



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
Fairfield Hills Authority
MINUTES

The Fairfield Hills Authority held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, September 13, 2017 in the Council Chambers meeting room at 3 Primrose St, Newtown CT 06470

These minutes are subject to the approval of the FHA at their next meeting.

Present: Ross Carley, Terry Sagedy, Jim Bernardi, Roger Cyr, Brook Clark

Absent: Phil Clark, Renata Adler

Public Participation:

Also Present: Pat Llodra, Christal Preszler, Kim Chiappetta (clerk)

The meeting was called to order at 2:01 pm

Public Participation:

None

Chairman's Report:

Ross Carley announced that the campus has been presented with a good opportunity to demolish Woodbury Hall using money remaining from the Canaan Hall demolition project. AAIS recently reduced their original estimate with the provision that work can begin this October. Ross provided the group with a picture of how beautiful the campus could be with the new streetscape and the removal of the decaying building, leaving a parcel that could lend itself to many possibilities.

Ross opened to the floor for discussion.

Terry Sagedy asked for confirmation that this project would not have to go out to bid. Christal confirmed that this is correct and that AAIS is on the state bid list. Terry asked Ross to define the dollars. Christal explained that the original appropriation of \$5 million was for CIP for over a period of 2 years. Being that the Canaan removal and other projects went smoothly there is \$904,000 remaining which is enough to remove Woodbury Hall. Terry added that he thought the building was in relatively good shape. Ross explained that the Fairfield Hills Master Plan established that if buildings were not renovated within 5 years of the approval of the plan, buildings could be demolished. Ross further explained that Woodbury Hall is comprised of small offices and rooms so it structurally does not offer the ability to easily reconfigure. In the past, interested parties who have looked at these building only expressed interest in taking them down to construct new buildings, but costs have deterred them away. He further explained that Newtown Hall was an office building and that he hopes to possibly be able to utilize this building in the future for the town. Terry asked Pat if using the funds would impact future CIP budgets. Pat reiterated that the original bonding action was for \$5 million. This amount was approved and is in the schedule. She then explained that the language of the bond is very important as it

defines what can be done with the money. This bond was specifically for remediation and demo. The opportunity to remove Woodbury Hall is within the language of original bond. There was also an intent of the Authority to provide resources for exterior bathrooms and possibly a trail connection or outside work for the Community Center. This type of work cannot be done under this bond, so there will be an effort to re-write this portion of the bond for money re-appropriation which will then be required to go through the necessary approval process. Immediate action can be taken for Woodbury Hall, then a subsequent action for the Community Center work.

Jim Bernardi summarized that as he understood it, either the money needs to be spent or returned to the government. Pat clarified that the money could be spent on Woodbury Hall or another project, but if money does not get used then it will not get added to the town's debt. Jim followed up by expressing that the plan was to get commercial interest in the area of Woodbury Hall and Newtown Hall. Ross agreed that the effort was to get commercial interest, but all interested parties wanted to remove the buildings and build new. He then highlighted the many options for the newly opened space.

Roger Cyr asked if the money could be used to renovate another building to make it more marketable. Ross clarified that this money is not earmarked for a renovation project. Pat added that if the Authority wanted to use the money for a renovation, then they would have to go through the bonding process to re-define the funds. The group then discussed past experiences in trying to re-appropriate funds. Pat added that these buildings have to come down and that potential investors do not want to invest in a new building when they will be in a location with buildings that are falling apart. Ross informed everyone that from a development perspective the cost would change from \$350 / square foot for remediation and removal and new build to \$125 / square foot to build new.

The group then briefly discussed potential opportunities for removing other buildings, but found that the cost of removing other buildings would not meet the current available money.

Ross put forward a resolution to remediate and demolish Woodbury Hall, utilizing the existing Fairfield Hills remediation and demolition capital project funds. Jim Bernardi seconded and all were in favor.

Pat explained that after discussing with the attorneys the understanding is that this action is solely under the purview of the Fairfield Hills Authority and does not go to Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, or Legislative Council. She then requested that for communication purposes Christal and Ross prepare documentation to present to all the boards so there is a clear understand of the decision that was made and why the decision was made.

Terry asked for that one point of communication be established to answer questions and address concerns. Ross agreed to be the point person who would address the general media. Terry reminded the group to ask AAIS to be sensitive to the new streetscape. Christal pointed out that the group needs to determine if there is anything of value that should be saved from Woodbury Hall. Ross said he would take on this task.

Adjournment:

With no further business, Ross asked for a motion to adjourn. Jim made a motion to adjourn, Terry seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 2:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk.