

THE THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2013 SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WATERFORD, CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:34 PM BY THE MAYOR, ROBERT J. CRITELLI, JR.

THIS MEETING IS BEING HELD AT THE WATERFORD TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT BUILDING LOCATED AT 2208 ATCO AVENUE, ATCO, NEW JERSEY.

NOTICE OF TIME AND DATE FOR THIS MEETING WAS SENT ON APRIL 26, 2013 TO THE COURIER-POST AND CENTRAL RECORD NEWSPAPERS AS A SUNSHINE NOTICE AND IS POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE "OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW". ALSO, A LEGAL NOTICE WAS PUBLISHED IN THE COURIER POST NEWSPAPER ON APRIL 30, 2013.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG:**ROLL CALL:**

Committeeman Hurley - Present
Committeeman Koons - Present
Committeewoman Merlino - Present
Committeeman Richardson - Present
Mayor Critelli - Present

PROFESSIONALS:

Virginia L. Chandler, Township Clerk - Present
Lawrence C. Ruocco, Township Administrator - Present
David C. Patterson, Esquire Township Solicitor - Present
Debra L. Shaw-Blemings, Deputy Township Clerk - Absent

PRESENTATION BY RALPH J. CONDO, CHAIRMAN OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING COMMITTEE ON AN OVERVIEW OF THEIR REPORT ON THE PROPOSED NEW PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING. (See Attached Report)

DISCUSSION ON THE PROPOSED NEW PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING:

Mr. Condo requested the Township Committee accept the report and post the report on the Township Website. He noted the Public Safety Committee is an advisory committee and the report is submitted to the Township Committee for their review. He asked if the Township Committee had any questions.

There were no comments from the Township Committee.

ANY ACTION NECESSARY TO BE TAKEN: Action taken after public comment portion.

PUBLIC COMMENT PORTION OF THE MEETING:**MAYOR OPENS THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS:**

Richard Beswick, Hillside Drive noted the need for a Public Safety Building, but that Township roads need repair and there are other areas also that need funding. He noted the issue should be put on the ballot as a referendum. He noted Loudon could be fixed and then there would be funds to address other needs in the Township. He voiced his concern about a possible Fire District.

Dave Cilona noted Loudon is a great property but in a bad location. He indicated the Fire Department was not looking to create a Fire District.

Carl Lange offered Loudon for one dollar.

Dave Cilona, noted Loudon is a great property, the location is a problem, it is too far away, it is all about response time.

Karen Strauss, Cooper Road inquired about the cost and need for a management firm.

Ralph Condo, noted the need for a management firm would be looked into if the project moves forward.

Karen Strauss, Cooper Road noted the decision should be up to the people, it should not be a decision made by the Mayor & Township Committee. She inquired about how many minutes are needed to respond before there is a problem.

Dave Cilona, noted no specific time, they like to be out of the fire station in five or six minutes from the 911 call.

Stan Banes, Atco Avenue noted he learned a lot from the firefighters. He inquired about the cost for utilities.

Ralph Condo, noted there is a calibration of a 71% savings on utilities as the new building would be more efficient.

Dave Cilona, noted the present building is 95 years old and the heater runs all the time just to keep the temperature at 50 degrees.

Stan Banes, Atco Avenue noted these are hard economic times. He noted the schools etc all have needs. He noted it is an excellent report. He voiced his concern for the cost and his concern for the senior citizens. He noted the financing aspect needs to be considered for all needs of the Township not just the firefighter needs.

James Lombardo, White Horse Pike noted these are hard economic times and his concern for the senior citizens. He requested the Township not move forward with the project. He suggested a Metro Fire Service.

Jon Becker, Morris Avenue noted the fire fighters deserve a building.

Dana Paul, Andrea Court noted the issue should be put on the ballot as a referendum. She inquired about the fire department operating budget.

Dave Cilona responded the operating budget is \$72,400.00.

Dana Paul, Andrea Court inquired about how much the firefighters are paid.

Dave Cilona, responded they are not paid except for a yearly stipend as an incentive. He noted the need for a new public safety building.

Dana Paul, Andrea Court noted she is not saying that the firefighters do not do a good job, but the issues should be on the ballot.

Mayor Critelli, noted the Metro Police Force raised County taxes.

Gabe Cimino, Jackson Road noted the firefighters did not get a stipend when he was fighting fires. He inquired about the run reports regarding the location of the fires.

