

**Village Of Scotia**  
**Municipal Facilities Meeting Two – October 4, 2004**  
**Notes from Rotating Small Group Discussions**

**Key Topic: Need** (John Holehan)

**Small Group One:**

In considering the issue of need for the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Confirm and educate the public that there is a need for more space and more modern facilities
- Explain how the potential for utilization of existing space was evaluated and why it was not feasible
- Consider planning for a shorter life span for the building
- Design a more basic facility to meet Scotia's needs
- Conduct and present a cost-benefit analysis
- Consider co-locating police and fire in the same building since they share some similar functional spaces (weight room)
- Start over - the whole process did not work and we should just begin again

**Small Group 2**

In considering the issue of need for the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Recognize that we need more modern police facilities
- Recognize that we need more space for fire department and ADA access to the Village Hall
- Consider the safety of the employee workplace
- Plan and locate facilities together (at least police and fire)
- Solicit more community input
- Find a way to reach the greater number of residents
- Select an architect familiar with upstate New York and firehouse development
- Place more emphasis on future planning
- Work diligently to resolve the fire district 4 contract issue as quickly as possible for a five year period
- Ensure that a signal device is installed at the fire station

**Small Group 3**

In considering the issue of need for the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Consider the future growth of the village
- Assess the capacity of the department to provide services (what more could they do from a new facility)
- Explain the government regulations regarding development of these public services - people don't understand how much of cost cannot be cut
- Ensure better communication to residents regarding space needs and regulatory requirements
- Consider shorter planning period than 50-100 years: things change much more quickly now
- Consider shrinking the size of the large meeting space proposed for the Fire Department
- Consider holding neighborhood meetings/focus groups to seek input and communicate the plan to residents

#### **Small Group 4**

- Recognize that there is a big need for the new police facility as well as fire
- Not a fair comparison, considering two facilities: urban site costs more than green field
- Support rehabilitation of the fire space for police and build a new fire station
- Address ADA accessibility fully in all facilities
- Examine village owned property and consider them preferred sites
- Actively consider selling the existing village hall since it is such a "money pit"
- Show residents the analysis of space needs that has already been completed
- Design the building for flexibility: needs will change
- Consider a design with a more sensible roof line
- Evaluate whether it is feasible to put a second floor on the DPW building for some of the needed space

#### **Key Topic: Consolidation (Chuck Steiner)**

##### **Small Group 1**

In considering the issue of consolidation related to the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Explain what we save (in \$, taxes) by consolidating, against what we give up/gain in services
- Examine what the debt load of the town is vs. the debt load of the village and impact of consolidation on taxes

- Explain what the criteria for selection for services to be consolidated is and who will lead the process of consolidation discussion in the future
- Evaluate who is in control of the negotiations and how consolidated leadership (who's the boss) is selected and how all of that impacts civil service
- Maintain current level of consolidation, while considering others after an evaluation of the effectiveness of current efforts and presentation of those results to the residents for discussion has been completed
- Focus on keeping the identity of the village in all discussions
- Work to eliminate the "us" and "them" mentality
- Maintain dedicated local public safety services
- Investigate success/failures of other consolidation in other municipalities and states
- Investigate the possibilities of/ impact of annexation

### **Small Group 2**

In considering the issue of consolidation related to the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Consider the loss of the individuality of Scotia
- Conduct an analysis of the costs of fire protection in the village, cost of fire protection in the town and what the impact on both would be on consolidating services
- Resolve the fire protection district four contract for the longest term possible
- Evaluate the outcomes of present shared services agreements
- Consider shared services opportunities within the village
- Evaluate other shared services opportunities with the town, city and county
- Consider the "want" vs. the "need" vs. the "cost"

### **Small Group 3**

In considering the issue of consolidation related to the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Design and size any new facilities so that they can fit into a future consolidation model
- Ensure that public safety services remain in the village
- Analyze present services as they related to space needs
- Evaluate present shared services agreements/are they working?
- Ensure that we do not loose identity or adequate control of the village
- Consider annexation of fire district 4
- Make sure that with consolidation, level of service should meet or exceed current level of services provided to be worth considering

