

Public Safety Facilities Review Committee
Tuesday, February 11, 2014
7:00 p.m.
Council Chambers, Albany City Hall

Co-chair Dave Burrigh called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Co-chair Morse and members Berg and Roe were absent and excused. Burrigh welcomed members Mike Martin and Janet Steele who were unable to attend the first meeting. Members quickly introduced themselves in turn.

Approval of January 28, 2014, minutes [pages 2-11 of agenda packet] Burrigh said the minutes had been prepared in far greater detail than what's required. Steele said they were very informative. Cordier said he didn't know the origin of some of the items on the Questions and Issues and Tasks posters; in particular, he did not recall "Early resolution of building sites: focus on police." Burrigh said the charts are subject to change at every meeting. He did not recall that the committee would focus on either facility. Wyatt moved to approve minutes as written; Ryals seconded. Minutes were approved by consensus.

Comments from the public – None

Burrigh said the next item was not on the agenda but something he would interject. He said members were probably all aware of talk in the newspaper, an editorial and some blog entries about some people objecting to the fact that some members of the committee are not Albany residents or not being voters. He said when he and Morse originally talked about the committee, their hope was to pull together a group of people that they felt cared about the community, called this their community, were intelligent, had something to offer, were good thinkers, and independent thinkers. He said he and Morse are extremely pleased with the makeup of the committee. Unfortunately, he said, during the last week, member Martha Wells contacted Burrigh, and told him that, because of the things that were going around, she had decided to resign. She lives a stone's throw outside the City limits in North Albany. He said he talked to Wells at length and is very sad that the committee would not be able to keep her. He described Wells as classy, very smart, calls this community her home, and from her previous time with the newspaper, she knows this community inside and out. He said Wells' resignation is a huge loss to the committee but it is Wells' choice. He said he had spoken to Morse about the resignation and they concurred to vet the situation with the committee. He read a statement received from Morse via email, addressed to the committee and the public at large. (See agenda file)

Burrigh described Morse as very eloquent and said the sentiment expressed is exactly what he feels. Wyatt said he lives in Corvallis, is not a resident of Albany or Linn County, and he had immediately raised that as an issue when he first talked to Morse about the committee. He said he has been serving the citizens on this side of the river and Linn County for 22-plus years. He said he cares about the community, about the citizens, but one thing that would bother him a lot is that, if the fact that he is on the committee, not a resident, he doesn't vote here, if that would become a liability for what the recommendation is. He said he was concerned from the time he was asked and would be willing to not serve if it became an issue.

Burright said Wyatt is a really good example of what he and Morse had looked for in committee members and when his name came up, Burright said, he considered him to be perfect for this group. He said he had worked with Wyatt for umpteen years, through additions to the jail, he had worked on the fairgrounds, and he has an engineering background. Burright said Wyatt is the kind of thinker the committee needs.

Hagerty agreed. He said his role on the committee is his connection with the Samaritan hospital system. He said the hospital is one of the best in the state and the emergency department is one of the busiest, but if we can't have police and fire show up as first responders, we have nothing. However, he added, if his presence on the committee colors the conclusions that the committee reaches, he would leave. Hagerty added that he is a taxpayer in the city of Albany. If a bond measure goes to voters ultimately, he said he would not have a say about whether it passes or not but he would get the bill. He said he believes he has a very vested interest in the City of Albany.

Reece said he thinks somehow he flew under the radar as well. He lives well outside the city limits of Albany, but has a vested interest in the city, with assets in the City and paying city taxes. He said he does not have a vote but he certainly wants a city response so that his buildings, employees and tenants are protected. When the tax bill comes, he doesn't have a choice. He said somehow residency had become an issue but he didn't think it was a criterion of the City Council that all of the committee members had to be city residents.

Burright said some people had thought that anyone who serves on any city committee has to be a city resident, but that's not the case.

Cordier said he doesn't have any problem with Wyatt and other individuals being on the committee because he knows their qualifications. He understands the argument "if you don't have skin in the game, you shouldn't play the game." He said what he is concerned about is some of the language that others have used, that said they have a vested interest in the community. That creates a potential conflict of interest issue. Burright asked how; he said all committee members have a vested interest. Cordier said he didn't know, he could create scenarios but that probably wouldn't be profitable; the issue is should there be a requirement for everyone on the committee to sign a statement that they have no vested interest and they can't make any money. For example, he said, if he owned a piece of property and wanted the committee to choose his property so he could raise the price and make some money; that is a conflict of interest. He said he is not saying anyone on the committee has a conflict of interest; he said he has a vested interest, too, but he has no ability or desire to make any personal profit from this process. Wheeler said he doesn't think anyone on the committee does. Cordier said he hopes not but there are some committee members that are required by statute to sign. He said he hasn't been asked to sign anything here and he's not suggesting that it's appropriate for this committee but he's suggesting that they need to be careful as they think about potential conflicts of interest.