Dave Cilona, noted 85% to 90% of the time when going to a fire they go left out of the fire hall.

Gabe Cimino, Jackson Road noted that Atco should have been closed and Dunbarton and Loudon should have been kept open. He noted the need for the proposed building but that he doesn't think the Township has the money.

Dave Cilona noted the stipend is an incentive and the firefighters have to qualify to receive the stipend.

Matt Cushing, Josie Lane voiced his concern about the cost of the proposed building. He inquired about bonding and funding.

Mayor Critelli noted the project would be bonded.

Ralph Condo responded they are looking for outside funding to assist with the cost, Items being looked at are the need for a building and the location.

Matt Cushing, Josie Lane noted he does not think funding assistance will be available as funding is hard to come by. He suggested the building should be toned down, build a nice building for less money.

Ralph Condo noted he does not think anyone has a problem with the need for a new building or the dedication of the firefighters. He explained the need for a new building and the funding involved.

Dave Cilona noted other fire departments were visited to compile needs, he noted every room in the proposed new building has a purpose. He noted the fire department just received a grant for fire packs and it took three times of applying for the grant to receive the funding.

Walter Barnes, Atco Avenue voiced his opposition to the location where the fire vehicles are washed. He voiced his opposition to the fire vehicles being parking on the sidewalks outside of the fire house.

Richard Yeatman, Atco Avenue thanked the fire chief and the firefighters for their service. He inquired about the Robbie Conley Report regarding equipment needs and response time.

Dave Cilona noted equipment and response time were addressed in the Robbie Conley Report including ISO standards.

Ralph Condo noted a possible insurance discount that can be received with an up to code building.

Dave Cilona noted shared services with other fire departments.

Richard Yeatman, Atco Avenue voiced his concern that he was told he could not attend the Public Safety Building Committee Meetings. He noted the firefighters should have some relief. He noted these are hard economic times. He noted the issue should be on a referendum.

Maria Yeatman, Atco Avenue inquired about the cost per average home.

Ralph Condo responded the figure received from the Tax Assessor for an average home is \$114,000.00 and change. At 3% interest rate the cost would be \$87.67 a year for 20 years and at 2% the cost would be \$76.38 a year. A United States Department of Agriculture loan would be \$63.61 per year.

Maria Yeatman, Atco Avenue inquired how green is the proposed new building.

Dave Cilona responded the building is energy efficient, more to build and less to operate. He deferred to Dan Cormaney.

Dan Cormaney responded regarding the energy efficiency.

Laurelle Cummings, Richards Avenue noted her appreciation for the firefighters and noted the need for a new building. She voiced her concern regarding the cost to the residents. She inquired about a building with less bays.

Ralph Condo responded about the need for all the bays referring to the Robbie Conley Report.

Laurelle Cummings, Richards Avenue mentioned less bays being needed if the EMS are not joining. She inquired about shared services.

Dave Cilona explained shared services with other towns and shared duty nights. He noted the building is designed for a 50 year plan. He noted concerned residents came out to the meeting tonight.

Laurelle Cummings noted she is not sure all the residents are aware of the meeting tonight. She mentioned the firefighters doing fund raisers to assist with the cost of the building.

Ralph Condo noted fund raisers were discussed.

Dave Cilona noted they need a way to set up funding. He noted the existing building would be given to the Township to sell with the proceeds to assist with the new building.

Ralph Condo noted there may be assistance available from FEMA.

Laurelle Cummings noted the Township Committee should think about putting the issue on the ballot as a referendum.

James Lombardo, White Horse Pike suggested requesting Governor Chris Christy assist with the funding rather than bonding the proposed new building. He noted the need for a new building. He voiced his concern for the cost to the residents.

Ralph Condo noted there has been a meeting with Michelle Brown a representative from the Governor's office.

William Rohloff, W. Atlantic Avenue posed the question, are you saying the Township Committee can make the decision and it does not have to go on the ballot?

Mayor Critelli, responded that is correct.

Francis Campbell, Forest Drive noted he is not opposed to a new building, he supports Chief Ciona and the firefighters. He thanked all the volunteers. He noted the residents need to stand together and tell the Township Committee to do what they want or they will be voted out of office.

Karen Strauss, Cooper Road noted more people should stand up and say they want to vote on this issue.

Gabe Cimino, Jackson Road noted the schools also need assistance.

