



Final report of the Town Office Space Committee

April 2, 2012



To: Select Board, Town of Granby
Chris Martin, Town Administrator

Final report of the Town Office Space Committee:

As charged, the Town Office Space Committee has reviewed options and developed alternatives for consideration in regards to the Town Office Space situation.

When considering the options, there are three logical choices, some with variations

Option 1: build a new structure

Option 2: buy an existing structure

Option 3: renovate an existing Town owned structure

Each option, along with their variations was explored by the committee, with the following conclusions:

Option 1:

A new structure should, ideally, be located near the Center of Town. It is estimated that it should be approximately 10,000 square feet, to include the school administrative offices, all town offices, and adequate meeting space. The project cost of \$400 per square foot (provided by an architectural firm and owner's project management firm as being an APPROXIMATE estimate) would result in a building cost of approximately 4 million dollars. The variations are as follows:

1(a). Build on existing town owned land

1(b). Purchase land for construction, then build

1©. Contract for a private company to build to suit then lease long term to the Town.

1(a): The most suitable Town owned land is the site where Aldrich Hall is currently located. It is in the Town Center, the site is large enough, and sits in a prominent location. It may be possible to tie into the Public Safety Complex septic system. The downside to the site, though not insurmountable, is the known presence of ledge and unavailability of sewer/water.

1(b): There is very little open land located in/near the center available for development. There is a possible location close to the South Hadley line, with sewer, but most likely would be costly to purchase, and it is not in a central location. There are few other suitable parcels available.

1©. the committee was approached by a private individual who proposed building a Town office to our specifications on land owned by him. It is in the Center of Town, and is large enough. The proposal would be for the Town to lease the space on a 20 year lease. Particulars were not discussed but covering the mortgage cost was suggested as rent.

The plus side to this proposal is that the owner could possibly build cheaper than the Town. The owner would be responsible for maintenance. The down side is that the town would not own the building, and in 20 years (or when the lease expired) we would be back to square one, having spent 20 years of lease payments. Also, it appears as if the rent would be in the area of \$100,000 per year. The source of these funds is unknown, as the budget could not absorb them without an over ride. This could be explored further with the developer, if desired.

Option 2: Buy an existing structure/renovate

2. There are advantages to an existing structure. There are sometimes cost savings due to the existence of parking, septic etc. There are also downsides, such as the fact that it is often more expensive to renovate than to build new. Also, there are few commercial structures in Town that could be available, leaving residences which were designed and constructed for a different purpose. Change of use would require code upgrades.

2(a): There are few existing structures currently available that would fill our needs. The logical first choice was the current Town Hall Annex, formerly the Telephone Company offices. The structure sits on a hill, and egress is less than ideal onto Rte 202. The property next door is for sale (site of a structure fire) which would allow for expansion of the parking area and a creation of a new entrance. The last listed price was \$80,000.

If the above two properties were to be purchased, the total purchase price is estimated to be in the vicinity of \$450,000. The building would need an addition and renovations (sprinklers) and would have to be brought up to code. An estimate would be a total cost of \$3 Million. A further complication is that the current owner (who is conducive to selling the property) indicated that the storage facilities in the rear might not be part of the sale, limiting development of the site. An elevator on the existing Annex might be needed to utilize the second floor.

2(b): A second site that we looked at was the Cloutier residence on Center Street. The residence is for sale for \$475,000 (last listed price); It is approximately 4200 feet square feet and is a beautiful old home. It sits on acre and 1/2. Although it COULD be renovated into office space, it would need an addition, and renovation, The result would still be an old home.

The positive side is that it is located in very close proximity to the Library, which would allow for use of that building for meetings and perhaps space for one or two Boards.

Option 3- Renovate a Town owned building

At first this option appeared not to be viable. The Board eliminated renovating Kellogg Hall as an option based on our preliminary report. Aldrich Hall, as also noted in that report, should be "deconstructed" as soon as it is vacated. The current library is too small for the entire Town Hall, and the lot it is located on is not a desirable site for expansion. The existing COA, although suitable for some offices on a temporary basis, is not expandable due to wetlands, and cannot house the entire Town Offices.

