrow clapboards in place of siding. How do we feel about a sheetrock ceiling with beams vs. the current knotty pine ceiling in the design plan? Shawn noted that that fits in the category of finishes; we’re not ready to talk about that yet but it will be part of the conversation with Bensonwood soon. We haven’t missed the boat on changing and discussing this. Shawn also pointed out that when the volume of roof showing is similar to the volume of siding, it tends to look better. This involves changing the pitch of the roof.

Bensonwood has offered a factory tour to the building committee, showing all the different kinds of finishes we could do. Soon they’ll have a CAD design that we can look at. We really need to be able to get those visuals out to people. Bensonwood did the Putney library about ten years ago, but with an architect, so it was a collaboration.

If we get the floor plan to where we like it, we can have something to show at a Loan Hearing in January. People who come to that meeting are going to be concerned about the costs, and we want to have images to show them that will help ease their fears.
Brad is going to redline the design plan, basically saying we love what you're doing, but here are the things we need to make this functional. He will bullet point the things that need to change, so it's very clear to Bensonwood what we want to see in the next round of design.

This is the first building we'll build under the Ready for 100 initiative – it's important to highlight that.

We had discussed the idea of repurposing bricks from the old building to be engraved with names of donors; we could make a patio or story walk with the bricks and help draw donations that way. Is there an option to name the library if someone puts down a huge donation? That's a Trustee decision.

We're still assuming this is on the warrant for 2019; Brad will pass Bensonwood the hearing dates (1/16/19 is the first Loan Hearing) so they understand our timeline. The timeline is critical at this point. Can we ask them for the next round by a specific date, now that it's built into their system?

Meeting adjourned at 8:48pm.
Present: Brad Atwater, Shawn Rogers, Shannon Decker, Leeli Bonney, Suzanne Spencer, Terri Crane, Steve Halleran, Mary King

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm.

Brad shared the latest iteration of the building plan from Bensonwood. The entryway has been altered to better fit our needs, and bathroom doorways have been set back slightly from the hallway. We’d love to be able to offer something “nameable” (nook/alcove, furniture, garden etc.) to attract a substantial donation. For now, we are as close as we can get to being able to say we can get the building we want for $800K or less.

Why is this building so expensive? The answer is: it isn’t. This is a 3700+ square foot building, with engineering at every phase because this is a civic building being built with public money (rather than a residential building). This building is also super energy-efficient, with 4 inches of insulation under the floor, extra in the walls, and triple-pane glass windows. We can take pride in having come up with a package that fits our price point.

Pathways is doing a new drawing to show the actual building on site with elevations, grading, etc. Brad may have this site plan as soon as tomorrow. Things that could shift the final cost lower: site work numbers, getting rid of the sprinkler system if possible, rightsizing contingencies as work is clarified and costs become more defined.

What’s the article going to look like? What are the numbers? We will ask for the number that will represent the maximum the loan can be, but we won’t take out the loan until the end. Steve suggested that we want real, hard numbers for the warrant article that are less than $1M for the building and $500K for the loan. Steve needs a number for the meeting next week, so we’re looking at $975K for the project and $487.5K for the loan. We want to even better than that at Town Meeting, to increase our chances of getting this passed.

What’s the annual energy budget? The heating and cooling estimate was a few hundred dollars less than our current spending, and that was before some recent changes. Brad estimates that the annual costs might be as much as $500 less per year, for a building that is significantly bigger.

The current estimate includes a professional lighting design with a fixture allowance, in the current plan. We may be able to reduce those costs through utility company incentives yielding lower first costs and operating costs.

At Town Meeting, people will want to know: 1.) Do we want to build a library? 2.) Do we want to commit the money? We want to tell them that we’re taking the loan at the end of
the project for the exact amount spent. Shawn and Brad are paring the budget down now and will continue to do so as they get additional clarity.

Next Wednesday, 1/16: There is a public hearing at 6:30, budget hearing at 7. Paul Franklin will be here to handle questions about how things will work at Town Meeting. Brad can present first, as an educational opportunity, then open the floor for public comment. We'll have the revised site plan from Pathways, as well as the floor plan from Bensonwood to show. There will be approximately 10 minutes for the presentation and 20 minutes for comment. Steve would like to invite Energy Committee members to the hearing, so they can comment on the building’s alignment with Ready for 100.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee
Meeting Minutes
1.22.19

Present: Brad Atwater, Terri Crane, Mary King, Chris Dye, Suzanne Spencer, Leeli Bonney,
Shannon Decker

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm.

The group viewed the digital walk-through of the library design provided by Bensonwood.

Mary gave an update on the fundraising. We’re close to raising more than half the cost of
the library. The trustees have $211K, $30K from the ADA fund can be committed to this
project. We have $190K in pledges since June ‘18, so we need $9-10K more to get the $50K
donation from the Byrne Foundation. The push is on for the last bit; fundraisers are back
out to get that money before February 1st. We have other applications in for funds and
grants, but won’t hear back before February. So the fundraising will be ongoing.

We’ll have to look at the challenge of putting together a schedule once the funding is in
place. Are there things that can be deferred until a year out or more: landscaping,
courtyard, furnishings, etc.? These could be covered by gifts and grants that come through
later. We’re on hold with Bensonwood and Pathways until Town Meeting, at this point. We
won’t be paying for civil engineering until after the project is approved.

Brad is working on getting the Benson digital walk-through available to show on a screen
at the library.

Steve asked if someone is going to try and put a building committee report in the Annual
Report. This would be an informational report of what we’ve done, why the Meriden
Library should be considered for replacement, why we’ve brought this plan forward – ADA,
energy-efficiency, and so on. We’d need to get this to Steve next week (1-2 pages). Brad will
work on this.

The Selectboard and Trustees are in favor of this project, and the Finance Committee will
be deliberating about it this week. The final budget hearing is on February 6th; the Annual
Report goes out on the 8th.

The Foundation is prepared to come to the budget hearing on 2/6 with a document in
writing, stating the situation with fundraising. We want to get out the message that we’ll
continue to fundraise and have more pokers in the fire.

We may take a Bensonwood factory tour and walk through the Putney Library before Town
Meeting.

Steve, Brad, and Kevin will meet in person this week or next to talk about the site plan.
One challenge of this design is the wall height and tall roof, which might make it look top-heavy from the exterior. Brad has some ideas about raising the foundation that could address this, when we get to that point. That involves altering the ADA ramp to the main entrance, so we can finesse those details as we go.

We spent the $25K from last year’s Town Meeting, plus additional funds from the trustees. For that money, we now have very high confidence in the complete design and the estimates going forward. Hiring an architect would have cost more, with less confidence in the estimates.

Next, we should work on what the presentation at Town Meeting should look like. Our February meetings will be on the 12th and 26th, so we can regroup about our Town Meeting presentation there and schedule more meetings if necessary.

After February 6th, we’d like to consider an Open House with members from the Building Committee, FOML, Trustees, and so on to show the designs and ask questions.

Meeting adjourned at 8:18pm.
The group reviewed a chart of the annual cost of the new library to taxpayers. We noted that the discussion at Town Meeting is not whether or not we need two libraries; that was discussed at Town Meeting 2017. That decision was already reached, and the mandate from Town Meeting 2018 was to put together a proposal to renovate or replace the Meriden Library. This needs to be made clear early on at this year’s meeting. A lot of discussion out in the population/on social media is about whether or not we need two libraries.