Burright said he has experience with committees at many levels. In each case, when something comes up that could be a conflict, that's when a member declares it. He said he hopes that is a foregone conclusion with everyone. Cordier said it had not been brought up before so that's why he brought it up.

Steele said she was new to the committee and apologized for not being able to attend the first meeting, then added that she is offended that people in the community are questioning the validity and the value and the service that everyone around this table has brought and are planning to bring for the next three months. She said Wells is a good friend, Hagerty and Reece have served on the Chamber of Commerce board, and she works with Linn County frequently and they are deeply valued members of the community, whether Albany is their home address or not. She reiterated that she was appalled that people would question the abilities or the service or the dedication that they have to this community. She said she would not want to see any of them leave.

Ryals asked Burright if he felt that the committee should make some response or if he was asking how members felt about the residency issue. Burright said he and Morse wanted to make sure they were not off track with the group. Wheeler called for a survey; Burright explained the process for Martin and Steele.

Wheeler said it is not an issue and the committee needs to move on. If at some point it becomes a financial issue with somebody in the group, they could ask the person not to be there or sign a nondisclosure statement.

Cordier agreed.

Reece said the committee needs to move on and go forward, but he feels that those who are members of the business community should not be shut out from opportunities that might arise in the future. He said Cordier is concerned that he is seeking financial gain by being on the committee but that is in no way his goal. His goal is to see that the committee does the right thing for the community. The outcome of that may result something where he gets to participate in bidding as an engineer, but his goal is to make sure the committee gives the best input it can to the Council so they can make the best decision for Albany.

Steele, Norman, and Edwards said to move forward. Arasmith it is much ado about nothing and to move forward.

Ryals said every member of the committee is a member of the community and their wealth of experience is what the committee needs and they should move on.

Hagerty, Wyatt and Martin agreed.

Burright thanked the members and said if there is anyone who has a conflict at any time, please speak up, announce the potential conflict, and the committee will deal with it at that time.

Adoption of committee mission statement [Page 12]

Burright noted that a draft mission statement was in the agenda packet and a copy of an email from Gordon Shadle, with related suggestions, is on the table at each person's place.

Cordier asked what does "the status quo" mean? Burright said do nothing. Cordier said a do-nothing recommendation could mean don't even do another bond measure. Burright said that could be; that's not off the table.

Wyatt said d) in the proposed mission statement presumes that facilities would be financed by a bond measure, but other methods of financing are available for public facilities. He said he doesn't think that should be in the mission statement.

Arasmith said he had conferred with Burright about part of the statement by email earlier. He said he was bothered by the statement that "public safety is the highest priority of government." He believes it is a high priority but not the highest. Burright suggested changing the working to "one of the highest."

Burright asked if anything on Mr. Shadle's list should be considered. He said several of the items, while not pertaining to the mission statement, are appropriate to consider as tasks or issues to consider. Cordier referred to Item No. 2: he said the way he reads it, it means "current public facilities," and Shadle says that other facilities that are not currently public that could be modified. Burright noted that Morse drafted the mission statement, but he doesn't believe he intended to the language to be exclusive.

Reece said d) could be stricken because it is covered by c). He agrees with Shadle's language in b) proposing "project delivery method" instead of "method of construction."

Item No. 2 language is changed to "remodel and expand existing facilities either public or private."

Motion made by Reece to adopt changes as proposed; Wyatt seconded. Changes to mission statement adopted by consensus.

Burright said he had a quick update: the *Democrat-Herald* recently ran a letter to the editor from previous Police Chief Darrel Pepper, saying that the police station was designed to be expanded but he didn't say how or when or where. The letter mentioned Tim Merrill, the architect of record on the project. Burright said he had called Merrill after reading the letter and Merrill was quite emphatic that the building itself was not designed to go up. Burright said he'd also got the original drawings for the building and Ryals had taken a quick look at them before tonight's meeting started. Ryals said it does not appear that the building was designed to go up; at least, it wouldn't meet current code for loading on the foundation it has. Burright said that does not mean a building attached to it could not go up.

Fire Station 11 issues

Ryals said he has not yet had a chance to tour the fire station.

Burright asked members their impressions of the building after touring it.

Hagerty said the building was unbelievable; the seismic aspect alone is a serious deficit in a building that is the center for emergency response.

Martin said he was the son of a firefighter so he'd grown up in that building in the '50s and '60s and was a volunteer later on. He said he had seen the building go through many changes; he's not sure many of them were any good.

Arasmith said he was convinced before he went inside that the building needs to be carted off some place. Wyatt said the best thing to do would be demolish it and start over. Wyatt said he had a fire department as part to his Air Force squadron in New Mexico. He said this building has served for 65 years, was a great investment, and Albany has been very fortunate that it hasn't had an earthquake and the building hasn't fallen down. The City has also been fortunate that no one has gotten sick and filed a worker's compensation claim due to mold. He said the building absolutely needs to be replaced.

