

**Town of Chester
Police Department
Space Needs Working Group Meeting
Thursday, November 29th, 2018
Municipal Complex
Approved Minutes**

I Preliminaries

Call the Meeting to Order
Roll Call
Approval of Minutes
Review of Bids
Bidder Interviews
Adjournment

1.1 Call to Order

This fourth meeting of the Police Department Space Needs Working Group was called to order at 9:29am.

1.2 Roll Call

Members Present:

Aaron Berube, Police
Cass Buckley, Selectman (arrived 9:45am)
Myrick Bunker, Building
Andrew Hadik, Planning
Karl Knudsen, Resident
Stephen Landau, Selectman
Corinna Reishus, Recreation

Members Absent:

Rhonda Lamphere
Michael Oleson, Road Agent
Debbie O'Sullivan, Resident
Herb Rowell, Resident

Others Present at Various Times:

Kyle Barker, Principal, Warrenstreet Architects
Kelly Leitner, Job Captain, Warrenstreet Architects
Jeff Shaw, Principal, Context Architecture

II. Old Business

2.1 Approval of Minutes

Minutes were not addressed.

III. New Business

3.1 Interview with Kyle Barker and Kelly Leitner of Warrenstreet Architects

Mr. Barker has been a practicing architect since 1987, and the bulk of his experience has been designing civic facilities. Ms. Leitner grew up in Chester and started her career with Dann Norris Batting, whose office was in town until recently. Warrenstreet is an employee-owned firm that focuses on giving back to the community by providing services pro-bono.

Selectman Landau asked of the makeup of the firm; Ms. Leitner explained that there are eleven staff members with ~100 years combined service with Warrenstreet. Police Chief Berube asked if the staff included specialized engineers (i.e. fire protection, electrical, etc.) and Mr. Barker clarified that it does not. They do, however, contract with a few engineering firms for all their projects. Mr. Barker noted that his team does their own assessments first to determine what might need further engineering.

Selectman Buckley arrived at 9:45am.

Selectman Landau asked if Warrenstreet had worked with DuBois & King (the town's engineering firm); Mr. Barker confirmed that they have done several projects together.

Mr. Barker explained the building and programming assessment process. A building needs worksheet (with up to 80 deficiency areas), programming worksheet (mathematical equation) and building and programming needs diagrams (plans) are generated to set the need for the project in factual terms. Then, a list of conclusions and options is created; usually including "do nothing", "renovate", and "build new". Mr. Barker noted that the cost of "doing nothing" often is enough to help shift the public's view of the necessity of the project.

Police Chief Berube asked of marketing; Mr. Barker explained that although there is no silver bullet, it's key to recognize the power of crowds. "If people have correct information, they make good decisions", Mr. Barker said. He suggested making the final needs assessment available to the public. Using a facebook page or wordpress site and having stakeholders send letters to the editors of local papers were also suggested. Mr. Barker emphasized identifying the community's "opinion leaders" and enlisting them to be a part of the process. Listen to what those individuals say and incorporate it into the reports – this improves the chances of reaching some of those on the fence.

Police Chief Berube asked if the estimate included attendance to monthly meetings; Mr. Barker said it did – some projects have taken ten years to come to fruition. Schematics, however, cost extra.

Recreation Director Reishus asked of Warrenstreet's history of engaging the public before the assessment is done; Mr. Barker explained that although public engagement is key, if the public is involved too early, they will assume they know what is needed before any research is done. The Police Chief, then Police and Town staff, then the public are engaged in that order.

Selectman Buckley wondered how Warrenstreet would help determine what town wants, what the Police Department should have, and the level of service needed. Mr. Barker explained that he would assemble data with the help of the Police Chief, put it in an easily-understood format, and then hold small forums of no more than 12-15 "opinion leaders". Selectman Buckley observed that Warrenstreet has focused their presentation today on buildings, but wondered where they got their population and call data. Mr. Barker noted that the RFP did not ask them to generate population and call data. He and Ms. Leitner then described how they've looked at call data in other projects; they also noted that they might choose to hire a planner with GIS mapping expertise.

Ms. Reishus asked if the cost of engineering would be above and beyond the estimate; Mr. Barker said it would.

Police Chief Berube explained that this was the first RFP he has written, and that he took information from various sources to determine what the town might need; he asked Mr. Barker how his firm would verify that is what is needed. Mr. Barker explained, as before, that Warrenstreet may choose to contract with a planner skilled in GIS mapping.

Planning Coordinator Hadik clarified that deficiencies would be facts; and growth / trends would be projections; and that previous SNHPC projections, for example, were overshot. Mr. Barker agreed, noting great variation in generational population trends.

Police Chief Berube asked of the engineering of evidence rooms, for example; Mr. Barker confirmed that these are specialized areas designed to the current standard of processing.