The new building will be extremely efficient, and that’s attractive to taxpayers. We’ve done our homework to make the building very tight. Mary noted that people are getting very excited about the building as they learn more about it, both at the public hearings and last week’s open house. Hopefully people will show up to Town Meeting, maybe uncertain, and perhaps can be persuaded by the presentation.

Brad shared the outline for the Town Meeting presentation, which will include Bensonwood’s digital walk-through, sample siding, sample wall segment. It would be nice to have the tax pie chart available to show people the exact tax implications of the library to their property. (“Where do my tax dollars go?”) Generally, Brad plans to discuss the features of the building, the cost to build, operation/ongoing costs, and the effect on taxpayers.

Shawn asked: Is there an opportunity to make a handout for Town Meeting? (One sheet, multiple images of the building design, plus some key bullet points.)

The meeting minutes from 9.4.18 and 10.16.18 were revised, and the group approved the revisions.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee
3.26.19

Present: Brad Atwater, Mary King, Terri Crane, Suzanne Spencer, Judy Hallam, Shannon Decker, Shawn Rogers, Chris Dye, Leeli Bonney, Steve Halleran, Scott Macleay

Scott Macleay came to the meeting with an idea: Rather than demolish the current library building, why not consider selling the building and lot, taking that money, and using the piece of property on the right-hand side at the school to build the new library? This would avoid demolition costs, and would put extra fill to use that isn’t adequate for roads. This would also provide continuity of service while the new building is being built. Scott questioned the current quote of approximately ¼ of the total cost being allotted to site work; Brad clarified that that number also includes mitigation, post-testing, and demolition, plus additional contingency. (Also dirt, grading, trees, paving, sidewalks, lighting, signage, two drywells to address runoff from the street.) It’s likely that the existing sitework number is fat, but we needed to bring a number to Town Meeting that we knew we could come in under.

Scott added that if we start from scratch on the school site, site work including concrete would likely be under $100K. The site work for this would not be difficult, but because it’s a public project we still need to do our due diligence. (We already did this for the current library site, and would need to do it again on a new site – wetlands paperwork, and so on.) Brad thinks this may be worth exploring the same way we explored the first site; gathering a bit of data and cross-checking it. We would first need to discuss this with the school, and would likely get significant feedback about driveways, parking, access to the school, etc.

At least two other committees have previously looked at putting the library in a different spot. We’d need to hear more of an argument from the public to turn us from the current spot; we’ve heard that people do like the current site and would be reluctant to turn away from it. Shawn noted that a committee he was on a few years ago (the Meriden Village Study Group) gathered data that showed people hoped to keep the library in the current location, since it was the epicenter of the current Meriden Village. This group was looking at creating a village center for Meriden. There’s currently a lot of possibility with properties being on sale in that area right now.

It would be interesting to know how a school site would change visits – there may be more after-school visits, but less walkability. Steve mentioned that we’d have to start with a discussion with the school board and parents. Would they see it as positive, negative, or neutral? Past committees have discussed moving the post office to that location, and the school was not excited about having external traffic/people on site. A library may be different, but we’d need to have those discussions.

Chris noted that the library is a local resource because of the way it’s located, and that we need to consider East Plainfield and outlying areas in even moving it a little further along to
the school. Scott did discuss that with Steve Beaupre, and they thought that changing the location to the school would not be an insurmountable problem.

Steve noted that what we’re talking about is changing assets around: Yes, we may be able to sell the current building and land for money to put toward a new library, but then we’re also using an existing resource (the lot near the school) that won’t be able to be used for something else in the future. Plus, several hundreds of thousands of dollars of private money have been raised, based on this plan on this existing site. Those numbers could be affected by changing the location.

We would love to add Scott to the committee, to assist with sitework. Scott has a great deal of expertise with sitework and is willing to help and eyeball numbers for us going forward.

Steve noted that there are a lot of positives that came out of Town Meeting, and there are a lot of positives happening in Meriden Village. We got 57% of the largest Town Meeting that anyone can remember, and additional interest since the meeting. That’s extremely positive. We’re marching in the right direction, and this is an opportunity to be thorough and consider new ideas.

What’s the path forward? We have a new Board of Trustees and a new Board of Selectmen. We need some time to see where people want to go with this, even if the majority hasn’t changed. We’d also need to discuss with the School Board before considering building on the school site.

Mary gave a Foundation update: The Foundation is renewing pledges and accepting new ones. Someone has come forward with a $200K matching pledge since Town Meeting. It will be a lot of work to do the matching piece, but the Foundation is committed to doing that. If there isn’t public money being spent, Library Trustees probably have the authority to give the go-ahead. There is a political piece, so we’d want to pull the town back together and update them even without a town vote. We may not need any town money, or at least not a quantity that would require a 2/3 majority. We add to the ADA fund every year, so we’ll be up to something like $45K that could be contributed to the library next year. The timing also gets better for next year, based on what other things will be on the docket.

As Facilities Manager, Brad plans to have a graphic projecting what projects are anticipated for both the town and the school over the coming years. This would help put to rest the issue of the Town Garage, which isn’t happening imminently.

So what’s next? This committee will not officially disband, the Foundation will continue with fundraising, and we’ll see what the Select Board and School Board think. The Building Committee may reconvene after these groups have discussed things, and after the Foundation has been able to continue their work for a bit. There are things we’d like to explore further, but those can wait for a little while.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.
Present: Brad Atwater, Mary King, Terri Crane, Shannon Decker, Leeli Bonney, Steve Halleran

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm.

The Foundation is making plans to move forward, but the members plan to attend the Library Trustee meeting next Monday, 5/13. They need a commitment that the Trustees will be moving forward with this project. Mary has been in touch with Dick Davidson, who is now the chair of the Library Trustees and is working on an agenda for next week’s meeting. Brad feels it’s important for the Trustees to make their views known at this meeting. Do they support the project? Are we moving forward or tabling the project? We can’t wait another meeting cycle to get a definitive answer about this. Mary is hopeful that their response will be positive. Is it helpful to have the Building Committee in the room? There may not be time for comment, but representation from the committee is important.

Brad mentioned the question of alternate sites for the new building. We worked with what we had, and didn't anticipate needing a large expansion in the near future. What we came up with gives us a reasonable sense that we can accommodate the expected function for years to come. If the information changes, or what we have at our disposal changes, we would be open to exploring that. If someone came to us (O'Leary property, Duckworth property) and offered their site, we would be open to it, but that may not be the job of the building committee. We've done what we were asked to do; the town could ask again and form a new committee, but by default that doesn’t need to fall to us. Brad would like the Trustees to say full speed ahead on this project/this site, and the door is open for someone to make a persuasive case for another site if one becomes available. Do we need to get this information to the Trustees before the meeting so they’re able to consider these questions in advance? Can Brad draft the questions to send to the Trustees in advance? Steve thinks this is fine, and it’s good to give the Trustees a few days to think about it, especially since some of them are new to the board.

