

8/14/18 Town Council Meeting excerpt:

- Municipal Building – Council received a memo from Mayor Rubenstein and the subcommittee. Mayor Rubenstein stated that this memo is intended to be a status of where the subcommittee is at. The idea is for the Council to ask any questions on the memo that was provided to them. Councilman Olson commented on storage and suggested a compact system of storage that is on rollers and stated that Doris has the paperwork on these types of systems. The Council together reviewed the memo.
  - Question #1, are we comfortable with the design of new building not having provisions for a Court? Scott stated that this was taken into consideration in the original plan. They made provisions before, however, they made it usable space that could be used for things other than a court. David said that tweaks could be made later, should a court need to be brought back. Joe mentioned that in the preliminary design, layout of the facility was to avoid having multiple entrances to the building.
  - Question #2, Is the Council comfortable with a smaller meeting space? Scott Olson provided his input on square footage and how they came up with the numbers in the past. David was comfortable with a smaller meeting space but said that we need to weigh the needs of the community for a public meeting space with the cost. Harvey would like to have a meeting with the committees, commissions, community groups and seniors in to see what their needs are. The space should be useful.
  - Question #3 - Requesting authorization for expenditure for structural analysis for the footings, foundation, piers and understand the feasibility of their re-use, further, for a structural analysis of the existing shed roof to understand the suitability for re-use. David was in favor of authorizing this expenditure. If the consensus of the Council is that this is a good idea, Alex would work with Joe to write an RFP, and have a resolution ready for the next meeting. Joe recommends having Cory and the structural engineer from his office to attend the next subcommittee meeting to help set parameters of what needs to be looked at structurally. The benefit of using Cory is to use his Professional Service Agreement.
  - Question #4 - Asking the Council for a properly qualified civil engineer to attend their next meeting to get a clearer understanding of the permitting process? Harvey said that this person should be more independent, including DEP permitting expertise. David said that he does not have an issue with Cory attending the meeting as he has a lot of background knowledge. Scott believes that we should have Cory do the work. He has the experience and has always done what Township has requested of him. Harvey Roseff said that he thinks that the engineer that they hire should have a re-habilitation specialty.

Alex added that they will be taking a tour of the Roxbury Municipal Building. Alex asked if anyone present from the subcommittee would like to provide any comments. Mr. Romano said that he agrees with the Council with having Cory meet with the subcommittee. He said that the members of the subcommittee have plenty of knowledge and expertise to question and/or challenge Cory. This would save a lot of money and time. He is also inviting the subcommittee for a site visit to his corporate office to see a total rehab on a private sector building.

10 August 2018

Byram Township Council:

Please allow this letter to act as an update from the Building Subcommittee on what has transpired over the last few months. To date, we have met five times as a subcommittee; May 31st, June 14th, June 28th, July 16th and August 6th. To date, the Subcommittee has been spending considerable time coming up to speed and understanding the work that has been completed thus far by the governing body and administration over the last few years.

As part of the process, the Subcommittee visited four other facilities: Andover Township Police Department, the Lafayette Municipal Building, the Blirstown Township Municipal Building, and the Stillwater Township Municipal Building. These locations were chosen for a variety of reasons, including purpose, location, age, construction method, among other things. We learned many things from these visits, but an interesting recurring theme is that, almost universally, you cannot have enough storage room. The Municipal Clerk of Lafayette remarked that she wished she had a basement the size of the footprint of the building. The police chief of Andover made a similar remark, that they did not have nearly a large enough armory or evidence storage room. Blirstown constructed their new building in response to a total loss of the previous building due to fire, and they state that even with the loss of all of the municipal paper records prior to the year 2000, their storage is insufficient as well. In visiting these other buildings, it also became clear that the layout of the space - and more importantly, the reconfigurability of the space to adapt to changes over time - is paramount. It was obvious and apparent to the committee that in at least two of these locations, the layout of the space was wasteful, and these opinions were shared by the hosts.

