

MILFORD CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
July 23, 2018

A Meeting of the City of Milford Police Committee was held in the Joseph Ronnie Rogers Council Chambers at Milford City Hall, 201 South Walnut Street, Milford, Delaware on Monday, July 23, 2018.

PRESIDING: Chair Katrina Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE: Committee Members:
Councilmembers Mike Boyle and Lisa Ingram Peel

Councilmembers Christopher Mergner

Mayor Archie Campbell, City Manager Eric Norenberg, Police Chief Kenneth Brown and City Clerk Terri Hudson

Chairperson Wilson called the Committee Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

New Police Facility/Design & Funding

City Manager Norenberg reminded the Police Committee that the RFQ was released to solicit architect and engineering firms for the purposing of designing the new police facility. By the July 19th deadline, six were received. Each of the proposals will be received for timeliness and accuracy, after which they will proceed to the next phase.

A discussion followed because Chief Brown had decided to focus on funding the five new officers and place the police facility project on hold. Chairwoman Wilson stated she did not recall a discussion that the need for five new officers were a must but she also wants to continue supporting the new police department.

Councilwoman Peel said she was also under the impression that the referendum had been on hold with a change of heart from Chief Brown. His goal was to get approval for the new officers and not waiting for a referendum because he thought it could be a problem with the public making such a decision. Councilman Boyle recalled the new police station and land purchase both being discussed. He feels the entire process is going to take some time, and in the meantime, there is a need to get busy and start exploring different funding options, while analyzing more accurate costs.

When asked about the time frame involving the property, Mr. Norenberg explained the option on the property expires on November 24th based on the voters denying the tax increase to fund the police station project. At this point, the City Manager feels we are beyond the point of accomplishing a referendum before November 24th due to the amount of education that is needed for voters. He prefers preparing an accurate comprehensive plan about why it is needed, what is needed and how much it will cost.

Mr. Norenberg is recommending we proceed with the purchase of the property, which was selected and identified by predecessors to he and Chief Brown between 2010 and 2012. It was agreed this was the best central location for north/south and east/west access, in addition to our downtown.

A pre-proposal conference was held with several of the firms at which time there was a discussion about the possibility of other uses at the site, in addition to the police station. That was based on the seventeen acres, which is quite a bit more than is needed. A couple ideas have been considered including selling off outlots or developing another commercial use there, both of which would help defray the overall project costs. However, the position of the station for public access and safety of officers must be considered first.

The City Manager also reported that a meeting was held with USDA officials and staff from Senator Tom Carper's staff about potential federal funding. Unfortunately, there is not a lot of money available that can help directly with the construction of the project, though there is technical assistance money that can be used for phase one of the project.

He advised that ICMA Fellow Evan Miller did a great job and quick turnaround to complete a grant application that would

help with initial costs. However, we do not know how much is available until close to the end of the Federal Fiscal Year, which is the end of September, though it could be as much as \$50,000. The balance would need to be appropriated from the general fund reserves though nothing was included in the FY18-19 budget.

When asked the estimated cost of the land, City Clerk Hudson reported \$875,000 of which \$50,000 was paid as a downpayment.

Chairwoman Wilson then provided a brief history, referencing the number of years since this process started, and the input that was received at the time from citizens and police employees. The Chief at that time, along with French and Ryan Architects, used that information to make site and design decisions.

Councilman Boyle then discussed various possibilities involving potential phasing to spread the \$15 million project over a period of years. He feels this would be a positive way to sell the package to our residents and ensure they understand the City is doing everything possible to keep costs at a minimum. At the same time, he agrees the safety issues need to be a priority and not overlooked.

Councilman Boyle's recommendation is to proceed with the purchase of the land, which buys some time to put the package together in order to make a convincing and informed presentation.

Mayor Campbell agrees with purchasing the land and recommends purchasing the out parcel that sits on Northeast Front Street. In the interim, that building could be utilized to help alleviate some of the crowding issues at the current department.

Councilwoman Peel understands the need to educate our residents and launch a full-blown PR campaign but asked what time frame needs to be considered.

Mayor Campbell asked to consider a referendum in possibly two years because our residents are still bitter about the previous school referendum. He feels that would be helpful and provide the additional time needed to create a more thorough job and to be able to reach more of our voters.

Chair Wilson recommends proceeding with the land purchase.

City Manager Norenberg feels it is important to select an architectural and engineering firm for the first phase. He explained the first phase is what has been bid and includes the feasibility, site plans, renderings, analysis of options, etc. That could then be used as educational materials which would eventually lead up to the referendum vote. In the meantime, it will take several weeks to screen and select the proposals before bringing that recommendation to Council.