Brad was hoping Steve could get feedback about the school site at a school board meeting, but there hasn’t been an opportunity. Putting the library on that site would change the environment/usage of the library itself. Mary noted that it changes the function of the building, and that the building would need to change as well (both to fit on that site, and to accommodate the influx of children that would likely use the space). Brad would want people to know that we’d have to spend approximately as much time and money looking into this site as we did with the current site. There are a lot of questions about water, curbs, parking, and so on. The library is for everyone, and there’s concern that, on that site, it would become absorbed by the school. The library has a significant group of older patrons who enjoy the peace and quiet of the current location. Any new design would need to ensure continued support for that constituency.
Our committee can state that we were asked to consider the school site: We’re not averse to another location, but a casual evaluation of the school site didn’t have any great drivers for us to research it further. If someone else wants to make a case for it, we’re all ears, but we don’t see sufficient reason to change course. The library function is different and the building serves a different population if it’s on the school site. A substantial number of people currently using the library are older, and changing the site is a challenge for meeting the needs of that group.

Prep work on the school site might well offset any cost savings provided by not having to knock down the current building, plus we’re still consuming a town asset. There’s no particular advantage of using one asset over the other. A different property offers the advantage of not giving up the library function while building the new library, but the community can let go of the service for a while during the building season. We don’t know exactly how long the process would take, and won’t know the construction schedule until a contract is signed. Brad guesses somewhere between 6-12 months.

There is an ongoing discussion about creating a Village Center, which also supports keeping the Meriden Library in the current location. We want to be open-minded, but we like what we’ve put our investment in. There’s something to be said for keeping the building and site the same, and being able to say we really believed in this, and bringing it back to Town Meeting with more fundraising in place but no major changes. We also want to be open-minded. Once we have an answer from the Trustees, Brad will go back to Benson and find out what the next steps are and whether or not the costs hold.

Mary reported that there isn’t much new coming from the Foundation right now; they’re in a bit of a holding pattern until the Trustee meeting. Beyond that, they’ve been talking about potential fundraising events. Part of the next plan is to do a town-wide letter from the Foundation. Right now, the Foundation needs $250K to get to the $975K total.

If the Trustees support this project moving forward, it would be ideal to go back to Town Meeting needing funding of less than $100K.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.
AGENDA

- give the group a general status update on the project, including a possible timeline as we move forward
- discuss concerns about considering a new site
- review and discuss a statement from the Foundation regarding the funding of the building
- appoint a new secretary to take minutes at future meetings

Present: Brad Atwater, Mary King, Terri Crane, Shawn Rogers, Suzanne Spencer, Leeli Bonney, Shannon Decker

Meeting called to order at 7:02pm.

Mary, Shawn, and Brad took a field trip to Walpole and Keene to see some Bensonwood facilities. Mary was very impressed by the factory facility and the automation in Keene, as well as the timber peg facility in Walpole. They met with Randall and saw some design rooms with different samples of flooring, lighting, windows, ceiling, etc. Shawn was interested to see the way everything is created to make the open-air construction predictable, manageable, and quick. Bensonwood also has a branch called Unity Homes, which focuses on residential building, including small houses (900 square feet). Their pitch is that they’re trying to bring quality and energy-efficiency to the masses through automation. Brad’s takeaway is that he’s completely comfortable backing them as the provider of our project. We want to prioritize the long-term value to the community, and Bensonwood does that level of work. We don’t have to touch the shell of the building, but the interior is flexible and we can change and build upon it over time — it should last forever. The building doesn’t create unnecessary waste, which is an advantage to the taxpayer. Shawn also pointed out that Bensonwood has control of their materials, so that helps avoid unforeseen changes and complications, which is a benefit to the voting public.

We had wondered if ductwork would be showing with the cathedral ceiling in our design, but on the tour, Bensonwood assured us that the mechanicals would be enclosed above the bathrooms. We haven’t broached a lot of these design details with them yet, but on this trip, Brad, Mary, and Shawn were able to see a variety of options and get a sense of what Bensonwood can do.

Leeli pointed out that people in the community need to hear that this is a great investment. Now we’ve been to the factory, have seen what they can do, it’s clear that both the build and the long-term product is a great investment. Each layer of a Bensonwood building has a different intentional life span, and everything pieces together in a flexible way so structures aren’t destroyed when changes need to be made years down the line. If you assume that the
building needs to evolve to serve the public efficiently, this is a building that can do that — rather than waiting and then tearing it down or doing a huge overhaul.

Shawn feels strongly that this is not a building that should make an architectural statement within Meriden Village. If people want to work on establishing a community center, the current site is where that is happening. Bensonwood traditionally has simple, straightforward finishes, but we want to switch those up a bit to fit more within the village and KUA. This building should be accessible and inviting.

Shawn has agreed to officially do some work to develop a trim package for the interior/exterior of our building. Right now, we’re waiting on clarity for funding, and there’s a chance that there’s a location by the school people may want us to consider. Brad is anxious to do everything we can possibly do on the building itself, but that involves billable time from Brad and Shawn. Steve still has a good deal of the $25,000 that was already approved for this year, so that funding is available for continuing our work. Shawn proposes a fee of no more than $500 to design trim details for the interior and exterior of our building. The roof could feel overpowering, so we need to balance it out with these details. Our current design from Bensonwood doesn’t include these details yet, so the goal is to have Shawn figure this out and then have Benson place it into the design. This is the kind of work we can be doing now: phase two of the design work (design development). We can also save money in the process. Brad would get our model back in his CAD system and get everything to scale so Shawn could work from it. This billable work would also not exceed $500. This isn’t trustee money, so it’s the Selectboard that really needs to vet the costs. There are other pieces of “design development” work that we can be working on. This work is something Shawn is able to do; he could walk us through the process and help us create a book of design details to hand to Benson. We would be able to save money this way, too. This could save time and negotiation, and Shawn can do it now. He can forward it to the group so we can review at our next meeting.

As we work though the design process, this committee will need to decide which portions of the project to have Bensonwood handle and when to hire local contractors. Mary pointed out that the timeline is crucial, and we’ll want this to be a quick process once we’re under construction and without a functioning library. Concrete and site work are two chunks of the process that we could possibly consider sourcing locally.

Steve has asked the school board for feedback on the Bonner Road site by Labor Day. The amount of money spent to accrue similar information on the site would quickly deplete whatever savings the Bonner Road site could afford us. If we’d like to pursue that site we can, but if we don’t think it’s the right fit, we don’t have to. There has also been discussion about using the O’Leary property on the corner of Bean Road for the library, but Brad sees that as less than a 5% chance of happening. We’re not ready to start over, since we’ve put so much time and thought into the current site. There’s not any great reason for us to change course at this point.

Brad is concerned that there’s a lot of design development work to be done between any approval at Town Meeting and being able to break ground and build in 2020. Is there any
way to complete that work now? If the Foundation is committed to continuing fundraising, is there any sense that we won’t build next year? Waiting until Town Meeting could mean delays in the building process, which potentially gets us closer to Labor Day 2020 and colder weather before we’re ready to build.

Mary gave an update from the Foundation. They are moving forward with their fundraising with the goal of matching the $200,000 pledge made after town meeting. If they are successful, and if $975,000 is our final number, they will be within $50,000 of the total cost of the project. There was some initial discussion about raising the whole amount of the project, but the official goal is to raise the matching $200,000. We’re hearing that people feel that the town should have some piece in the funding of this building. Is there any material we could produce that helps the fundraising process? Mary doesn’t think it’s necessary, but she’ll look into it.