## **Small Group 4**

In considering the issue of consolidation related to the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Examine how other municipalities in other communities and other states are doing it – especially regarding public safety
- Consider consolidating buildings; not departments (separate departments sharing one building)
- Consider housing fire apparatus (1 vehicle) at Thomas corners or other off site location
- Have the Trustees asked village residents/taxpayers how they feel about consolidation?
- Consider how many actual fire volunteers are available in the village. This may change building needs.
- Contract with City of Schenectady to ensure response when needed
- Prepare/share a cost analysis of consolidated police in Scotia/Glenville
- Consider equipment/services provided by fire department that could be provided by others

**Key Issue: Cost** (Margaret Irwin)

## **Small Group 1**

In considering the issue of cost related to the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Focus on informing people about what they would be getting in a new facility for their tax dollars
- Help people to realize that the proposed facility cost about \$15 a month – more than most people pay for magazines, gum and other “pocket vices”
- Include the interest cost of the overall bond amount in total cost
- Research, analyze and share comparisons with surrounding fire companies who are building fire houses - people need to understand that these are apples and oranges
- Publicize more widely the process for architect selection
- Address, through public relations, the misconception that the fire house was a \$7.3 million dollar project
- In developing the plan and budget coordinate with consolidation opportunities to build facilities which might fit in a consolidated plan or be readily reused for other things

- Work to resolve the fire district four contract for the longest time possible.
- Consider asking the NYS Legislature to change the maximum five year contracting threshold or get a waiver so they can negotiate a contract (ideally) for the life of the bond

### **Small Group 2**

In considering the issue of cost related to the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Work cooperatively with Glenville to jointly hire an independent survey firm to conduct an extensive survey with the residents of fire district four. Make an effort to give them authentic input since they cannot vote.
- Show cost of the projects as annual and monthly tax impact in addition to/instead of big overall construction/bonded amount
- Survey residents about how much total additional indebtedness/tax they would be willing to pay and develop a budget from that
- Set a budget cap and challenge architects to do their best within the budget
- Design something functional that is affordable
- Clarify what a 100 year (or other functional age building means). Isn't the biggest cost of buildings in steel, concrete and wood? How do you cut those costs?

### **Small Group 3**

In considering the issue of cost related to the municipal facilities project the trustees Should:

- Use local architects to reduce costs
- Evaluate local plans for firehouses being constructed. People see articles in the papers for large fire housed build for less. Scotia must establish why that is not a good comparison.
- Make sure to use a “clerk of the works” to keep costs in line
- Evaluate if it would be cheaper to demolish the old building and build on that site rather than building new. Inform people about the evaluation.
- Explain what the fire department needs to operate vs. what made it into the final plan (what did we add on top of basic needs and why)
- Explain what the bare minimum requirements are that are required by law to build these facilities and explain why we need more than that (people haven't got a clue how much regulation drives up these costs)
- Build a basic firehouse, not a castle
- Compare our design and cost and space to other comparably sized fire houses built/under construction in the region

- Make sure that the building is in keeping with the historic character of the Village, especially if it is located on Mohawk Avenue. The CVS is an example of a building that does not fit - even though other communities have forced CVS to build more appealing buildings. Why don't we stand up and demand more of developers?
- Consider changing fire employee occupational structure to 8 hour shifts to avoid need for overnight sleeping areas

#### **Small Group 4**

In considering the issue of cost related to the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Develop a combined facility for all services in one building
- Explain and research state and federal grants and hire professional assistance to ensure that submissions are complete.
- Reflect only awarded grants as cash offset in the final budget
- Negotiate for longer fire district 4 contract
- Account for the fact that the cost of steel has increased dramatically
- Evaluate the tax consequences on seniors and other low income residents. Is there a way to exempt them from the additional burden or lessen the impact?
- Evaluate the differences between coverage provided by volunteer companies and professional companies. This will be important in explaining why they can build less expensive firehouses.
- Design a building that fits our needs – not our wants
- Give a priority to the hiring of qualified local architects
- Reduce the cost of interior finishes and the cost of furniture/furnishings
- Reduce large group gathering space: fire house should not need to accommodate 200 people
- Provide more public relations on the sites and correct the misconception that this was a \$7 million dollar firehouse
- Encourage more open communication between the public and trustees
- Worry less about the aesthetics of the buildings (bricks) and more about the function and cost
- Steering committee should be diverse and local – find ways for more people to be involved either on the committee or in another way