Ralph Condo noted the School Board had the courage to do the right thing even though the referendum was not successful.

Gabe Cimino, Jackson Road noted the need for a new fire building but voiced his concern regarding the cost.

MAYOR CLOSES THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS:

Dave Ciona voiced his concern about the possibility of a referendum being unsuccessful.

Mayor Critelli noted there had been no closed session meetings regarding this issue and the Township Committee has made no decisions regarding this issue.

MOTION:

Moved by Richardson, 2nd by Critelli to accept the Public Safety Building Committee Report and post the report on the Township Website.

Poll Vote:

Committeeman Hurley - Yes

Committeeman Koons - Yes

Committeewoman Merlino - Yes

Committeeman Richardson - Yes

Mayor Critelli - Yes

ADJOURNMENT: (9:45 PM)

Moved by Merlino, 2nd by Richardson to adjourn.

ALL IN FAVOR:

Committeeman Hurley - Yes

Committeeman Koons - Yes

Committeewoman Merlino - Yes

Committeeman Richardson - Yes

Mayor Critelli - Yes

ATTACHMENTS: Public Safety Building Committee Report.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

Virginia L. Chandler, RMC
Township Clerk

2131 Auburn Avenue
Atco, NJ 08004-1900

Township of Waterford

Public Safety Building Committee

Phone: (856) 768-2300
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To: Robert J. Critelli, Jr., Mayor and Township Committee

FROM: Public Safety Building Committee
Ralph J. Condo, Chair

RE: Findings and Recommendations

DATE: May 16, 2013

In accordance with Resolution # 2013-72 adopted by the Township Committee on January 23, 2013, this memorandum is intended to meet our requirements as stated in section five (5) of that resolution.

INTRODUCTION:

By adopting resolution # 2013-72 the Township Committee determined that the matter of the construction of a new Public Safety Building should again be evaluated. They appointed a committee of five (5) Township residents that had various qualifications relating to finance, construction, real estate and other experiences as deemed appropriate.

The Committee was appointed on February 13, 2013 and held its first meeting on February 18, 2013. Since that time the Committee has met many times officially and on several occasions members of the public attended those meetings. In addition, numerous informal meetings were held with representatives from the Federal, State and County governments. The Committee also met with various experts and professionals such as the Township Engineer, Administrator, Treasurer, Certified Financial Official, Construction Official, Solicitor, Clerk, etc. for advice and counsel.

We wish to thank all of those who cooperated with the Committee and our task could not have been completed without their assistance.

In conducting its deliberations and reaching its findings and recommendations, this Committee took its responsibilities very seriously. We knew that if the Township Committee were to undertake this project it would perhaps not only be the largest public works project ever undertaken by the Township but would have a direct and profound impact on all of our residents. Its impact would not just be on their overall safety and security, but on their financial resources now and in the future. We fully understood that there would be additional costs to the taxpayers and have tried our best to mitigate those costs. We approached this assignment with the utmost sincerity and commitment to doing what was in the best interest of the entire township.

We also understood there is no greater responsibility of elected officials then to provide a safe and secure community for their residents. We have tried to provide you with the information that will help you decide on how to proceed. The committee thanks the Mayor and members of the Township Committee for having faith in us.

The Committee determined that there were several areas or questions for us to review and make recommendations on, they were;

1. Is there a need for a new Public Safety building?
2. Does the design previously presented still meet the requirements of the Township?
3. Was the location previously identified still the preferred site and if so, how could it be acquired?
4. What would be the estimated total cost of the project?
5. How would the project be funded and what would the financial impact be to the average taxpayer?
6. How the project would be managed to insure cost effectiveness and completeness.
7. Final Comments.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. *Is there a need for a new Public Safety Building?*

Finding:

The entire committee carefully reviewed the comprehensive report submitted on June 22, 2011 by Robbie Conley Architect, LLC. Members personally toured the existing facility; spoke to township firefighters, current and previous township officials as well as members of the public and concluded that "Yes" there is a need for the construction of a comprehensive "Public Safety Building" for the Township of Waterford. It was further agreed that this building should address not only the needs of the fire department, but serve as an emergency management center and an emergency shelter in times of a disaster.

Recommendation:

- A. The Township Committee should carefully review each and every recommendation contained in this report and after deliberation take the necessary steps to authorized the construction of such a building.