It’s worth sharing the message that every dollar counts, in order to reach the group of people in town who are possibly sitting back and/or assuming this will just pass and be built. There is also a letter from the Foundation in the works to update members of the community. The main purpose of this letter is to provide updates and information.

Shannon has moved into the chair position, and so we need a new secretary for the group. Brad will look into apps that transcribe into Word docs, but we can also rotate note taking on a meeting-to-meeting basis.

Within the next six weeks, we’re hoping to have trim specs from Shawn, a list of furnishings needed, and an interior floor plan (plan from Brad, configuration from Mary and Terri).

Our next meeting will be **Thursday, July 11th at 7pm.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:07pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee
7.11.19

Present: Brad Atwater, Shawn Rogers, Shannon Decker, Suzanne Spencer, Jeanne Woodward-Poor, Mary King, Leeli Bonney, Terri Crane

Shawn circulated two different versions of bid documents. We can use a hybrid method for to get the work done, since we’re working with a design builder but have the option to pull out portions of the work to offer to local contractors (either before or after Benson has done the bulk of their work). That’s something this group will have to recommend, so it’s up to us to look at the different pieces and decide what best serves the library mission.

Would we consider a temporary space in Meriden with a cart of books while construction is underway? It would have to be staffed. Mary has mentioned to Steve that it would be nice to set something up in the Meriden Town Hall. We could also rent a construction trailer and put it on the site, so there’s a space where people can observe the construction and also access the materials. Jeanne mentioned the Duckworth Museum, but it’s not heated and is under contract; Brad also suggested TDS, since the building is right there. What’s the value that a temporary space is worth? Setting something up would involve a cost.

We briefly discussed the Bonner Road site, but reiterated that we’re waiting for feedback from the PES school board by Labor Day. Gathering data on that site will be costly, so this group won’t do that until we hear back from the school board.

Shawn discussed his sample bid documents. These cover specific details that we would eventually discuss with Benson, so it’s a helpful exercise to see what kinds of details are laid out. If we have an idea of what we want now, that will save us time once we get to the design details with Benson. This ultimately keeps us in control of the budget; the downside is that it takes volunteer time to look at floor tiles, light fixtures, etc. Randall at Benson can do the legwork and winnow down the options, but there’s a cost in the budget associated with that (upward of $100K).

What pieces of the new building project would we consider extracting and outsourcing to a local contractor? It’s up to this group to decide what pieces make sense to extract. If we can do that this summer, we can find out if there’s any interest from local contractors. If not, this is a moot point. For us, it would likely be more straightforward to just let Benson build the building, but it would also be nice to include some local contractors and have the community involved. Benson is willing to do this, as long as it works for the project as a whole. It can be difficult to ask contractors to hold a spot for a building that we won’t have the go-ahead on until Town Meeting. Some possibilities of pieces to outsource include:
1.) Site work (once demo is done)
2.) Concrete
3.) Exterior siding/trim
4.) Painting
5.) Flooring

Benson could produce document sets for each of these pieces, which we could then hand out to contractors. This way, everyone will be following the same general set of instructions about working on this site.

Will we have some sense by late fall whether this will get built, based on how much the Foundation has raised at that point? We'll have a sense, but not certainty. Many people feel strongly that a portion of this funding should be coming from the town, which means we may not know for sure if we have those funds until Town Meeting. Hopefully we would only need a simple 50% majority for an amount under $100K, but Steve has said there are different ways to achieve that. If we had the full amount raised, our understanding is that the Trustees could give the go-ahead.

Can we follow the same timeline we were originally looking at for 2019? We can, but introducing local contractors into the mix could skew the timeline. Would it be helpful to have a meeting of the Trustees, Building Committee, Select Board, and Foundation to determine procedure and timeline going forward? Can the Select Board use float money to cover the fundraising period so we can get started? This is something to discuss with Steve.

Bean Road is posted, and some of the places that demolished material might be hauled are on posted roads, as well. This could affect the timeline of when we could be doing the work.

Total project: $975K
Trustee funds: $211K
Pledges (including the $200K challenge): $490K
Town ADA Fund: $40K

Needed for match: $160K
Remaining needed beyond match: $50-75K

We have about $300K in hand that's easily accessed (not pledges).

Brad and Shawn suggested holding an Open House for local contractors at the current Meriden Library after Labor Day, to see who is interested and available to do different pieces of the project. Brad and Shawn can put together some packages of subcontracts to local builders, plus place ads in PlainFacts, Connect Cornish, and NextDoor to get the word out early. If we had some details posted on the web for contractors to look at, that could get people thinking about it.

Should there be a Library Trustee on the Foundation? Mary can act as a liaison, as that overlap could become a conflict of interest for a Trustee. Mary is hoping to bring the Foundation together for another meeting in the next week or two.

If we’re not going to be able to get very far with the $17,000 we currently have at hand, the next step may be to ask the Trustees to free up other money to move ahead on things with
Benson. Let’s think about approaching the Trustees with that in September. Brad and Shawn can work before then to produce a document about next steps, what they would cost, and why we need to do them now. If we had a specific site number with that, that would also help address the questions about the Bonner Road site. (That new site would also require a different building design and different ongoing budget – hours, staffing, etc.)

Brad will pass floor plans to Shawn, so Shawn can work on trim details. They’ll bring some questions to our next meeting so the group can help flesh out those details and decide what things to outsource. At that meeting, we can also give some thought to how to start advertising for interest.

By next week, a letter should go out to the whole town of Plainfield from the Foundation. This should help dispel any rumors going around, and allow us to move forward with our work.

**Next meeting: Tuesday, July 30th at 7pm.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee
7.30.19
Meriden Town Hall

Present: Brad Atwater, Mary King, Terri Crane, Suzanne Spencer, Jeanne Woodward-Poor, Shannon Decker

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm.

Brad presented scale floor plans that now include the bump-out with a set of interior doors (12'x20'). Mary expressed that she would really love to see this as part of the building, but without seeing the price rise. Adding the bump-out would be an additional cost, but Brad highlighted some of the contingencies built into our plan (the building itself, site work, sprinkler system), which could free up some additional funds if those numbers are too padded. Benson felt that the sprinkler system was an automatic add, but Brad's discussion with the fire protection folks suggested that there are other options that may be less expensive. Sprinklers are building-savers, but don't mix well with paper books, so we'd like to look into alternate options. There are other alarm systems built in, such as lit exit signs and an automatic dial-out for emergencies. The group agreed that the bump-out is an important space, and we feel that it would get a lot of use. It would also be nice to have that area set apart from the rest of the library, so the table there wouldn't block things that patrons may want to look at, and doors could be closed if the group at the table was loud or needed privacy.

Since the original plan was voted down at Town Meeting, adding the bump-out and altering the design at this point is fair to bring in front of the Trustees. If we see room for improvement, it's our mission and mandate to bring the best building forward within a reasonable cost (under $975K).

Brad asked the group to consider what the details of the building should look/feel like. Would we like Shawn or Randall to present us three flavors to choose from? That would cost money. Would we like to give them some guidance? Mary agreed that it would be nice to provide guidance and save money. Judy Hallam had sent a photo of a cupola, as an example of a classic New England look. The Benson trimwork is fairly clean and simple; we may want to add some additional molding or dress things up on the exterior. The cathedral ceiling is a challenge because it isn't classic. Do we go with that, or do we try and counter it? The cathedral ceiling does make the small building feel more spacious, especially with tall bookcases in play. Mary has visited the Putney Library, which Benson built. It's slightly larger than our plan, at about 4000 square feet, but the cathedral ceilings work well and the staff there is happy with the building.

Brad showed two different versions of the bump-out, one with a pitched roof and one with a flat roof. The pitched roof looks more classic, but Brad felt that having the typical 2-foot overhang on that roof starts to feel like a bit much. Having a small pitched roof over the entrance and another over the bump-out is a nice balance. The pitched roof would give the
bump-out a cathedral ceiling inside, unless we wanted to add a suspended ceiling in that room to help it feel more cozy (since that’s the purpose of that space).

The multi-purpose room has gotten slightly smaller; originally we wanted a room that would seat 50. Benson’s drawing now shows seating for 30, but could likely seat more. Suzanne asked how big the music room at PES is; Brad will look into it, for comparison’s sake. The Philip Read multi-purpose room feels small; the entrance is on the side, it’s narrow, and the screen had to be hung out from the wall. The Town Hall meeting room can comfortably fit 12 or so people, up to 20 or 30, but it gets hard for people to hear and fit in the space at that point. The group felt that the current plan is proportional and works well.

The library will be carpeted; Mary would like to consider carpeting the multi-purpose space as well. We could look at dirt-catching carpeting for the entryway area, which can be picked up so that the tray underneath can be cleaned out. KUA has some of this in a few different buildings. We’d also want to look at carpet tiles, so sections can be replaced as necessary. There could be a different color/texture in the children’s area to give a visual clue and delineate different spaces.

As for lighting, we’re generally looking at a layered concept — overall overhead lighting, plus another layer in heavily used areas (pendants over tables, etc.). We’d want electrical outlets right under the tables, so that we could have table lamps. Could we run power through the bottom of the bookcases, with an outlet in each? They did that at Philip Read and don’t really use them, and it creates trip hazards. More important might be desk-level charging areas for computers and phones.

What happens next? Brad is planning to update the budget with fresh numbers, to get everyone on the same page and make sure it all looks good. Are there things we could be doing now that make sense, like the engineering for the site work? We have the money in this year’s allotment to move ahead with that. We had also talked about breaking out pieces of the project that we might want to outsource to local sub-contractors. We need to gauge community interest from qualified people, and that’s something we could do now — if there’s lots of interest, we could have an open house, show them the floor plan, and foster a discussion. Brad and Shawn can talk to people between now and Labor Day to test the waters and gauge interest. Shawn is also working on a trim package.

The response from the school board about the Bonner Road site seems to be ambivalent, though they still have until Labor Day to give an official response. A significant amount of work would have to be re-done on that site in order to decide if it’s suitable, and that would cost money that we’ve already spent on the Bean Road site. We’re also concerned that the Bonner Road site would end up being more expensive anyway, with the water on-site. We’re planning to move ahead on the current site based on the information we have at this point.

Mary mentioned that the letter from the Foundation is in mailboxes now, so we’ll see the responses from that imminently. There’s a lot of misinformation out there, and the letter should clarify those things. The next piece is direct contact, community building, and some
different fundraising events. It would be nice to put a thermometer outside the building, to give people a sense of how the fundraising is going. Is that something we need permission from the Trustees to do? They can put it on the agenda for September, and Brad can help construct something.

We discussed signage for the new building. We’ll have to consider a sign on the street, but also a sign near the side entrance. Right now, there’s no sign that can be changed to list events, but having something like that, on wheels, that can be placed out by the road would be nice. Brad also mentioned making a small trash/recycling/storage shed that’s a replica of the old Meriden Library, maybe built out of the original bricks. It could be very charming! We also discussed how to break up the tall walls and use that space somehow. Lighting and murals are both options, and can be discussed at a later date.

Our next meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, August 20th at 7pm**.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41pm.
Meriden Library Building Committee Meeting
September 17, 2019
Start Time: 7:05pm
Attending Suzanne Spencer, Jeanne Woodward-Poor, Terri Crane, Shannon Decker
Brad Atwater, Mary King, Steve Halleran
Agenda
● Overall timeline and goals moving forward
● Updated budget from Brad
● Trim details package proposal from Shawn
● Foundation update from Mary
● Update on potential FOML fundraiser from Shannon
● Group discussion of Judy Hallam’s email and donation offer
Next meeting: Set time for public comment at the beginning of the meeting (5 minutes)
Jeanne Woodward-Poor received correspondence from Helen Koehler regarding the
activities of the Building Committee. Helen will be informed of the date of the next
committee meeting.
Timeline and goals moving forward: The Committee needs clarification from Steve
Halleran about the process for bids to get more details on construction details.
Budget:
Current Bids:
Bensonwood Design/Build $817,700
Mac’s Trucking $137,000
Numbers from Bensonwood need to be updated. Should we pay for an engineer to
provide
a detailed site plant?
Discussion: Do we spend more money to get firmer numbers/bids? The goal would be to
eliminate some of the uncertainty in the budget and get a firmed up total project cost.
Steve Halleran recommends no further spending. He will contact Bensonwood to ask if
there will be an adjustment in their quote to deliver the same package in 2020.
Discussion: Bensonwood detailed design. How much input will we provide for the
interior
design? Can we get realistic bids from local contractors without a detailed design from
Bensonwood?
Mary King provided an update for the Meriden Library Foundation. To date, the
Foundation has raised $494,000 in cash and pledges. Applications will be submitted to
four foundations over the next two months. The Foundation’s goal is to match the $200K
pledge from a community member. Currently, they have raised $47K towards that goal.
The committee decided to ask to be placed on the agenda of an upcoming Select Board
meeting---possibly October 2nd. Representatives of the Building Committee, the Meriden
Library Foundation, and the library trustees would like an opportunity to update the
Select
Board on the current status of the committee and the Foundation’s fundraising. We need
to
request support from the town in 2020; seek the Select Board’s input.
The Friends of the Meriden Library are planning a fundraising event in the New Year with proceeds going to the Building Fund. Judy Hallam has offered to donate her artwork as a fundraising opportunity. The Building Committee does not have the ability to receive funds so the idea will be passed along to the Meriden Library Foundation and the Friends of the Meriden Library. Shannon will contact Judy to follow up.

Next Meeting: October 15, 2019, at 7 pm at Meriden Town Office
Adjourned 8:45 pm
Meriden Library Building Committee Meeting
October 15, 2019
Start Time: 7:05pm

Attending Suzanne Spencer, Jeanne Woodward-Poor, Terri Crane, Shannon Decker
Leeli Bonney, Mary King, Steve Halleran
Guest: Helen Koehler

AGENDA
Recap of Building Committee history to date from Shannon
Public comment (5-10 mins)
Foundation update from Mary
Discussion of response from Bensonwood re: updated costs
Timeline and goals moving forward
Additional public comment as needed (5 mins)

Introduction and overview of the Committee’s work:
Chair Shannon Decker

- Warrant article at 2017 Town Meeting to defund the Meriden Library was voted down 225 to 29. This group is not in place to consider the question of one vs. two libraries in this town, as that was addressed and voted on by the town in 2017. The ML Building Committee was formed in 2017 by the Library Trustees at their meeting of June 6, 2017, and members were approved at the meeting of August 9, 2017.