In the past few weeks, however, there appears to be a new development which might make this option more viable. The School Superintendent and School committee are exploring the possibility of moving the third grade out of West Street School, into East Meadow. The sixth grade at East Meadow would move to the Jr/Sr High school, joining seventh and eighth. The Superintendents administrative offices would, in part move to modular office space on site at the High School.

This is only under discussion at this time, and should not be considered by any means a decision by the school to take this path. it is one option being discussed.

If it does occur, however it would open 4 classrooms in the West Street building. The SPED Director and staff would move to West Street. The remaining offices would be available for Town Office Space. This would allow all of the Aldrich Hall offices to move to West Street. The existing library could be used as meeting space, and perhaps house a few Town Boards, when the new library is constructed.

There are two possible scenarios.

1. West Street remains open a school
2. West Street School closes and students move to East Meadow.

If the decision is made to keep West Street open, then The Town has the options of keeping the offices there or reverting to option 1A

If, long term, the intention is to move K-2 into East Meadow (with the addition of modular classrooms, or with an addition on the school) then at that point all Town offices and School administrative offices could re-locate to West Street.

Conclusion/recommendation:

Based on the above, the committee recommends the following:

1. - Option 3 (if available)

There are numerous advantages to this plan -

It is our feeling that this could be done without an over ride (with the exception of course to the addition on East Meadow, using MSBA funds in part)

There is ample room at West Street for all Offices, Boards, and Committees. The library and cafeteria could both be used for large meetings, and a few classrooms could be used for smaller meeting- all Board could meet the same night.

There would be adequate room for groups like GCAM.

The close proximity of the Administrative offices of the School and Town would be conducive to sharing resources.

The School could save money by administrative staff reductions, and reducing transportation costs.

The repair funds recently spent on West Street (roof) would not be "wasted" as they would be if the building were razed.

The building renovations needed for office space are much less than would be required for school use. Parking is adequate; the ball field/playground could be maintained. The building is in the center of Town. Any portion of the building that is not needed could be torn down.

Until the entire building is available, the offices at the annex could remain there. The vacated library could be used for meeting space and a few boards. The Veterans Plaques could be removed from Kellogg Hall and set into concrete at the site of Aldrich Hall.

If for some reason the project fell through and West Street continued as a school, the Town Hall could always be constructed on the Aldrich Hall Site. (Option 1a)

2- Option 1(a)

To construct a new Town Hall built to accommodate the Town Offices and the School Administrative staff on the site of the current Aldrich Hall. We estimate \$4 Million for this project.

- Step 1- relocate the existing offices to either West Street or the COA (Fall 2012)
- Step 2- appropriate money to de-construct Aldrich Hall (Spring 2012)
- Step 3- appropriate funds for a preliminary design, if needed and construct the new Town Hall. Spring 2013 (if west Street is not a permanent option)
- Step 4- to do what is necessary to make the existing library suitable for meeting space. Summer/Fall 2013)
- Step 6- construct a new Town Hall/School administration office (2014)

We believe we have explored all the options. Again, without funds for professional input/evaluation of existing structures, etc. this report is based on conclusions drawn from the best of our knowledge and ability.

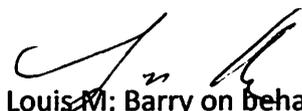
We would also like to emphasize that we think Kellogg Hall should be saved, and although it may not be financially possible for the Town to do so, every effort should be made to find a private party to keep this important part of our Town history intact.

The Board should also consider moving the Veterans Plaques from Kellogg Hall and creating a permanent location for them, perhaps on Aldrich Field near the flag pole.

Please remember that all of the above was done without current professional input. Since the Town voted not to expend funds for this purpose we relied on our own knowledge, and input from others to come up with the cost estimates. They may or may not be accurate and should not be considered as "quotes".

Also keep in mind that any project will require a public water supply, with its required setbacks, and most likely a sprinkler system. These two requirements complicate or eliminate many sites and structures as feasible alternatives.

Respectfully submitted



Louis M. Barry on behalf of
the Town Office Building space committee:
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