When asked to talk about the Redstone process, Chief Brown stated that in 2011, Redstone was working with local Architects French and Ryan. They completed the needs' assessment study and came up with some basic blueprints which consisted of different options, including a one-story building and a two-story building. Different designs were also provided as options that included building material choices.

Councilman Boyle emphasized the building has to meet today's and future needs. Chief Brown agreed adding that technology has changed over the past eight to ten years as well.

The estimated cost of the initial building in 2011 was approximately \$7 million and last year's estimate was \$13 million.

City Manager Norenberg noted that at this point, we are coming out of a recession and the information that Redstone prepared is available. He feels that is a great starting point and Mr. Redstone has been in contact with a couple of the firms that submitted RFQ's though we will still need to evaluate each proposal and take into consideration the addition of the five new officers as part of the plan.

Chairwoman Wilson recommends we proceed with hiring the architectural/engineering firm in order to start putting something together for the public. She recalled getting to that point several years ago and people were really excited especially when they saw the visuals. Money will have to be spent to get to that point.

Once the land is purchased, it needs to be known that is where the future police department will be built.

It was confirmed that no referendum is needed to purchase the land.

Councilwoman Peel highly recommends that the firm hired should have the PR capacity and not just the architectural knowledge in order to know how to build a consensus in a community. When asked if the request was only advertised locally, it was noted that it was added to the City website, and all area newspapers including the News Journal, whose ads are often picked up regionally.

It was noted that once the land purchase is authorized, Councilwoman Peel pointed out that the voters will want to know what it is needed for. At that point, the referendum discussions need to begin. Her concern is who will be handling it.

Councilman Mergner asked what happens to the land, if the referendum fails. Councilman Boyle recommends holding onto it. Chairwoman Wilson said if it fails the first time, we will try a second time until it is successful.

Councilman Mergner expressed concern about putting the cart before the horse by allocating the money to purchase the property and starting discussions with the public. Chairwoman Wilson stressed that this is not a 'new' need. This has been on the table since before 2011 and many of our residents are familiar with it. Councilman Mergner said it is new to many new residents that have moved to Milford over the past couple of years. He believes the process should be started with City Hall meetings and presentations so the public can understand. In his opinion, it should have started last year.

Councilman Boyle feels the land will be an asset considering its acreage and location. He is sure the value of the land has increased since the agreement was signed and will continue to increase as well.

City Manager Norenberg confirmed the land is in the DDD and the opportunity zone which makes it even more valuable.

Councilman Mergner warns about the manner in which the public is informed about purchasing the land. He feels it is very important the voters understand the true need and issues involved.

Several possibilities were discussed for the land in addition to its use by the police department.

When deciding how to select the firm, it was confirmed no timeline was given in the RFQ. Mr. Norenberg explained that some general time frames were added. However, the timeline presented this past April had the referendum occurring in November. However, that date is no longer valid because the project was put on hold. Therefore, the timeline can be stretched out as needed, based on the decisions of the Police Committee and the amended schedule.

In addition, the City Manager emphasized an estimate was not requested to prevent any lock in at this point. However, the qualifications need to be evaluated and the firm who is the best fit for the city should be selected and contract negotiated. This will be a criteria and qualification-based selection without a price which will allow some additional flexibility.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilmember Boyle moved to go into Executive Session reference the below statutes, seconded by Councilmember Peel:

Pursuant to 29 Del. C. §10004(b)(2) (2) Preliminary discussions on site acquisitions for any publicly funded capital improvements, or sales or leases of real property.

Motion carried.

Chairperson Wilson recessed the Council Meeting at 6:42 p.m. for the purpose as is permitted by the Delaware Freedom of Information Act.

Return to Open Session

City Council returned to Open Session at 6:59 p.m.

Land Acquisition

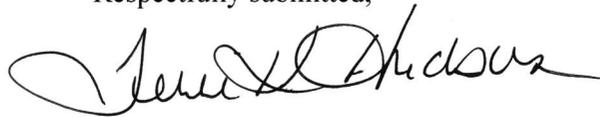
Councilman Boyle moved that City Manager Norenberg and Chief Brown continue to evaluate the proposals and proceed with the RFQ process, seconded by Councilwoman Peel. Motion carried.

Councilman Boyle moved to recommend to Council the authorization to proceed with the feasibility of purchasing the adjacent property as discussed in the Executive Session, seconded by Councilwoman Peel. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Wilson adjourned the City Council Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terri K. Hudson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "H".

Terri K. Hudson, MMC
City Clerk/Recorder