- The Building Committee worked to bring a warrant article to Town Meeting in 2018, asking for a $25K appropriation to consider the renovation and/or replacement of the Meriden Library in order to make the Meriden Library ADA-compliant. This was approved by a vote of 137 to 5.

- The Building Committee then used those funds (with approval by Library Trustees and Selectboard; see below) to consider renovation vs. replacement, do preliminary sitework, and work with Bensonwood to design a proposed new Meriden Library building.

- We brought our proposal to Town Meeting in 2019, looking for not more than $487,500 in the form of a bond. We needed a 2/3 majority vote and received 57% (249 votes to 190; needed 293 votes to pass).

- The Building Committee and Meriden Library Foundation came in front of the Library Trustees on May 13, 2019, and the Trustees voted for the building committee to continue their work.

- At the Trustee meeting of June 10, 2019, the Trustees voted on the new composition of the building committee. Some members stepped off the committee, and Shannon Decker took over as chair in Chris Dye’s absence.
Public Comment:
Helen Koehler
Helen raised these concerns and questions: Sees this as more of a community center than a library; what groups will be using the space, how big will it be? Why not gut the building and add a ramp?
Helen’s questions/concerns were addressed. The plan for a new building includes library space and a meeting room. The meeting room is designed in a way that will allow it to be used by community organizations when the library is closed. It will not be a community center, it will be a library with a community meeting room.
Within the past five years, plans for a ramp were presented to the library trustees. Because of the cost of the ramp and that it would still not provide access to the bathroom or basement the plan was not approved.

Foundation Update:
Mary King
Three grant applications to foundations have been submitted, one more will be submitted in the next few weeks. Thom’s Tavern held a fundraiser and FOML is planning one. By the end of the year, there will be another campaign to let people know where we’re at, how much money we’ve raised, how much we have to go. Goal is to match $200K pledge.

Bensonwood Update:
Steve Halleran
Randall Walker from Bensonwood Design/Build is projecting a 3 - 7% increase in materials and labor costs for the project. An updated cost proposal can be provided before the town meeting in March. Bensonwood remains enthusiastic about the project and could be ready for a project in 2020. We will need Brad Atwater and Shaun Rogers to work with them to finalize the project details.

Timeline and Goals:
Steve Halleran
Steve provided the committee with two important dates:
Tuesday, October 22, Finance Committee Meeting at Town Office
Wednesday, November 6, Select Board Meeting at the Town Office. Finance Committee will be on the agenda.
It is important that we provide an update of the Building Committee’s plans to the Finance Committee. Shannon Decker, Jeanne Woodward-Poor, and Mary King will plan to attend the Select Board meeting.

Committee Discussion
School site: As a group, we’ve decided to stay with the Bean Road site. We’ve moved beyond this. Professionals have looked at the school site and recommended against it, and it would cost more money to get exact numbers. We don’t want to spend any more money than we already have. The building would also have to change to accommodate after-school care.
Next meeting TBA.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:13 pm
Meriden Library Building Committee  
12.10.19  
Draft Minutes  

Present: Shannon Decker, Bill Knight, Terri Crane, Leeli Bonney, Jeanne Woodward-Poor, Brad Atwater, Mary King

AGENDA

● Public comment
● Updates:
  o Foundation (Mary)
  o Bensonwood (Brad/Steve)
  o Finance Committee Meeting (Shannon)
● Messaging and outreach
● Bonner Road site
● Energy costs for Suzanne
● Additional details to consider between now and Town Meeting
● Future meetings:
  o Building Committee next meeting – 1/28/19 at 7 pm
  o Finance Committee meeting – 1/21/19
● Additional public comment as needed

1.) Updates

a. Foundation/Fundraising: More pledges have been received in the last month. The Foundation was notified that they did not receive a grant from the Samuel Hunt Foundation. There are two more grant applications pending and several more will be submitted in January. An appeal letter was sent to residents. The Foundation continues to work toward the goal of matching the $200K pledge received last spring. Private money from Foundation and Trustees savings: $775,000. There is a commitment of $45,000 from the town ADA fund. Total of $820,000. Steve has $175K in the warrant article, so we’re in that range for a $1M building with material cost increases. Previously approved funds not yet spent will go toward eventual project expenses are not included in the Foundation’s current number; we have about $17K left from this year.

b. Bensonwood Update: At our last meeting, we discussed Brad and Steve continuing talks with Benson to tighten things up. Will we still ask local contractors for bids on certain elements of the construction process? Is this something we can do now or is this too on hold until after Town Meeting? Even if we choose to have Bensonwood manage the entire building construction they might still use locals for certain things (concrete, etc.). We might not have locals for other elements available on the necessary timeline. We have decided not to spend funds (est $40K-50k) to get final schematics until after a vote. The focus has been on fundraising. If the project is approved then we will move forward with design schematics. There will be a
lot of work before construction can begin. Possible construction timeline of 24 weeks.

c. Finance Committee meeting of 12.9: Steve presented $175K in the draft warrant and a variety of ways to get there. The overall atmosphere was positive with regard to this project. There was a request from Judy Ptak for a more detailed budget if the Meriden Library were to be closed for construction. The Finance Committee didn’t think there was a need to endorse a request for that work to be done. If the library doesn’t spend money, it goes back to the town. Shannon, Leeli, and Vicki could email the Finance Committee to acknowledge that they were there in support of the project.

2.) Messaging and outreach:
   a. Thermometer? Mailing? Social media?: Terri is working on a thermometer sign, Brad is happy to help build it if needed. Terri MacNamara is doing a raffle for the library; there’s a box out at the Deli Mart. FOML will be doing a “Love Your Library” fundraising event at Salt Hill Pub in February, with a raffle and silent auction. They’re in the planning stages and are considering some different format options.

3.) Bonner Road site:
   Review site work numbers of what’s already been spent on the Bean Road site: site-related spending is less than $18K. Brad doesn’t have exact numbers on hand. What would need to be spent to accept or reject a site? The answer depends on assumptions. Perhaps more to the point: We followed a public process; we might have considered another site if we were unhappy with an element of our site, or if someone had come to us with a compelling argument for a different site. That has not happened. The committee and the trustees are happy with the existing site and building plan. That said, once an alternative was floated we did consider it. The Bonner Road site would be challenging and undoubtedly lead to a different building design that responded to the unique needs and took advantage of the unique characteristics of that site. We would need to start almost from scratch on building design, soil analysis, etc. What would be the purpose or advantage of doing that work duplicating those costs)? We are confident that our process has resulted in a design, on our exiting site, that meets the identified needs in a durable efficient building that will serve the community well for decades to come.

Jeanne will report at the January Trustee Meeting. There needs to be a discussion, motion, and acceptance of warrant article and building plan before Town Meeting.
Create an FAQ answer sheet to address this and other concerns? 5 big questions that will hit what people have been asking. Could go on the library website, be available at library desks. Shannon can draft this.