Cordier said the founding documents of the one and only urban renewal district in Albany has some definitions of "blight." One of the definitions is that blight is evidenced by buildings with "incurable functional obsolescence." He said he thinks the fire hall meets that definition.

Wheeler said he thinks the committee is in agreement that the building is not healthy. He said he is not convinced that tearing it down and building something right there is the right thing to do but the City has got to give its employees a better place to work. Wyatt and Edwards said they need a better place to live also. Wheeler added that employees shouldn't be asked to go out and risk their lives, then come back to mold in the walls or does the flashlight on the wall work. We can do better.

Burright said he had an email suggestion earlier in the week that a survey might be in order, early in the meeting, after everyone had toured the building. Wyatt called for a survey:

Wyatt said Albany needs a new main fire station.

Martin, Wheeler, Cordier, Reece, Steele, Norman, Edwards, and Arasmith agree.

Ryals said he didn't get a chance to tour the station it. He said he has spent a good deal of time looking into the geology and the potential for a seismic event in the valley. If that does occur and our main responders are digging themselves out, they won't be able to help anyone else. Hagerty agree.

- Committee recommendation: The building needs to be replaced.

Burright said he'd gone on the tour but that was one building he was pretty sure about. That was a low-hanging fruit to him, he said, from experience in his previous career. Because he expected the committee's conclusion, he said he had taken the risk that the committee would not need Chief Bradner to convince them. That led to a discussion of what should they spend time on at this meeting.

Steele asked for clarification of the recommendation. She said the committee was recommending only that the building be replaced but they are not sure it will be on that spot with a torn down building or something else. Burright said he hadn't meant that location; just that the building needs to go.

Reece asked if that building might qualify for some historical? Ryals said if it's 60 years old, it would. Reece said, to Steele's point, if that's not a functional building and has no chance of life as a fire station, if something thinks that beautiful architectural marvel could have new life as a museum, wouldn't it need to be upgraded to come into compliance with current codes.

Ryals said it wouldn't matter what went in there. He thinks the committee should consider whether it's sellable and if a better location exists in the central district that could accommodate that. He said he thinks he knows what the answer would be but the topic should be on the table.

Cordier said the committee's recommendation was that it should be torn down. Whether the building was historic was not a consideration during the survey. The survey was to tear it down. If somebody else wants to create an historic thing, go ahead but the committee recommendation is to tear it down.

Steele said she hadn't heard "tear it down."

Norman said he thought the survey and recommendation were to replace the building. Everybody had different comments about tear down and replace, but his response was to replace the building.

Wyatt said his earlier comments were to tear it down, but the survey was to replace. Wheeler said that could also mean to tear it down. Other members concurred.

Wyatt asked if the fire station had been submitted as an historic building. Ryals said it is not part of the historic district, and has not been nominated, but is old enough to be considered historic; 60 years is the cut-off point. It would not necessarily be a problem to take it down. Burright said, for now, the committee is saying "replace." Hagerty said to have the fire service out of there.

Cordier said this thing will have a life of its own and go on and on and on and that's not his definition of low-hanging fruit. He said he would do the survey from his perspective and if that doesn't get support, that's fine. He proposed that the committee's first choice would be to tear the building down.

Reece said the only reason he brought it up was the possibility that the building might have value for another purpose and the fire station could be built on another site. If the fire station is built on another site, leave it up to whomever purchases the existing site to leave it there or tear it down. He said he disagrees with the survey question.

Steele said she understood that no decision had been made to stay at that location or move. She said she would hesitate to say tear it down; she is in favor of replacing it.

Norman said he disagrees with tearing it down as the first choice because of the mission statement. It doesn't preclude any other choice, but the committee agrees that the building doesn't serve the purpose of a fire station as a central office.

Edwards agreed with Norman.

Arasmith said the building should be torn down. He said if he owned it, he would be reluctant to sell it to anyone because of the liability he would have on it forever. He said he doesn't see trying to keep it for anything.

Ryals said it is a little more complicated issue. He said he is on the Landmarks Advisory Commission and is aware that the plan calls for tearing down the fire station and another one behind it that is 100 years old. The plan does not call for removal of the Hasty Freez. He said he doesn't know if those issues have been fully explored: is the site big enough? What about the building that is on the national historic register? It will take another 10-12 months to tear down and rebuild the fire station; where will the trucks be located and the fire service operate during that time?

Hagerty said fire services and the central station need to be moved out of the existing building.

Wyatt said he agreed with Cordier that tearing down the building should be the first option and is probably the best choice for the City of Albany. He said the value of the property would improve if the building was gone.