#### **Key Issue: Location (Anne Savage)**

#### **Small Group 1:**

In considering the issue of location related to the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Consider those sites least likely to impact tax base (not taking tax generating use for nonprofit use)
- Consult the most senior fire fighters – those with the most experience
- Select a site that has no impact on business either from a tax basis or environmental basis
- Explain the role of the Steering committee and how their votes are/will be considered and give the committee a stronger voice
- Reconsider development of a fire substation and rehabilitation of existing fire facility
- Consider where the location of the majority of calls are and locate the fire station near there
- Keep in mind that the primary mission of the fire department is protection of life and property
- Prevent building from being located in the flood plain
- Consider keeping the large hook and ladder truck at a different site, perhaps at/near the Baptist Church Retirement Center
- Provide for more involvement of local firefighters in setting criteria and establishing rankings
- Make sure people can view maps of the potential sites that show the flood plains
- Consider land already owned by the village including second floors of buildings
- Define an acceptable range of response times
- Evaluate/explain the impact of location on local traffic patterns and response time
- Consider how sites impact downtown parking and the negative effect on parking
- Do not allow negative impact on any business in the area
- Evaluate impact on pedestrians, kids and green space
- Ensure that fire protection is a presence in the village (not located in the town)
- Protect residences from negative noise impact

## **Small Group 2**

In considering the issue of location related to the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Consider locations outside of the village including some at the industrial park (WWII buildings)
- Consider satellite locations for largest trucks
- Consider traffic safety (one-way issue proposed)
- Consider other locations in the village that were not identified include Sunnyside/wash and route 147 (currently for sale)

- Reconsider scoring mechanism
- Keep historical presence in the village center – some service should be there though not necessarily fire
- Put fire off of Mohawk Avenue because of congestion
- Make sure that emergency response time stays as good as it is today
- Reconsider using Department of Public Works site
- Keep a central location to ensure excellent response time. As a rule of thumb trustees should keep in mind that a fire doubles every minute
- Remember that the primary mission of fire is protection of life and property
- Provide more maps to be used in public site selection process
- Ensure that location of rail road track is taken into account when figuring response times.
- Consider one location for all services

### **Small Group 3**

In considering the issue of location related to the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Consider property next to the flint house (part of land)
- Consider old/grand union/family dollar (not thought to be currently available)
- Consider site where Collins and Mohawk merge - no business is displaced and it is an eyesore
- Provide a big map and consider every possible site
- Consider 302 Mohawk avenue (condemned) – old Valley Chevrolet and the adjacent site
- Provide a better indication of why a site was eliminated
- Make sure site rankings are accurate – consult with local experts

### **Small Group 4**

In considering the issue of location related to the municipal facilities project the trustees should:

- Consider disruption on residential neighborhood of locating services
- Consider Dutch Meadow for fire house
- Make sure other services needs are met (police and village hall services) not just needs of the Fire Department
- Local people/fire/police/employees should have more influence than those not directly impacted
- Understand that a group of people are meeting separately from this process to discuss this issue

- Leave the fire house where it is. Move the court/police/clerk etc. to a building constructed on the parking lot one block down facing Glen Avenue
- Close one block of North Ten Brock Street to add land for expansion
- Consider Flint House property
- Keep services in the center of the village even if it means condemning property, but only if impact on tax base is small
- Consider the site on Sacandaga and Birch Parkway just outside the village near Corporate Park. It is build-ready with infrastructure and three phase power.
- Look at all locations including abandoned properties