

Summary of the FIRE HOUSE BUILDING COMMITTEE (02/10/2025)

PRESENT: Scott Wiley, Karen Chavis, Jim Letterie, Kim Dimes, Paul Flanagan, Stephen Calandra, Shannon Poulos, Jill Dorr

ABSENT: Joseph Hanlon, Marc Wallerice

CALL TO ORDER: 7:20PM

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE:

MINUTES: Chief Wiley made a motion to table the minutes from the previous meeting. Jim Letterie seconded the motion.

Quick recap

The meeting focused on the approval of previous minutes, website updates, and discussions about a firehouse building project, including its financial aspects and outreach efforts. The committee explored various strategies for communicating with the public, such as open houses, coffee hours, and social media campaigns, to garner support for the project. They also discussed election day preparations, including the need for observers and volunteers to ensure high voter turnout.

Next steps

- Chief to reach out to the town's attorney for an opinion on creating a social media page for the Firehouse Building Committee.
- Karen to contact Laurisa about arranging coffee hours and provide Chief's contact information.
- Jim to reach out to Honan Sign for a cost estimate on a banner for the old middle school.
- Committee members to review the FAQ booklet and provide feedback, changes, or new questions to the Chief ASAP.
- Chief to send the one-pager explaining the difference between debt exclusion and 2.5 override to all committee members.
- Chief to obtain and distribute the response time analysis for the new Pauline Street location to all committee members.
- Chief to work with Sarah Johnson on creating a simplified one-page financial breakdown of the project.
- Committee to decide on whether to do mailings and yard signs by the next meeting (24th).

- Chief to investigate the possibility of reviving the previous fundraising entity or creating a new one for campaign expenses.
 - Deputy to arrange open houses at both fire stations on March 8th from 9 AM to 12 PM, with a focus on adult attendees.
 - Committee to explore setting up coffee hours at local yacht clubs and housing complexes (Golden Drive, Governor's Park, Pond Street, Seal Harbor).
 - Chief to obtain and distribute the breakdown of previous vote results by precinct to the committee.
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Summary

Meeting Minutes and Website Updates

The meeting was delayed due to a late school committee meeting. The main topic of discussion was the approval of the February 3rd meeting minutes, which was tabled for further discussion. There was also a discussion about updating the website, with a new person being assigned to update it. The committee members were asked to review the FAQ booklet and provide feedback on any changes or additions. Lastly, a document explaining the difference between a debt exclusion and a 2 and a half override was discussed, with the possibility of sharing it with the community.

Town's Financial Situation and Financing Options

Mr. Letterie discussed the town's financial situation, stating that they are expecting a final breakdown of finances to be around \$38.5 million. He mentioned that they are considering financing options, with a 25-year plan costing approximately \$120 a quarter for the average taxpayer, compared to a 30-year plan costing \$457 a year. Winthrop emphasized that the 25-year plan would save the taxpayers around \$8.6 million. He also mentioned that other debt exclusions, such as Miller field and the Middle High school, would be coming off the tax rolls in the future. Lastly, he addressed concerns about response times, stating that they are well within the NFPA standard of reaching any address in town within 5 minutes and 20 seconds 90% of the time.

Efficiency and Response Time Discussion

Chief Wiley discussed the efficiency of a single station concept versus a two station concept, emphasizing that the slight degradation in response time is made up for in efficiency and needed upgrades. He also mentioned that he and the Deputy Chief had timed the drive from the middle school to the gates of Deer Island, stopping at every stop sign, and still managed to arrive in under 5 minutes. Chief Wiley proposed including this information in any paperwork sent to taxpayers and suggested reaching out to the senior center and other locations for coffee hours. He also mentioned the need to update the website and to reach out to the citizens.

Mass Mailing Campaign and Building Value

Mr. Letterie discussed the cost of a previous mass mailing campaign, which was expensive and involved lawn signs. He suggested the possibility of reaching out to individual citizens for donations to fund a similar campaign. However, he noted that the Teachers Union and potentially the Fire Union could donate to the override committee. There was also discussion regarding potential value of the Shirley St. Station, estimating it could be worth around \$1.6 to \$1.8 million if it had 20 to 24 units. He emphasized the need to find out who has the tax ID for the entity that handled the previous campaign and whether someone would be willing to volunteer or create a new one.

Upcoming Open House and Meeting Plans

Karin Chavis reminded us that next week is school vacation, and we could wait until Monday, February 24th for the next meeting. Deputy Chief Calandra announced an open house event at the stations on Saturday, March 8th from 9 to 12, inviting the public to attend. Chief Wiley suggested advertising this event on various platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, and possibly getting it featured in the local paper. He also offered to provide contact information for those interested in attending the open house.

Website Progress and Fundraising Strategies

Chief Wiley discussed the progress of their website and the potential for a QR code on Facebook to direct users to the site. The possibility of a mailing campaign was considered, with Winthrop suggesting it could be targeted towards frequent voters. The idea of restricting the upcoming open house to adults only was also brought up due to safety reasons. The team also discussed the need for better fundraising to support their plans, and the possibility of using a QR code for donations

Committee Work and Yacht Club Outreach

Chief Wiley discussed the upcoming committee work, emphasizing that the real work would begin if the vote passes. He mentioned the hiring of OPMs, architects, and builders, and the formation of subgroups for the project. A citizen suggested a coffee hour at yacht clubs to disseminate information and garner support for the project. He proposed that a few committee members could attend these events to provide information and generate excitement.

Simplifying Financials and Social Media

Chief Wiley discussed the need for a simplified financial breakdown for the Firehouse Building committee, which Sarah Johnson can help with. The possibility of creating a social media page for the committee was also discussed, with the suggestion that comments could be turned off to maintain a strictly informational platform. The idea of linking the committee's page to the Union's Facebook page was also proposed. The website would be updated with frequently asked questions, with one person responsible for answering them. The total voter count from the last election was recalled as around 4,100, with a need to flip about 500 more voters. The potential for door-to-door mailers

in certain areas was discussed, as well as the possibility of hosting coffee hours to build a positive relationship with voters. The committee was also asked to send around the breakdown of the vote by precinct. The idea of having a presence on the day of the election, similar to the school or Miller field, was also discussed.

Election Day Observers and Volunteers

Karin Chavis discussed the importance of having observers on election day to ensure that all eligible voters cast their ballots. She suggested that volunteers could be used to check if people on the positive list had voted and to encourage those who hadn't to do so. Providing transportation for elderly voters who might need assistance was discussed. The last day to register was set as March 26th, and the possibility of early voting was discussed, but it was decided that the town clerk would stick with the absentee ballot system.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8PM