Martin said deciding now to tear the building down is like getting the cart before the horse; the committee should decide first what to do with the fire service – keep it at that location or move it to another. If it stays there, the building would automatically be torn down. If not, someone with a lot of money might want that piece of property to build a bigger Hasty Freez and make it the buyer's responsibility to tear it down.

Wheeler said the committee needs to look at being able to replace the fire station; he said he is not ready to say tear it down. He suggested the committee agree that something needs to be done but leave what to do with the building down the road a bit. He asked if an appraisal had been done on the city property. HE said everyone agrees that the fire station needs to be replaced and that's a great first step.

Burright reaffirmed that everyone agrees the fire station needs to be replaced. He said he had asked Chief Bradner to come tonight prepared to talk about the site; a decision about the site will make a big difference in other decisions about the building.

Bradner distributed a memo summarizing work done to date on selecting a site for the main fire station, acquiring property, how the department would continue operations during construction and specific building needs that are specific to the main station (see agenda file). Three main documents support the memo and were distributed at the first meeting: the timeline, replacement location options and the ZCS/HSR study.

Site selection: Bradner said a property selection committee was chosen in November 2009 and made up of members of the Public Safety Commission (including Mike Martin) and Fire Department staff. The committee met for about seven months and came up with a list of potential sites that met the requirements for the downtown fire station. Bradner reviewed those requirements (see memo.) The property selection committee had looked at property near Central Elementary School, but it was hampered by ODOT

regulations for highway access and could have had a negative impact on the neighborhood. The former location of Tom's Garden Center on Pacific Boulevard was rejected in part because the downtown station has more visitors than any other fire station and positioning it on a busy state highway could limit that access. Bradner said he considered the Mark Thomas Motors site, across Lyon Street and a block north of Station 11, a perfect location; he approached Thomas three times but he was not interested in selling. The property committee also considered the *Democrat-Herald* property, but the assessed value was over \$3 million. The committee also looked at expansion capabilities: the City owns half an acre at the current location, so buying another half acre in another location probably would not make sense, Bradner said.

Bradner reviewed the committee's work with the City Council. The property committee had made two recommendations to explore further: expansion at the present site and the Central School property. The City Council agreed with that but had two additional sites they asked Bradner to explore as well. He brought back information on the two additional sites and the Council came back to the current site and Central School.

The City hired ZCS/HSR in 2011 to do an extensive analysis of the site and the Fire Department. The consultants concluded that a downtown fire station should be two stories with 29,000 square feet of space on 1.64 acres. That was when the department started looking to purchase additional property. They approached the school district about Central School. The district was not interested in selling, Council had some concerns, the site had access and neighborhood issues, and was eventually dropped from consideration, Bradner said. Council and staff returned to considering expansion on the current site.

Bradner directed committee members to a map of the area. He said staff had contacted surrounding property owners and working with realtors to find out who would be interested in selling and looked at a number of options for configuring the site. He began with conversations with Gary Davenport, who owns Richard's Cleaners, Hasty Freez, and the historic Ralston Dodge building. Davenport told Bradner that his family had said for years that it would make sense for the Fire Department to expand onto his property and he was willing to negotiate. The City has now signed a purchase and sale agreement with the Davenports to buy the cleaners, the Ralston Dodge building and a portion of the Hasty Freez property, enough to allow Hasty Freez to remain operating there. Wheeler asked how much land was involved. Bradner said he thought it was about 17,000 square feet or a little less than half an acre.

Bradner said, while negotiating with the Davenports, he approached the owner of two properties across Sixth Avenue – 500 Lyon Street Company. He said the company representatives understood what the Fire Department was trying to do and were also interested in negotiating. The City now has a draft purchase and sale agreement on two parcels that has been agreed to in concept with a specific price and is waiting for attorneys to finalize everything. He said he hopes the sale will be completely within the next week or two. A third property is 129 Sixth Avenue SE. An old house there was damaged by arson in 2010 and was later demolished. The City bought that parcel through foreclosure.

Cordier asked about the historic property, specifically a garage. Bradner pointed to a "shanty" at the end of the City-owned parcel; it has no historic significance. Cordier clarified that the historic building Ryals referred to is on 7th Avenue.

Wheeler asked about contingencies on Davenport property. Bradner said the property must pass geotechnical studies to make sure it's not on a liquefaction zone and must pass all environmental studies. Wheeler asked why all the parcels are needed if Sixth Avenue is to be vacated. Bradner said the total of all parcels equals 1.6 acres, the amount recommended as needed by the ZCS/HSR study for a two-story fire station. Martin said the property would include space for parking and ramps.

Cordier said he thought the 1.6 acres came from a single-story 29,000 square foot building with parking. Bradner said a single-story station would require 1.88 acres; a 3-story building would need 1.37 acres. (p. 226 in the binder)

Members asked additional questions about the shanty's location and status. Bradner said the City has received numerous complaints from neighbors and all would like to see the structure come down; that will be done before too long. Cordier asked if the historic building at 177 7th Avenue was coming down. Bradner said no, the Council gave strong direction that it be relocated or repurposed in some way. Bradner said he has had numerous conversations with Davenport relocating the building and Davenport is very agreeable to that. Bradner provided some history about the building when it was the Ralston Dodge dealership.