On June 14th, Township Manager Joe Sabatini spent some time presenting the various relevant documents that have existed going back as far as 2004. He gave an explanation of how each document was derived and went over the findings. The Subcommittee then spent time reviewing and understanding these eleven documents.

The committee also has discussed the programming documents that have been formed over the previous years. These documents spell out the space required for the staffing we have. It has not been suggested by the Subcommittee that are not reasonable or acceptable to us, as least as of now.

At the July 16th, 2018 Subcommittee meeting, Mr. Mark Alpaugh of MJA attended. Mark was involved in the estimating exercise that occurred in 2017. He spent time explaining to us how the cost estimates were arrived at. During the meeting, it was understood that the estimates provided were based on a set of preliminary, conceptual floor plans. Lengthy discussion was had about how the estimate could be off by a considerable amount, because many items (electrical, plumbing and mechanical system design; finish selections, etc.) were not specified as of yet. MJA suggested to us that a much tighter, more accurate estimate can be had once we have a more fleshed-out, more complete version of schematic drawings. This is something MJA has represented to us that they have expertise in and are willing to help the Subcommittee as we move forward.

On July 24th, a small group of the Subcommittee met with Mr. Fred Braun, a past resident of Byram Township who had some level of involvement with the construction of the truss roof that is now above the administrative trailers. Mr. Braun explained to the group, from memory, what construction methods were used. Unfortunately, Mr. Braun did not have any documentation regarding the existing footings and foundations that the trailers sit upon, and as of this writing, no architecture or structural plans have been discovered that would document this. Mr. Braun had opinion of a method that could be used to reuse portions of the structure, but at this time there is no evidence one way or another to substantiate the claim. It will require further engineering investigation and review to determine the usability of the existing structure, truss, roof, footings, foundations and columns.

As time has transpired and we have learned about the existing structures, we have come to agreement that the continued use of the trailers is not reasonable, and that to use the existing mortar building (currently housing the meeting space, vault, and finance offices) there would have to be considerable rehabilitation, including new bathrooms, new roof and perhaps roof structure, and a complete interior and mechanical refresh. At our most recent meeting, it was revealed to us that there are ongoing roof leaks and there is now a mold issue in the occupied space.

With this in mind, it would seem the consensus of the subcommittee is to proceed with one of the following three options:

Use of BOE Open Space and mortar building: The subcommittee has entered into discussions with representatives of the Byram Schools Board of Education (BoE). The Byram Intermediate School has a independent standing structure known as “open space” which has not been used for some time. The total space is approximately 20,000 square-feet, which can be somewhat easily divisible in half. We envision the administrative function of the township moving there (administration, construction, finance, clerk, meeting spaces, etc.), and then renovating the mortar building as a stand-alone police department. The current structure comprised of the trailers would be demolished and that space would not be used at this time. The subcommittee has toured the open space and had a high-level, general conversation with BoE representatives. The BoE is open to the discussion of the use of the space by the municipality, however they have considerable concern about the potential security risks that may be posed to the school by having the general public visiting the space for administrative purposes and public meetings. We will be scheduling another meeting with the BoE to discuss this issue to try to fully understand the fear and what can be done to bring a comfort level to them and the townspeople.

Reconstruction of the trailer space and mortar building: In this option, the concept is to take the existing mortar building and repurpose for a stand-alone police department (similar to the above option). Then, the idea would be to deconstruct and demolish the existing trailers, but leaving behind the shed roof, foundation, footings, and facade that exists today. As noted above, a meeting was held with Fred Braun (he was involved with the construction of the shed roof) and several committee members, and it was suggested by Mr. Braun that a new structure could be built within the confines of the existing shed roof. He also spoke to the methods used to construct parts of the foundation and footings, from memory. If the existing footprint size it not adequate, it could be expanded either towards the mortar building, or towards BARKS, or both. Further analysis is required on a few of these issues to understand how realistic this option is.