2. *Does the design previously presented still meet the requirements of the Township?*

Finding:

The Committee met with Mr. John Gibson, from the Gibson Tarquini Group on February 27, 2013 to review "drawings" previously submitted to the Township. The purpose of the review was to determine if there were any operational or conditional changes required to be made to the plans since their original submission.

Mr. Gibson was previously the architect of record for the Township and had prepared and submitted initial drawings for a Public Safety Building in 2011. His submission was based on recommendations as outlined in the report prepared by Robbie Conley and previously referenced in this report.

After a thorough review of the existing plans by the Committee and in particular by the Township Fire Chief and the Township's Construction Official, it was determined that the plans as proposed would allow for the construction of a facility that would support the needs of Waterford Township for the next fifty years.

It should also be noted that those needs not only included those for the Fire Department but also Emergency Management, Police, and township administration in a disaster situation. It will also be available on an as needed basis by township affiliated and non-profit groups for meetings and training purposes. Every resident of the township, if needed will have access to this all-encompassing facility.

In the course of our review we were concerned that the proposed building be designed and built at standards that would minimally meet all Federal, State and National Fire

Safety Standards. That the building, while having the ability to meet our needs in the future, not have any unnecessary, frivolous or non-emergency related spaces or equipment. We were assured by the architect and the Township Fire Chief that the building was designed properly and meets the overall purpose of this building as well as all Federal, State and local requirements.

This building was designed as an institutional building; it is subject to a State Building Code, which dictates materials requiring certain fire ratings. As a public facility, maintenance-free materials and durability of materials is also a critical choice. Basically, the facility is to be constructed of maintenance-free masonry units. The exterior walls will be an insulated decorative masonry block, exterior doors will be pre-finished insulated units and the windows will also be insulated pre-finished units. All exterior construction will require no painting or maintenance. Interior construction, where subject to firefighters and equipment, will be constructed of masonry block, metal doors and frames, and concrete floor slab construction.

The Committee was also aware of concerns expressed by members of the public regarding the possibility of reducing the building by one bay. The possibility of an "extra" bay was the result of the reassignment of the Township owned fire apparatus from our current facility to a facility owned by Berlin Borough. The Committee asked Mr. Gibson to provide us with an estimate on possible savings if this bay was eliminated. The Committee then asked the Fire Chief for his thoughts on this possible reduction and its potential impact on his department. Mr. Gibson estimated that there would be a savings of approximately \$145,350.00. This would be achieved by reducing the square footage by 1,530 SF, the Fire Chief was concerned with the loss of training space and the ability to store all Townships currently owned equipment.

Recommendations:

- A. The Township Committee should accept the design initially submitted by Mr. Gibson and reviewed by this Committee.
- B. The building **should not** be reduced by one bay. While the potential savings may appear to be attractive, it is the Committee's opinion that if the vehicle currently stationed in Berlin had to be brought back into the Township, there would be no place to house it. Also, with the construction of the bay as proposed, if the Township Committee in the future decided to reassign the location of its EMS vehicles, they could be accommodated.

3. ***Was the location previously identified still the preferred site and if so how could it be acquired?***

Findings:

The Committee discussed in length all of the sites identified in Mr. Conley's report to determine if the conclusions reached were reasonable and supportable. We discussed the criteria used to evaluate the sites as well as comments received by the Township Committee from members of the public at their public meetings.

We also sought input from the Township Fire Chief on any information that would impact a final recommendation. Based on these discussions and research we make the following recommendations;

Recommendations:

- A. The ideal site from an overall operational, functional and economic perspective is the site known as Block 1605 Lots 3 & 4 for the construction of the facility.
- B. The Township should begin the process of acquiring Block 1605 Lots 3 & 4 as quickly as possible.
- C. The Township Committee should also proceed in acquiring either through purchase or leasing Block 1605 Lot 1. This lot while not required for the construction of the facility, its ownership/control will allow for future growth, additional parking, training areas and most importantly access to the White Horse Pike, State Highway Route 30. Its acquisition could also reduce the overall cost of site improvements needed to acquire State approvals for construction.
- D. The Township Committee should authorize Mr. Gibson to proceed with phase II, Task 6 as outlined in his proposal of October 11, 2011. This task calls for a Geotechnical Borings/Engineer Foundation Report at a cost not to exceed \$5,600.00. ***This was accomplished at the March 13, 2013 meeting of the Township Committee.***
- E. In order to determine a fair market value for the two properties identified above, the Township Committee should authorize the acquisition of up-dated appraisals for these properties. ***This also was accomplished at the March 13, 2013 meeting of the Township Committee.***
- F. Upon completion of Task 6 and it is determined that the property is suitable for construction; the Township Committee should begin the process to acquire ownership of these properties.
- G. Once a commitment to purchase the property is in place, the Township Committee should authorize Mr. Gibson or another professional to complete Task 7 & 8 as described in Mr. Gibson's memorandum of October 11, 2011. These tasks involve performing a preliminary site plan and begin the permitting process necessary to construct the facility.