In cases where entirely new facilities are built, Selectman Landau asked what is done with the spaces left behind. Mr. Barker noted that his firm doesn't make these recommendations but they will help communities figure out what they want to do on a case-by-case basis. The former Hampstead PD was a very small building and was demolished. Mr. Barker is familiar with the current Chester PD and felt that "the back parts of this building are rough". He cautioned against repurposing the facility because he knows it does not meet seismic and snow load codes, for example.

Selectman Landau asked who Conestco were; Mr. Barker explained this was their third-party cost estimator contractor. Selectman Landau asked of Warrenstreet's other projects that had failed to be approved by municipalities; Mr. Barker explained that such failure is usually attributed to a lack in engaging and educating the public. Mr. Barker advocates holding charrettes, intensive meetings open to the public with brainstorming and Q & A. Planning Coordinator Hadik added that these are familiar to the town, recently age-friendly and master plan charrettes have been held.

The group thanked Mr. Barker and Ms. Leitner for their time; they departed the meeting at 10:33am.

3.2 Interview with Jeff Shaw of Context Architecture

Mr. Shaw explained that Context Architecture is comprised of thirteen project managers / designers. In the past thirty years, Context has designed fifty-six public safety projects.

Mr. Shaw showed plans for public safety buildings being built in Southbridge and Whitman, MA. Even though it's a small town, Whitman, MA handles a lot of overflow crime from its neighboring city of Brockton; and it was designed to allow a second floor easily be added.

Mr. Shaw explained that a site study matrix is first created; which includes identification and ranking of specific issues for each site, if applicable. Then the actual space needs analysis is done; which projects future staffing needs and fleet size with crime stats. A list of spaces with detailed plans are then created.

Selectman Buckley noted that it hadn't been made clear in the RFP that the town actually needs someone to help evaluate what the space needs are; now, and in twenty years. He asked Mr.

Shaw if this is something his firm can do, and if so, how they would do it. Mr. Shaw confirmed that this is a core part of the space needs process. It's definitely not a cookie cutter application; Department of Defense studies, IACP guidelines, and other national standards are consulted. Population trends and build-out analyses, as well as the town's preferred building character are considered. Context is strictly an architecture firm; but they consult with specialized engineers for things like energy efficiency and dispatch & communications. Mr. Shaw added that nice views and lots of daylight are incorporated into design to foster employee retention.

Police Chief Berube asked if Context employed any full-time engineers; Mr. Shaw said no, but they regularly work with certain engineering contractors. Mr. Shaw added that out-of-house cost estimators are used because they are more accurate.

Police Chief Berube asked what "statement of probable cost" meant; Mr. Shaw explained it is a way of wording "cost estimate", in the preliminary phase, based on a square footage.

Police Chief Berube asked if the proposal included plans; Mr. Shaw explained that the \$25k includes drawings and diagrams for more than one design. Police Chief Berube noted that various bidders probably had different interpretations of the RFP, resulting in significant proposal amounts.

Selectman Landau asked how many of Context's feasibility studies resulted in projects; Mr. Shaw estimated 60%; the main reason it's not higher is that projects get defeated by voters due to cost.

Police Chief Berube asked of marketing; Mr. Shaw noted that, for example, he just attended his 21st meeting in 6 weeks for a fire station in Andover, MA. Video tours of existing facilities are often used to show the public deficiencies. Mr. Shaw said that information should be presented to the public "continuously and repeatedly". Mr. Shaw has found that there is often a great disparity between "real needs" and "expectations of service".

Selectman Landau asked how often engineers would need to appear on-site for this project; Mr. Shaw thought maybe once or twice in the beginning.

Police Chief Berube noted that the Chester PD does not currently have its own dispatch, and that a contingency for dispatch is desired.

The group thanked Mr. Shaw for his time; he departed the meeting at 11:54am.

3.3 Working Group Discussion of Bidder Interviews & Next Steps

The Working Group discussed this week's interviews with Cowan-Goudreau, Harriman, Warrenstreet and Context.

Selectman Buckley felt that the version of the RFP that was published was "too guided" and may have led bidders to believe that the town is already aware of what its needs are; and that is actually a huge part of what must be determined through this study.

Mr. Hadik created a draft "Chester Police Department Statistics" spreadsheet which outlines types and quantities of calls and quantity of officers / staff over time (1990 to present with SNHPC population projections to 2020).

Building Inspector Bunker moved to offer the Chester Police Department Space Needs project to Harriman; Recreation Director Reishus seconded the motion. The vote was

unanimous in the affirmative; so moved.

Selectman Landau will have BOS AA Doda send a written offer to Harriman to begin the project in January; as well as letters to the other bidders informing them that the town has chosen another vendor and thanking them for their time.

IV. Adjournment

The next meeting of the Chester Police Department Space Needs Working Group is to be determined.

Police Chief Berube moved to adjourn the meeting; Mr. Knudsen seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in the affirmative; so moved.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:46pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caroline Wilson
Recording Secretary