Construction of an entirely new building: This option has been talked and debated the least by the committee at this point. The focus of time has been on the above two options at this time, since they require the most amount of background investigation to determine their eligibility. Clearly, the advantages are that the municipality would receive a newly constructed building to the exact specifications set forth. However, at this time, the Subcommittee has not spent a lot of time on this option by choice, until the previous two options are fleshed-out further or eliminated.

At this time, we are not ready to eliminate any of these three options.

At our last meeting, on August 6th, the following questions were posed to be put forth to the council for answer and guidance:

First: Does the new building need to facilitate the possible return of municipal court? As the council knows, our municipal court function was discontinued and we are now in a contractual agreement with Andover Township since the beginning of 2015. This agreement ends at the end of 2019. One town we visited (Stillwater) has no provisions for court in their building, and they made that decision consciously when they recently remodeled. They currently are in an agreement with Wantage. We asked them if they were worried about the eventual return of court, their clerk and mayor seemed completely unworried, and that if Wantage wanted to discontinue serving them, they would simply find another court willing to do so. The decision to have to design for this (or not) will have a space and financial impact on the final solution. We look to the council for guidance on this.

Second: Is the council comfortable with a smaller meeting space, even if just slightly smaller? It is believed that the current meeting space can accommodate about 100 people. As the council surely knows, the use of the space by town council space and planning board meetings usually attracts an audience of less than ten people. Mr. Sabatini told us about Randolph Township, who has made a decision to hold their meetings in a small conference room instead of the meeting space unless a large crowd is anticipated. Stillwater does the same, their meeting room holds only about 30 to 50 people. If considerable participation is expected, they simply move the meetings to another venue such as a school or fire department. It should be noted that in many cases (but not all), when a large crowd is expected, our meeting room of 100 people is too small anyway (case in point: planning board hearings for the Quick Chek which had to be held at the intermediate school). If the Subcommittee can shrink the size of the meeting space, even slightly, this could have a considerable financial impact on the final solution. Perhaps part of this is entering into a more formal agreement with the Byram Township Fire Department or Byram Township Schools to be able to use their larger meeting spaces on demand.

Third: The committee now asks, formally, for the Byram Township Council to authorize expenditure for structural analysis of the footings, foundations, and piers that sits beneath and next to the current office trailers, to understand the feasibility of their re-use. Further, we wish for a structural analysis of the existing shed roof, to understand its condition and suitability for re-use (snow loads, wind loads, condition of the wood truss, condition of the asphalt roof, etc.).

Fourth: We ask for the council to allow for a properly qualified civil engineer to attend our next meeting so that we can get a much clearer understanding of the permitting process. As an example, we would like to know what actions trigger what types of permitting required, and at what cost and time delay.

To the public: If you wish to send comment or ask a question of the subcommittee, it is strongly urged for you to attend one of our meetings; or, you can send an email to [jsabatini@byramtwp.org](mailto:jsabatini@byramtwp.org) and he will forward to the committee.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Byram Township Building Subcommittee

**Timeline of events to date:**

- May 21, 2018 Town Council meeting - launched subcommittee and current municipal building tour
- May 31, 2018 Initial Subcommittee meeting
- June 14, 2018 Subcommittee meeting
- June 19, 2018 Andover Township Police Department site visit
- June 20, 2018 Visit with State Senator Orono to discuss proposed public-private legislation
- June 21, 2018 Lafayette Municipal Building site visit
- June 28, 2018 Byram Intermediate School Open Space site visit
- July 16, 2018 Subcommittee meeting
- July 18, 2018 Blirstown Municipal/Police site visit
- July 24, 2018 Subcommittee meeting w/Fred Braun regarding prior work on existing building
- August 6, 2018 Stillwater Municipal Building site visit
- August 6, 2018 Subcommittee meeting
- August 10, 2018 Release of this document to the Township Council