4. *What would be the total estimated cost of the project?*

Findings:

The Committee reviewed the initial estimates provided by Mr. Gibson to the Township Committee at a public meeting in December 2011.

Those estimates indicated the following:

• Building (21,000 GSF @ \$200/SF)	\$4,200,000.00
• Site Improvements (Water, Sewer, etc.)	\$ 175,000.00
• Equipment/Furniture	\$ 225,000.00
• Professional Fees (Architectural, Engineering, Legal etc.	\$ 275,000.00
• Contingency	<u>\$ 100,000.00</u>
Total Estimated Cost	\$4,975,000.00

Do to the fact that this estimation was over a year old we asked Mr. Gibson to provide us with an up-dated projection. He advised that after the initial design was given a final review by himself and the Fire Chief and taking into account adjustments required for operational and site conditions the building would now be increased by approximately 600 SF. He also stated that a new rate of \$215/SF should be used to calculate estimated cost due to the fact that it is now over a year since his original proposal and that in general the cost of construction has increased and may continue to increase over the next twelve to eighteen months.

Therefore the new estimates are as follows;

• Building (21,600 GSF @ \$215/SF)	\$4,644,000.00
• Site Improvements (Water, Sewer, etc.)	\$ 185,000.00
• Equipment/Furniture	\$ 200,000.00
• Professional Fees (Architectural, Engineering, Legal etc.	\$ 275,000.00
• Contingency	<u>\$ 125,000.00</u>
Total Estimated Cost	\$5,429,000.00

Recommendations:

- A. That the Township at this time in the process accept for *planning and discussion purposes only* the most recent calculations and projected project cost as provided by Mr. Gibson. This committee as well as all of the professionals we consulted, fully believe that these estimates may be reduced as the project moves forward. These reductions should be achieved by employing proven processes i.e. “value engineering”, the public bidding process, and most importantly by professional program/project management.

5. *How would the project be funded and what would the financial impact be to the average taxpayer?*

Findings:

The fact that this building is owned by the Township of Waterford and is for the benefit of all of its residents, the funding for this project is therefore the responsibility of the Township.

The Committee requested that the Township's Chief Financial Officer use those amounts identified earlier in this report as **estimates** and for *planning and discussion purposes only*, and to provide us with projection on the potential impact on the budget and most importantly on the average taxpayer per year.

His projections and comments are as follows;

If we were to use the highest estimates available the total project would cost \$5,429,000.00. We are required to put down 5% or \$271,450.00 leaving \$5,157,550.00 to be bonded (assuming no grant monies). The down payment would have the tax effect of 5.77 cents. This would be approximately a \$65.00 increase per year on a home assessed at \$114,000.00, which is the township average.

While he could not give us an exact interest rate for the future, he advised that based on conversations with bond counsel the rates should be between 2 to 3 percent. Therefore, if we were to use 3% for 20 years, the yearly payment would require an approximate tax increase of 7.69 cents, equaling an \$87.67 increase per year on a home assessed at \$114,000.00, or \$7.30 per month.

If we were to use 2% for 20 years, the yearly payment would require an approximate tax increase of 6.7 cents, equaling a \$76.38 increase per year on a home assessed at \$114,000.00, or \$6.37 per month.

The Committee was advised by the United States Department of Agriculture that they could guarantee a loan for 30 years at a rate between 3 to 3.5%.

If we were to use 3% for 30 years, the yearly payment would require an approximate tax increase of 5.58 cents, equaling a \$63.61 increase per year on a home assessed at \$114,000.00, or \$5.30 per month.

However, it was also the responsibility of this Committee to help the Township Committee identify outside funding sources for the purpose of reducing the financial impact on the average taxpayer. In attempting to meet that responsibility, the committee looked at numerous sources of possible funding, including Federal, State, and County governments. We also considered organizational and private donations, as well as the donation and sale of the existing privately owned fire station.