Ryals asked about repurposing the Ralston Dodge building at the current location. Bradner said staff has discussed moving the Fire Museum to the site. Martin said he thinks the museum is a great idea but wonders how that affects overall square footage needs. Bradner said he would address that as he talks about moving forward.

Cordier asked Ryals if his company benefits financially from the creation of the historic building and its renovation. He asked if Ryals was likely to get a contract to redevelop or repurpose that building because it's architecturally whatever it is. Ryals said no, the City has an historic architect on contract; if something was going to be done with the building and an architect was needed, that person would be hired; it is not Ryals. If it was to be repurposed as part of new development, it would fall under the purview of whatever architect the City commissions. It wouldn't be something that he would be looking at to do.

Wheeler asked the cost of the Hasty Freez deal. Bradner said it was \$545,000 less a \$50,000 donation that the Davenports have agreed to make to the Fire Department. The two properties north of Sixth Avenue total \$625,000 for the parcels, and 129 Sixth Avenue was \$500.

The geotechnical study was done on January 14. Bradner said he is waiting for a final report but initial results from the drillers, who drilled down 60 feet, was that there is no issue. The environmental tests began February 5 at a number of locations and no reports are back yet. The City got a \$60,000 State of Oregon Brownfields Redevelopment grant to pay for the environmental testing. The state has a drycleaner fund that will cover costs of cleaning up any issues related to the cleaners. Wheeler asked for clarification: any cleanup costs associated with the cleaners are on the seller, with no out-of-pocket costs to the city.

Burright said the City could have contamination from the station's old lube room. Bradner agreed, added that the station also used to have a diesel tank and a tank for unleaded gas on site. Related issues would have to be addressed by the City. He said he hopes to get final reports back in a month or two. Burright asked if Bradner or others know the magnitude such cleanups. Bradner said he didn't know the scope of work needed for the city property. He has met with state Department of Environmental Quality staff a few times to discuss the cleaners; DEQ said some similar projects have cost \$1 million and the drycleaners fund has enough money in it.

Ryals said he recently did a project in McMinnville involving a drycleaner and two tanks that came to about \$15,000. Reece said he has experience with that at the Ironworks where diesel and TCE were found in the soil. It had to be hauled to Coffin Butte with a per-ton tariff totaling \$73,000. DEQ costs are unknown at the outset. He said the City had made a very smart move in going after clean-up funds in advance. Reece said he thinks any contamination at the fire station itself should be pretty well contained. The mitigation for those types of volatile organic contaminants is to cap them if they are deep and the soil does not need to be disturbed.

Wyatt said part of the problem is the water table in Albany. When Linn County cleaned up Jackson Street, it had diesel and that was probably \$60,000 with testing. The problem with a drycleaner would be where the plume went. Until you get the report back, you really don't know. He asked Bradner, if Fire wanted to expand the footprint, has he talked to any of the other property owners? Bradner said yes. One sold out from underneath them; another was pulled back at the 11th hour. Discussion followed about various properties on Sixth Avenue.

Ryals noted that parking eats up probably half of the property. He said he looks across the street at the *Democrat-Herald* and a lot of the parking lot is empty; he asked if anyone had looked into acquiring part of that? Bradner said he had not looked into joint use of parking there.

Wheeler asked that ZCS does. Bradner said they are a professional engineering firm from Klamath Falls and had partnered with HSR Master Planning Architecture, Inc. They were selected because of experience doing emergency services facilities. Albany hired them to do a programming and needs assessment, what would be needed in a new fire station. They did not look at any sites, but Bradner did talk to them about the current site and their thoughts on remodeling the existing building. He said they reached the same conclusion that this committee had. Wheeler asked when the City has last looked at an alternate site. Bradner said June 2013.

Hagerty asked if there is any concern about oil at the Ralston garage. Bradner said environmental testing is being done there as well. Old documents indicate it was a repair garage, and an auto painting booth may have been in there. All those things are being considered.

Ryals asked if, after all the studies and going to the Council, was there any controversy about shutting down Sixth Avenue? Bradner said there was concern about shutting down Sixth and about the drycleaners. He said at some of the early Council meetings, some of the Councilors said they didn't want to take on someone else's nightmare. That's why Fire pursued the brownfields redevelopment grant, the drycleaner fund to pay for it. The property to the south of the Fire station also has a prospective purchaser's agreement that says the City wants to purchase the property but it also wants a clean bill of health. The sellers are having the environmental testing done, remediation will be done if needed but if anything else comes up in the future, DEQ foots the bill. The City is pursuing that to provide protection. The City has not signed the prospective purchaser's agreement because it needs the test results first.