4.) Energy costs for Suzanne
   a. Suzanne has volunteered to research the utility costs of the new building. She would like to show what the savings will be over time.
   b. Heating/cooling analysis has been done. Complete criteria for window package and lighting design have not been done. Ventilation has not yet been modeled. We have budgets for all of this design/equipment, but that design isn’t done yet. Can’t go very far until you’ve finished your design. We do know that the new building will cost significantly less on a square foot basis; (estimated to be approximately the same operating costs as the current building for a much larger space). Bill notes that a library operates similarly to the school in terms of lighting/ventilation. Our proposed library is roughly 10% of the school size. School costs approximately $37K in propane/electricity, so expected library costs would be approximately 10% of the schools. Somewhere in the range of $3700 with a $1500 spread either way. The library is designed for solar-ready but we don’t have solar in the budget. That would be a target for continued fundraising beyond the building costs.
      i. Would it be helpful to have the endorsement of the Energy Committee? Is that part of the info we get out ahead of time, or part of the statement at Town Meeting? Jen Lenz (Trustee) is a member of that committee. Perhaps Suzanne could reach out to her to strategize this.

5.) Details to consider between now and Town Meeting
   a. Summary of current event attendance at ML to underscore how we will use a common/multi-purpose room.
      i. After-school early release programs, we turn kids away. Capacity in the basement is 20 kids; turn kids away every time. Where to store backpacks during that time is even an issue.
      ii. Many programs are moved elsewhere because we cannot hold them in the library – we hold them at the school, the Duckworth (which we’re losing), the Town Hall.
      iii. 40-50 people for Humanities events held by FOML; summer programs have no indoor backup on site.
      iv. The meeting room will provide space for the programs on our wishlist, this room would allow us to add programming over time and have a home for current popular events like the FOML Poetry evening, and “Soup and Good Books”.
   b. What are our options for book/furniture storage during construction of a new building?
      i. Material doesn’t need to be accessible. To avoid boxes, Brad suggests a weather-tight tractor-trailer (with humidity control). Books could be
loaded by conveyor belt onto shelving. How many trailers do we need? Start with Lucky’s or RSD for rentals. Storing on-site would be preferred. Could we make an arrangement with TDS to park it there? Brad will look into this for more details. We’re not hiring a moving company to pack books and store them. We’re looking at doing everything as fiscally responsible as possible; volunteers will move the books.

c. Do we have a working list of what new materials will be needed to make a new library functional?
   i. Mary and Terri have been working on a floor plan and layout. If necessary, we could operate the library with what we currently have. Will reuse the newer bookshelves; would like to replace some of the older shelves. The meeting room is new, so will need seating, audiovisual equipment, shades. There will be additional fundraising for furnishings. We will start with existing materials; fundraise for new materials to fill new spaces. Over time, we’ll replace the things that no longer serve us in the new space, but we can resume operation with what we have.

6.) Warrant article composition:
   a. Needs approval of the Trustees. $975K is still in the warrant, the amount to raise is $175. If Trustees suggest using some Fund Balance, that needs to happen ahead of time in the warrant article. Finance Committee as the venue to discuss this, with Trustees attending to get input?

7.) Need to mark out time to prep for Town Meeting presentation. (We have drawings, video walk-through, what else do we want to add?)
   a. We believed in what we brought to you last year, we listened to community concerns and raised more money to put toward this project.
   b. $175K is $0.56 on the tax rate for the year. Include this with Brad’s spreadsheet for tax implications on the FAQ sheet.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm.
Agenda
Public comment
- Foundation updates
- Bensonwood updates
- Friends of the Meriden Library updates (upcoming fundraiser)
- Recap of discussion at recent meetings: Trustees, Selectboard, Finance Committee, Energy Committee
- FAQ sheet: draft review
- Town Meeting presentation outline: discussion
- Town Report: write-up?
- Report to Energy Committee: review
- Report to Trustees (we confirm that contracts will not be signed until pledges are converted to deposits; flexibility for Trustees to release their funds to pay for detailed design? No, nothing until the money is in the bank.)
- Discussion of the general timeline if the project moves forward
- Upcoming meetings:
  - Selectboard meeting: 2/5, 6 pm
  - Library Trustee Meeting: 2/10, 6:30 pm
Next building committee meeting: TBD
Additional public comment as needed

Called to Order: 7:03 pm

Present: Shannon Decker, Jeanne Woodward-Poor, Suzanne Spencer, Leeli Bonney, Steve Halleran, Terri Crane, Brad Atwater, Mary King
Members of the Public: Helen Kohler, Steve Beaupre, Holly and Vern Braswell

Public Comment:
Helen Kohler: Would we entertain making the meeting room smaller in order to save money? We are recommending what we think would be best for library use based on the info we've been given. Trustees could certainly recommend making changes. Did we entertain bids? In the process of getting to Bensonwood, we went to LaValley, and Preferred Building Systems; any of those only do a certain piece, so you have to parcel out all the different parts and supervise all of those contracts (all of which involve risk in terms of finances and timing).

Meriden Library Foundation Updates, Mary King: Appeal letter went out in December with a good response. More pledges and donations were received as a result. Notification at the end of December of a $5000 grant from a foundation in Manchester. Foundation-only funds currently: $581,000 (in cash and pledges).

Friends OF ML Fundraiser Update, Shannon Decker: Thursday, 2/6 from 5-8 pm at Salt Hill in Lebanon; will include a silent auction and raffle to raise money for the project.

Bensonwood update, Brad Atwater: Bensonwood confirmed energy modeling, we can base our estimates on $0.60/ft for heating and cooling and will get more details later. There’s a spreadsheet where we can enter plug loads to estimate utilities. Brad has asked Bensonwood for a revised number that will hold for Town Meeting, and we should have that soon. He has also talked to Bensonwood about a general timeline if the project goes forward, to make sure it would work and find out what they need the site to look like when they get started.

Liberty Utilities: Liberty Utilities confirmed today that they will fund 100% $1500 for modeling of energy. That’s $1500 worth of engineering we don’t need to spend. The building will be so energy-efficient that it will hopefully be an ideal project for Liberty to incentivize.
Steve needs the Building Committee report for the Annual Report by Friday. Everyone can send thoughts/edits to Shannon between now and then. FAQ sheet can serve as the town report document, with an introduction added and a few small changes.

Report to the Energy Committee: Brad put together a report for the Energy Committee after attending their latest meeting. Looks good to the group; OK to send to the Energy Committee for review.

Recap of meetings, Shannon Decker:
1/13/20 Trustee meeting: revised warrant article.
1/15/20 Selectboard meeting: did not vote on this warrant article. Warrants will be finalized and vote will take place at the February 5 meeting.
1/21/20 Finance Committee Meeting: members attended to listen to the committee’s discussion regarding the proposed warrant article.

Discussion of a general timeline, Brad Atwater: What is the best timing scenario? Start as soon as possible at yes. The way the warrant is phrased, we could also postpone for a year to get funding in and contracts aligned.

Benson would be comfortable starting the building foundation as late as the end of October; this gives some flexibility to waiting for funds to come in, keeping the library open longer for patrons, etc. Planting/seeding wouldn’t happen until the following spring. Between now and Town Meeting, we should get a proposal for the detailed design contract to review. The detailed design work will need to get done in a fairly tight window before we can begin the site preparation. The Trustees will need to approve before beginning. Can the Trustees approve and fund the next step of the design? We’ll need to have a list of things to bring before the Trustees at each of their subsequent meetings for decision/approval. Priority is having the least amount of time without the Meriden Library.