The following are some of the organizations and ideas we believe may help reduce the cost to the residents for this project;

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. United States Department of Agriculture | low interest loan & outright grants. |
| 2. Federal Emergency Management Agency | leasing of facility & equipment grants. |
| 3. Community Development Block Grants | multiyear grants to be used for payments. |
| 4. New Jersey Emergency Management | grants for equipment. |
| 5. US Congressman Frank LoBiondo | Federal grants related to firefighting. |
| 6. US Congressman Robert Andrews | Federal grants from homeland security. |
| 7. Private donations | naming rights to conference room |
| 8. Private donations | Dunbarton Fire Company – naming rights. |
| 9. Private donations | assistance from local businesses- (plaque). |
| 10. Sale of existing fire house | proceeds is dedicated to paying down bond. |

Recommendations:

- A. The importance of finding additional outside sources of funding for this project cannot be overstated. For every dollar raised from outside of the township, lessens the amount of money needed to be paid by our taxpayers. Therefore, we recommend that the Mayor and Township Committee consider establishing a structure or mechanism to pursue all of the above mentioned sources as well as any others they may identify.
- B. We also recommend that if the Township engages the services of a “Program or Construction manager and that they are charged with actively pursuing outside funding. They should be familiar with applying for and administering grants at all levels of government.

6. *How the project would be managed to insure cost affectedness and completeness.*

Finding:

The Committee, due to its make-up and experience was fully aware that many factors can affect the final cost of a public work project such as this. Our beliefs were reinforced by discussions we had with experts in the financing and construction of large public works projects of this nature. Those factors can include such things as using value engineering, program management, bond ratings, government subsidized loans, current market rates, and the volume of public work available for contractors to bid on.

In addition to these factors, we also considered the fact the construction projects – regardless of size – involve numerous details, and not every owner has the time or experience to manage the process. Many choose to retain a firm to handle the planning, design, construction phases and financing strategy of their projects. This process is referred to as Construction/Program Management and is credited to **savings upwards of 20%** on projects.

Owner-focused representation (i.e. Professional Construction/Program Management) in the early design and construction process will achieve superior results for owners involved in the design and construction of their facilities. Owner focused representation is simply the best means to achieve optimal results: high-quality, cost-effective, dispute and injury-free construction projects.

The core of the focus should be the owner and this firm should be able to provide attention to the details of your building program to assure stewardship of your resources. Put your best interests at the forefront. Focus on your project relieves you of the relentless issues that arise throughout planning, design, construction, and post construction, yet allows you to retain control and focus on your business.

If utilized, it can also guarantee that the project is done on time and at or below budgeted amounts. By utilizing such industry practices you will be able to guarantee the public that this project was designed, priced, built and fully completed according to our requirements. There will be no question that this building will be ready to meet the public safety needs of our township for many years to come.

Recommendation:

- A. That the Township endorses using industry accepted practices such as Value Engineering and Program Management as this project moves forward.
- B. That the Township immediately begin the process to engage the services of a professional firm, either governmental or privately held that would provide complete program management of this project. It should be noted that the cost of this recommendation should be equal to or less then cost already included in the estimated amounts mentioned above.

7. Final Comments:

It is the unanimous recommendation of this Committee that the Mayor and Township Committee move forward quickly with the construction of the Public Safety Building as described in this report.

We are fully aware of the financial, operational and political implications of such a decision. We encourage you to become familiar with the reasons why this building should be built and be prepared to answer all of the public's questions. We fully believe that an informed and supportive public is essential to the success of this project.

However, we do not support the idea of holding a public referendum for several reasons. First, the only fair way to ask for the public's support would be for you to conduct a comprehensive public information program which will take time and money. The cost required to do this could be between \$25,000 and \$30, 000 dollars. Second, it would delay the timeline for the bidding, and bonding processes, thus leading to possibility higher construction and financing costs. And finally, as in any public discussion of an issue, the facts are always subject to interpretation and perhaps misunderstandings as well

as the possibility of this very important issue being “politicized”. Also, the history of referendums in our township have a record of small voter turnouts, thus allowing for a very small minority of voters imposing their will on the majority of taxpayers who for various reasons may not be able to come out and vote.

President John Kennedy in his book “Profiles in Courage” gave us many examples of where elected officials did what they thought were best for the people they represented. Sometimes that led to their defeat at the polls. However, their actions proved to be in the best interest of their citizens and our nation.