Arasmith said he and Cordier had an opportunity to go with Bradner to look at Stations 12 and 13. From those site visits and viewing Station 14 from Google Earth, he said it looks like what has happened is that the City, like lots of cities, has boxed itself in with each of the places where it's difficult to expand. At Station 12, the property includes the City bus barns, a big lift station, and the Fire museum. At Station 13 by Home Depot, property is on both sides of it. He said it looks like a little more expansion is possible in North Albany. He cautioned the committee not to put the City in the same box here. He said he had looked at population projections for the county (he said he didn't find any for the city), looked like about 1% per year, which is not big but it compounds. He said his approach is to challenge assumptions. He said one that he'd challenged Cordier on recently was whether emergency medical services should be private or is it something the City should be doing. He said they did some research and concluded that what the City is doing is the right thing. He said other people had brought others to his attention, such as the museum: besides the LaFrance truck there, it has some very nice pieces of equipment that the public doesn't get to see that are stored in the bus barn. He said he's not sure why the bus barn is on the Fire station property. It would be nice if that equipment was in a place where the public could appreciate it.

He said with Station 11 and the police facility, he's noticed that everybody has a desire for training facility and a community room; what we want and what we really need may be two different things, but maybe a large training facility should be where the training equipment is now, on 34th Avenue. He said if he owned that, he would look at moving the museum out of there and put training facility there. One of

the down sides for training is bus barn back there; you start doing training, then bring the buses back, they have to stop, roll up the hoses – a number of things go into deciding what is the best move here. Other things that come to mind include water rescue. He said he thought the county also did that; is it a duplicate or could it be merged together? When looking at a place to store supplies for the ambulances, it makes sense here because it's close to the hospital, but he said Bradner said Stations 12 and 13 get the majority of the calls; wouldn't it make sense to have the supplies closer to those ambulances? He said his tendency with such subjects is to step back and say what is it we really need and what should be here? He said he noticed a yellow water truck at Station 11; he said he doesn't know if it's needed downtown but probably needed at 34th Avenue but there's no place to put it. He said he has a tendency to challenge all those things; he didn't want an answer tonight but wanted the Chief to be thinking about them.

Bradner said these are all questions that Fire personnel have asked themselves and all those things are done very purposefully. He explained the tender is not staffed daily but is located at Station 11 so all the other stations can stop and pick it up.

Burright said Arasmith's questions are a good segue into what will come later. He said he had talked with Bradner earlier in the day about the possibility of the committee deciding quickly that the building needs to be replaced, then going into the programming document to look at what's there. Depending on the committee's direction, they could discuss what's necessary in the building and what would be nice and if dollars had to be cut, what would go first. He said Bradner said he needed more time to vet that with his staff. Burright said he'd like to resolve exactly what the building is going to hold and then do the site, but that isn't going to happen tonight. He said he'd like to get a start on the site and finish it up after the programming is discussed.

Wyatt said if this becomes the location, by getting some additional parcels nearby, the Fire Department would have expansion capabilities and options for one-story or two-story buildings. Single-story buildings don't have to have elevators; he said, from his experience, elevators are a pain, especially as they age. A single-story building automatically has accessibility with one story but it limits other options dramatically.

Reece asked to talk about the parking situation. He said arrangements could be made such as leasing spaces across the street. More building could be done on the site by moving parking to adjacent locations. He suggested talking to Lee Enterprises about buying a quarter of their block for future expansion of a storage facility. Instead of a two-story facility going up, the building could go down with a basement, create storage space and keep the same footprint. Wheeler asked how much land is needed for a single-story building. Bradner said the study shows 1.88 acres.

Ryals called for a survey. He said he had been through all 17 locations on the list, and is coming to conclusion to stay on this site in some form and tear the old building down. He said he'd like to survey to see if there is another site:

Hagerty said he likes this plan right here.

Wyatt agreed, especially considering the City's investment in purchasing additional properties there. He said it is the logical choice.

Martin said he agrees totally, adding that the committee needs to touch on the issues related to vacating Sixth Avenue.

Wheeler said he is not convinced yet. He asked if there other options and asked if the old Safeway building was considered. Bradner said it would take the staff farther from the response area and the downtown core and would not be in the best interest of Fire operations. Wheeler asked about the former

Tom's Garden Center location. Bradner said it is long and thin and narrow but the biggest concern there is proximity to the rail line.

Cordier said he believes the fire station ought to be where the existing station is, but he is not in agreement about closing Sixth Avenue and the issue of having one building or two buildings is still an open question. He said the general location is right but he hasn't seen a site plan so that's as far as he can go.

Reece said he agrees that this is the site; all the work's been done toward site selection in years gone by and unless a new site raises its head, the conclusion is this is where it needs to be.

