

Minutes for Fire House Building Committee 03/10/2025

PRESENT: Paul Flanagan, Karin Chavis, Scott Wiley, Stephen Calandra, Hannah Belcher, Joseph Hanlon (via zoom) Jill Dorr, Shannon Poulos, Jim Letterie, Jack Dempsey

ABSENT: Marc Wallerice, Kim Dimes

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30PM

The Firehouse Building Committee meeting on March 10, 2025, focused on approving meeting minutes, discussing the success of recent events, and conceptual plans for the firehouse interior. The committee also discussed the town's website, the possibility of sending out mailers to registered voters, and the upcoming vote on Saturday, April 5th. Future meetings were scheduled, and the committee addressed questions about the middle school site and the cost of the 38.5 million dollar debt exclusion.

Next steps

- Shannon to contact Laurisa about continuing to include information about the fire station project in the town manager's newsletter.
- Chief Wiley to schedule the next Firehouse Building Committee meeting for March 24th at 5:30 PM.
- Chief Wiley to schedule the final meeting before the election for April 3rd at 5:30 PM in the Harvey Room.
- Firefighter Kevin Gorman announced that he and other Firefighters would be handing out pamphlets about the fire station project at the marketplace on upcoming Saturdays and Sundays.
- There was discussion about setting up electronic signs about the Saturday election closer to the date.
- Town Manager to arrange a reverse 911 call to remind residents about the election one week before and a few days before the vote.
- The FHBC hosted a coffee hour at the Senior Center on March 10th. Another coffee hour was planned for March 13th at Seal Harbor.
- Jack Dempsey discussed the possibility of arranging a tour of a recently built Boston firehouse for the committee to gather ideas for the new Winthrop fire station.

Summary

Firehouse Building Committee Meeting Minutes

In the Firehouse Building Committee meeting on March 10, 2025, the attendees discussed the meeting minutes from February 3rd and February 24th. Karin Chavis made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 3rd meeting, which was seconded by Jill Dorr. The minutes were unanimously approved. For the February 24th meeting, Council President Letterie made a motion to accept the minutes as circulated, which was seconded by Ms. Dorr. A correction was made regarding the last day to register, which was amended to March 26th. The minutes were then accepted with the amendment.

Firehouse Tours and Open Houses

Chief Wiley mentioned the successful open houses in both firehouses over the weekend, which convinced some people of the desperate need for the station. The Golden Drive coffee hour was also well-attended, with representatives from the precinct and senior housing community.

Conceptual Plans for Firehouse Interior

Jack Dempsey discussed the conceptual plans for the firehouse interior, suggesting changes to better utilize the space and accommodate future needs. He proposed setting up a tour of a new firehouse in Boston to gather ideas. The team agreed to consider regional firehouses for inspiration once the election is over. They also shared their experience with the Middle School High School project, emphasizing the importance of staying within budget and making necessary changes.

Winthrop Firefighters' Social Media Success

Karin Chavis commended the Firefighters for their effective use of social media, noting that they have been approached by many people with specific questions. Chief Wiley updated the committee on the town's website, stating that it is fully operational and all information is accurate. He mentioned that the interactive finance page provides detailed information on assessed values and costs. KC also suggested adding a link to the fire station website and on the town's web page.

Voter Mailer Strategy Discussion

Paul Flanagan discussed the possibility of sending out mailers to registered voters but expressed concerns about the financial feasibility of such an action. He suggested targeting specific groups of voters and reducing the cost by focusing on registered voters and frequent voters. The idea of using QR codes on postcards to direct people to the website was also discussed. Shannon Poulos asked if we have anyone/an organization to raise money for mailers. At this time there is not.

Upcoming Vote and Election Reminders

Chief Wiley discussed the upcoming vote on Saturday and the need for reminders about the election. He also mentioned the town manager's plan to send out a reverse 911 call and email reminders. Jim Letterie asked about including information in the town manager's newsletter and clarified the debt exclusion, explaining that it does not result in a direct reduction in taxes but prevents them from increasing.

Committee Discusses Future Meetings and Debt

The committee discussed scheduling future meetings for March 24th and April 3rd. They also encouraged public comment and discussed the distribution of informational pamphlets by the Fire Union. Jim Letterie emphasized the availability of factual information on their website and encouraged hosting coffee events. He also addressed questions about the middle school site and the cost of the 38.5 million dollar debt exclusion, which would be paid off in 25 years, saving the town 8.4 million dollars. The full impact of the exclusion would not be felt until January 1st, 2028.