Town Meeting presentation outline:
Reading of the Article (moderator) will look to someone to open it
- Trustees (Jeanne)
- Building Committee
- Finance Committee?
- Energy Committee?
- Facilities Manager
- FOML?
- Foundation
- Library Director
Plus a quick overview of the building itself. A short segment that represents each to the groups.

No additional public comment.
Next meeting: Tuesday, February 18 at 7 pm.

Meeting adjourned 8:20 pm
Agenda:
● Public comment
● Updates:
  o Foundation (Mary)
  o Bensonwood (Brad)
  o Friends of the Meriden Library (Shannon)
  o Recap of discussions and/or endorsements by other groups: Selectboard, Finance Committee, Energy Committee
● Building info sheet: review
● Town Meeting presentation outline: discussion and revision
● Discussion of the timeline if the project moves forward
● Additional public comment as needed

Present: Mary King, Brad Atwater, Terri Crane, Shannon Decker, Leeli Bonney, Steve Halleran, Shawn Rogers

Public: Helen Koehler, Jen Lenz

Meeting called to order at 7:06.

Public Comment/Questions: Helen Koehler asks how long the library could be closed, and where the books will be stored. Mary replies that Bensonwood calls it a 16-week project and that books will be stored in trailers, which we’ll pack ourselves and store on town property. Will site work be done by Maks, or put out to bid? Brad notes that we’re not at that point in the process yet; different contractors could handle it differently. Maks could potentially do everything, including landscaping. We may choose to split that into different packages, but we’re not at that point yet. No one will promise anything until we know we’re a go. We’ll be in a crunch if we get the go-ahead. Benson could start as late as October. We used Mak’s for a paid estimate, we needed a broad spectrum of prices for the variety of things we might need. They gave us target numbers to work with; we hope to get those leaner as we go ahead with the process. They’re not the only contractor, but they gave us information for a fee; when we have the go-ahead we’ll give everyone a fair shot.

Meriden Library Foundation Update-Mary King: If the warrant is to pass, the Foundation is preparing to reach out to the donors and let them know that the project can’t begin until pledges are received. Notification of two outstanding grants will come in March. There are still possibilities for additional funds. The Foundation is comfortable with making the $800K goal.

Friends of Meriden Library--Shannon Decker, Leeli Bonney: Fundraiser was a success; made in the range of $8000.

Bensonwood Update-Brad Atwater: New Bensonwood contact has been assigned to us for the next phase. We’re in a place where we don’t want to spend any more money but do want more...
information/tighter numbers. (Energy budget, update on control estimate.) Because of the transition, it’s taking a little longer to answer our questions. Brad will have a conference call with them this week. Everyone feels like there’s a wonderful building to be built for our target numbers, so Benson is tightening that number up as we adjust for inflation. Initial pass at a base case for energy consumption shows the building at 34% better than code. It could lead to a significant incentive from Liberty Utilities (could be in the neighborhood of $10K) to offset the cost of the total building. This would be known before we start construction. Liberty also has money available for lighting design ($2-3K) and commissioning, which is independent verification that you get what you paid for (up to $6K). This could also include staff training on the new systems, operating manuals, etc. We would define these variables in the next phase of the project.

Shawn notes that Bensonwood really keys in on the tightness of the building. They do a lot of tests, infrared scanning, etc. Shawn has worked with Benson before and has seen this in action. We have a simple building, sitting on a slab, which makes the project less complicated. When design and build are all under one roof, it is easy to make sure everything gets done and everyone is on the same page. In this market, it’s not a great situation to put out that type of project. Our choice was to have more control, rather than going with the low bidder. In the end, it’s smooth – you get what you asked for, and there are no surprises. If we have a performance-based contract, that’s our guarantee. That’s how quality construction is done today.

**Recap of Recent Discussions by Other Town Groups- Shannon Decker**: Selectboard supported the warrant by a vote of 2:1. The Finance Committee has a statement in the Town Report, 4:2 vote in favor of the library project. Jennifer Lenz, a member of the Energy Committee, noted that all discussion within the Committee has been positive, though they may not have taken an official stand at this point.

**Building Information Sheet- Shannon Decker**– Shannon drafted an information sheet on the proposed building that will update and remind people about the building specs. It has been posted on the library website. We can make printouts available at both libraries and the Town Office.

**Town Meeting Presentation-Shannon Decker**: Discussion on the best way to present information at town meeting. Shannon suggests having the group of presenters at the front of the room, seated together. Steve thinks that is possible.

Visuals will be part of the presentation. Brad will have exterior and interior shots up on each screen for people to look at while they’re listening. Will others want slides projected?

**Tentative Plan for Presentation:**
- Trustee--Jeanne Woodward-Poor (opens the warrant article)
- Building Committee--Shannon Decker and Shawn Rogers
- Review of Project---Brad Atwater
- Meriden Library Foundation--Joe Crate and J. Rendahl
- Trustee--Jennifer Lenz
Other parties may speak, (Friends of the Meriden Library, Energy Committee). Question of whether this would happen during the formal presentation or during the open comment period.

Moderator Paul Franklin needs the list of people who will speak so he can manage that.

Discussion of who will field questions that do not directly pertain to the warrant article. e.g. One library vs. two. Will Paul Franklin direct questions back to the warrant article?

**Discussion of the timeline if the project moves forward:**

$45K ADA Fund and $214K Meriden Library Building Fund are in the warrant article, and if approved that money is approved.

Trustees, Selectboard and the Foundation should meet with Barry Schuster to get the funding in order. The process to accept donations, including public hearings, need to be done correctly with all parties in agreement.

Next meeting: Thursday, March 5th – 7 pm at Plainfield Town Office, Meriden.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm.
Called to order:  7:05 pm

Present: Shawn Rogers, Shannon Decker, Jeanne Woodward-Poor, Jen Lenz, Mary King, Brad Atwater

Agenda: Preparation for town meeting presentation

Tentative Speakers:
Jeanne Woodward-Poor (Library Trustee)
Shannon Decker (Building Committee)
Shawn Rogers (Building Committee)
Brad Atwater (Facilities Manager)
Joe Crate (Foundation)
J Rendahl (Foundation)
Jen Lenz (Library Trustee)

Jeanne W-P brought up the concerns among the community about the process that has been followed by the building committee.

Jeanne will open and speak for the trustees. She will acknowledge that the majority of the trustees are in support of the replacement of the Meriden Library.

Sean would like to address questions that are circulating. He will speak about the process, how we ended up where we are, and the goal to deliver the best product for the best value.

Shannon will talk about the history of the committee and past actions. e.g. meetings and quotes from UK architects, LaValley’s and Preferred Building Systems. This year’s work, responding to what we heard from the community at town meeting.

Brad will present a short description of the building.

Mary reported that Meriden Library Foundation members Joe Crate and Justin Rendahl will present. J has a slide for a visual presentation. They will provide information on pledges vs. cash. All pledges must be collected before we can break ground.

Jen Lenz will speak as a trustee and focus on history, 30-years since the Meriden Library Building Fund was established and how the Plainfield community has supported two libraries.

Housekeeping details:
Speakers will be seated together at a table.
Presentations will be brief, no more than five minutes per speaker.
A list of speakers must be emailed to Paul Franklin.
Slides or documents that will be projected must be on a thumb drive. Student volunteers assist with the technology.
Shannon will put together an outline of the presentation to make sure that important information has not been missed or overlapped.

Meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.

Submitted,

Mary S. King