Steele agreed that this is where it needs to be.

Burright said his gut feeling is this is the right place and he can't think of any place better, but he is also bothered by vacating Sixth Avenue. He said if a private person or business wanted to locate there and say they had to close Sixth Avenue, he has a feeling the City would say no but because it's the City, we will. However, it's also a fire station, a critical component to our community; maybe, because of that, if that's what it takes, that's ok, the price we pay. He said he's also concerned about the surrounding homes and people who live nearby. It's a small inconvenience to have to use other streets, he said, and if he lived there, he thinks he would put up with that just to have the fire station close. Bradner said he has spoken to neighbors and they are very much in favor of closing the street and think it would improve their property values. The City also did some traffic studies on that scenario a few years ago. More discussion is needed.

Norman said he thinks this is the site. He said he had reservations about closing the street as well but it could serve to the advantage of the department in eliminating hard turns and backing fire apparatus responding to and returning from emergency calls.

Edwards agreed that the site is the right place.

Arasmith agreed; it makes the most sense. He said he is absolutely opposed to closing Sixth, based on years of doing business with small communities where streets have been vacated, making it difficult to work on utilities. He said is also not convinced that one building is necessary but possibly two. He said he is really looking forward to getting this out on the table so when people confront him, he can say yeah, we looked at that. He would like that information to get out to the public.

Ryals added that he thinks it's the right location, it has a lot of issues, but it feels like that's enough area. He said at the start of the meeting, he wasn't convinced it was the right spot but he is now.

Reece asked if Sixth Avenue is part of the acreage calculation. Bradner said it is, just to the edge of the city property line. He spoke briefly about the location of underground utilities there.

Burright summed up the surveys, saying he heard the committee agree that the fire station should stay at its current location but they are not agreed about Sixth Avenue or what the station should look like. Steele said she doesn't know how a new configuration would work without vacating Sixth.

Bradner referred the committee to the list of optional properties and a comparison of the acreage used by each of the current fire stations. With the additional parcels downtown, Station 11 would have essential the same amount of land as Stations 13 and 14. Both are smaller buildings and a single story. Bradner said he'd heard comments during the bond election that people wanted to see a conceptual drawing of a new fire station. Since the property still isn't secured, Bradner said, he has not been able to go to an architect with a footprint and ask for a drawing.

To Ryals' comment that the station has to remain operational during construction, Bradner said that is correct; other stations don't have room to store the equipment and apparatus from Station 11 and the Fire Department could not leave the downtown area unprotected for the time that construction would take. He said he has talked to HSR, ZCS, and the engineering firm that did the seismic remodel at Station 12 and talked about a concept: close Sixth, build the apparatus bays on the street right-of-way, then build firefighter living quarters on the north side of the street; once that construction was completed, would move the apparatus out of the old building into the new bays, then move the day staff to another location temporarily while the old building is demolished and additional construction happens south of Sixth. That would allow continuity of operations during construction. Bradner said phased-in construction comes with additional costs but allows Fire operations to continue until new facilities are ready.

This configuration would provide drive-through apparatus bays so apparatus can exit onto Sixth without making the hard turns that they do now. Bradner said, when he first started looking into replacing the station, he didn't anticipate how many complaints he would get from the public about engines blocking Lyon Street to back into the engine bays. Drive-through bays eliminate backing up and are safer.

Cordier asked how many square feet are gained by closing Sixth Avenue. Reece and Ryals estimated it at about 12,000-14,000 square feet.

Burright said he hears three arguments for vacating Sixth:

1. Get the necessary square footage;
2. Allow phased-in construction; and
3. Drive-through bays and direct access straight out.

Reece asked if the required parking is in code or desired; is it based on staffing or square footage? Bradner said shift change requires extra parking. Reece reviewed other large developments in Albany that had been faced with specific parking requirements in code, based on building footprint, but fewer spaces were allowed. Shift change may not require additional on-site parking, he said, if those arriving for duty parked on the street until those ending a shift were gone. That approach could save space. Bradner said ZCS had checked with the City on parking requirements when conducting their study. Wyatt said a community meeting room in the building would also affect parking.

Burright said the site issue is something the committee would deal with some more.

Questions to answer

Burright directed the committee's attention to the lists of questions to answer and asked for changes.

Cordier asked if parking codes are flexible, and if Lee Enterprises would allow Fire staff to park on their property. Burright added "Other parking opportunities" to the list.

Steele noted the question about remodeling buildings. Burright crossed off the Fire building.

Cordier said he wants the committee to focus on Fire and hopes they can go deeper into the Fire issue before moving on to the Police Department. Burright said the Police Department tours are scheduled and that schedule should remain, but the committee had made progress on the Fire issue tonight, it is fresh in their minds, and he recommended that they continue to work on Fire for now.

Consensus was to stay working on Fire Department and get into the programming document and space needs at the next meeting.

Wyatt came back to the Lee Enterprises property. He said he suspect the company doesn't want to sell it, nor does the City want to buy it, but the number of people working there is dramatically less than it used to be. He said he doesn't like the idea of people going back and forth across Lyon Street, but he suggested an option of getting leases from Lee for day offices. That could address part of the scope of the project, including some parking. Bradner said the Deputy Fire Marshals work closely with the firefighters, so would generate a lot of back and forth traffic across Lyon Street. Burrigh added the option to the Questions list.

Reece had additional comments related to a community room and parking needs associated with that.

Committee thoughts and comments

Cordier presented a paper titled "Fire Station 11 is within the Central Albany Revitalization Area" (see agenda file.) He said the definition of blight fits this station and referenced the City of Albany mission and vision statements and several sections of the CARA plan. He said he thought Norman had brought up the issue of finding other funding methods. He said a coming CARA agenda is a plan to ask the public for ideas of where to spend \$3 million and he believes CARA should be used to its fullest possible extent to help the rebuild of this station. He believes the public investment is worthwhile. He said he wants to see a police station built and CARA has the ability to borrow up to \$56 million, they've already borrowed about \$10 million, so there's \$40 million sitting on the table. It would mean no bond. He said even the acquisition of property is within the CARA bounds. He would like to see the committee discuss the concept. He said his goal is to get a recommendation to the City Council to apply CARA funding to support this project.

Arasmith said Cordier had referred to the Police Department. Cordier said he meant to say Fire but the Police Department is within the CARA boundary as well. He said he wants to see some value, true value, come out of the CARA process.

Members asked about how quickly they need to act regarding CARA funding. City Manager Wes Hare said he assumes the committee would want to make recommendation to CARA Advisory Board. He added that the committee would need to deal with some issues: for one, the Fire Station is not a part of the CARA plan and an argument could be made that a fire station is a major amendment to the plan and that now requires a vote of the people. That could be done, but would take more time. It could be a part of a package recommendation from the committee to include CARA funding and is something that has been done in other urban renewal districts, Hare said.

Burrigh said discussion is going to take more time. Cordier agreed, but said he wanted to rebut Hare: it is an opinion that the Fire Station is not in the plan. He said the items in the document he presented can be used to say that it is within the plan; nothing in the plan mentions replacing the Fire station, but enough markers are there that it shouldn't need a change, but if it does, he think it fits the definition of a minor change.

Reece said Cordier had made an interesting point and the committee should explore it deeper; it's creative thinking. He said he likes the direction the committee is going, and likes having selected a site. He said he is not hung up on what happens with Sixth Avenue. He said the committee has some opportunities to maximize the site for the future and not get boxed in.

Steele said she likes the chosen site, has no problem with vacating Sixth Avenue, and CARA is an interesting thought that the committee should explore.

Norman said he's glad they got quick consensus on the site. He said he is trying to get his mind around CARA paying for this; his first thought is why would the City pay for itself? He said maybe Hare has

examples of where urban renewal money has been used that way. He said urban renewal funds are used to leverage private funds and doing something public will never have the tax increment impact that private investment would have. He thinks it is a creative solution but wants to know more about how it would work.

Edwards said the committee has come a long way and she appreciated Chief Bradner talking to people on Sixth to see how they feel about closing the street. She thinks the committee is going in the right direction.

Arasmith said he likes the fact that they've reached a decision and is looking forward to getting into the weeds.

Ryals said he thinks this is the right location and there's enough room there. He would like to pursue acquisition of all that property if possible, but that doesn't mean building it all out to start. The City needs still needs to be frugal with resource. The issue of CARA is worth exploring. People have different opinions of what CARA is for; he said he believes it was intended to leverage private funds to increase the tax base. The argument could be made that the Fire station serves the same area and could make it more attractive for an outside developer to come in with a large expensive development downtown if he knows it's going to be protected. He doesn't know if CARA is the right answer for the whole project but some cost-sharing might be possible. He said he's been to CARA several times and if someone proposed funding all of it through CARA, they would meet with resistance.

Hagerty said he appreciates all the work Bradner has done, especially managing the Davenport property and the environmental issues. He likes what the committee has done.

Wyatt said the committee is making progress. As to CARA, he agrees it might bear a share of the cost but not the whole thing; CARA has been used for utilities and streetscape projects. He said having a new fire station downtown will increase values for the whole area.

Martin said he can't see how a fire station can operate out of two buildings without vacating Sixth. He said he is happy with the conclusions reached tonight.

Wheeler said he is impressed with how much progress has been made.

Burright said when he and Morse decided the committee was finalized, they both said this is a good group and they were right; he thanked everyone for participating, adding that they don't always agree but there's good discussion.

Next meeting will key on the programming study.

The meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Signature on file.

Marilyn Smith
Management Assistant/Public Information Officer