

SMRT Contract with Town of Exeter

	29900	% complete	
10/1 to 10/31/05	5,980.00	20	
11/1-11/30/05	6,308.00	40	
12/-12/31/05	5,159.25	57	
1/1/06-1/30/06	5,472.78	75	
2/1/06-2/28/06	1,646.22	80	
3/1/06 -3/31/06	1,517.41	85	
4/1/06-4/30/06	1,794.00	91	
5/1/06-5/30/06	2,178.08	98	
6/1/06-6/30/06	<u>598.00</u>	100	Original "Flat Fee Budget" exhausted
	30,653.74		
6/1/06-6/30/06	3,185.00		
7/1/06-7/31/06	3,933.85		
7/1/06-7/31/06	60.00		
8/1/06-8/31/06	2,632.50		
9/1/06-9/30/06	65.00		
10/1/06-10/31/06	260.00		
10/1/06-10/31/06	260.00		
11/1/06-11/30/06	4,493.94		
12/1/06-12/31/06	<u>540.00</u>		
	15,430.29		
Total SMRT	46,084.03		
Original Warrant	100,000.00		
Balance at close	53,915.97		

SMRT Hourly rate was \$130 per hour from June 1, 2006 through December 31, 2006

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES FEBRUARY 27, 2006

14. Town Office/Town Hall Project Update

Mr. Dean gave a brief update on the Town Office/Town Hall Project. On February 14, 2006, Mr. Dean and Mr. Eastman met with a technical review group to discuss various options. A few new ideas were mentioned, including potentially building up versus building out. The easement next to the Town Office was also discussed, and a meeting will be scheduled with the Inn at Bandstand owner to work out a site plan.

Another issue discussed was the future of the Chamber of Commerce. Chairman Ingram presented the idea of potentially moving the Chamber into the Courthouse space. Mr. Pace mentioned space on the main level of Town Hall that is currently used as storage space. It was decided to bring in the architect at some point in the near future.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES JULY 31, 2006

9. Town Office/Town Hall Project Presentation.

The Town Office/Town Hall working group has been meeting with SMRT, the architectural firm chosen to work on the Town Office/Town Hall Renovation project. On July 27th, they reviewed a number of options and discussed the preferred "Option D" which SMRT would like to discuss with the Board.

Mr. Mac Collins, architect and planner for SMRT began the presentation by recapping the options that the Town Office/Town Hall Group had reviewed. The first option, Option A, involved renovating the Town Office alone. The second and third options, Option B and Option C, both involved renovating both the Town Office as well as the Town Hall. The Group evaluated the options and refined them into Option D, which includes a complete renovation to the Town Office, and a number of renovations to the Town Hall. There were two primary items to review – one is the primary cost of the renovations, and the second is the "soft" costs, which included fees for consultants, printing, surveys, inspections, administrative costs, etc.

Mr. Collins explained how SMRT conducted an Initial Conditions study, which was an assessment of the needs of each department and current employees. Next, they interviewed all town departments to determine their needs over the next 10-15 years. They performed a computer-based Code Study, which helped them decide if this building could house these requirements now and in the future.

With all of this information, it was concluded that 14,800 square feet of space would be needed to house all Town Office departments, allowing for future growth. SMRT initially presented six options based on this figure. After analyzing the six options, the Board of Selectmen asked SMRT to focus on an option that involved renovating the Town Office and also the first floor of the Town Hall. The Town Office/Town Hall Group then focused on four options, Options A, B, C, and D. Cost estimates were developed for each option and copies of these proposals were given to the Board prior to the meeting.

Mr. Collins again recapped Options A, B, and C; he then continued to focus on Option D, a plan the committee felt was most worth exploring. As part of this plan, Building, Planning and Code

Enforcement moved to the Town Hall. Renovations for the Town Hall would also include updating the HVAC system, making rest rooms more handicap-accessible, as well as correcting some structural issues in the building that need to be addressed. There would be no offices put in the basement of the Town Office in this plan; instead a thorough treatment of the Town Office basement would for useable storage space and free up quite a bit of space upstairs.

On the first floor, the large offices would be kept in tact. The overall intention is to try to keep things as spacious as we can. This plan does involve an addition on the rear of the building as well.

There are two options for the second floor of the Town Office as well. One has the Assessing Department, Finance, Welfare, and a waiting area on that floor. The second plan has a common waiting area between the finance and assessing department.

With this plan, there would be adequate meeting space, document storage space, interior restrooms for employees, as well as other restrooms accessible from the street. For this option, rough estimates (based on other similar construction projects and projected supply costs) for renovating the Town Office are \$141 per square foot, which would put the project cost for the Town Office at \$2.4 Million. Soft costs would bring the total building cost to \$3.3 Million. The Town Hall building would cost out at \$1.1 Million, with soft costs increasing it to \$1.5 Million. The projected total cost, in this conceptual stage, is \$4.8 Million for both buildings.

Mr. Collins added one last footnote, explaining that architects have to try to walk the line in situations like this. They do not want to shock people with projected costs, but they also do not want to estimate too low so it has to go to a rebid. Estimates given are conservative, and Mr. Collins agreed it is a lot of money but that is why we're here, to help solve this issue.

Chairman Binette asked if there was any discussion as to where employees relocating to Town Hall would park. Mr. Collins admitted this was not a question that had been brought up by the Town Office/Town Hall Group.

Mr. Campbell did not support relocating the Selectmen's Office. He couldn't agree with bringing it upstairs. Mr. Campbell feels this room needs to be accessible to the public and not out of the way. Also, he questioned the placement of rest rooms only accessible by the Nowak Room. He wondered if meetings were in session, how people would access these. Mr. Campbell was concerned about relocating the IT/Cable TV crew. If technology is upgraded, it would be feasible to have this group farther away. As it stands now, it would be difficult to move them.

One last question Mr. Campbell asked was if the Receptionist area on the first floor would be closed in. Mr. Collins stated that proposed area (currently the Water/Tax Collector Office) would be more open. Mr. Campbell liked that because now sometimes people don't know where to go and the receptionist is at the other end of the building.

Mr. Pace was pleased that the Committee chose to reject taking over part of the second floor of the Town Hall. He felt that would create issues with controlling access to the Art Gallery.

Mr. Campbell asked if we are picking up storage space, would we have moisture issues. Mr. Collins said that basement renovations in this plan included dealing with moisture issues and is included in the cost estimate.

Mr. Pace recalled a previous discussion about holding Board of Selectmen meetings and other events typically held in the Nowak Room in the main floor of the Town Hall instead. Mr. Collins said that it was preferred by the Committee to keep the Nowak Room as the primary meeting space. Mr. Ingram felt if we could make the Town Hall that much more functional, for the money we're spending we should get as much as we can out of it.

Mr. Dean pointed out that one thing discussed was the "thunder" issue for those located in the basement of the Town Hall. Having people walking upstairs is quite audible to those working below. Mr. Ingram felt if we are going to do this once and for all, we should look at the best use for the larger spaces.

Mr. Pace liked Option D best of the ones presented, but he also disliked the idea of moving the Selectmen's office. Mr. Ingram agreed, and he also liked adding a waiting area for the Welfare Office. Chairman Binette also agreed, giving the idea three conceptual approvals, and he thinks the Selectmen's Office should be across from the Town Manager's Office, making both offices easily accessible to residents.

Ms. Tracey McGrail, Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce, thought it was odd to have two rest rooms on the second floor of the Town Office that are not easily accessible. Mr. Ingram agreed it seems like a bit of overkill on bathrooms. Mr. Ingram thinks it still needs work but conceptually likes Option D.

Mr. Campbell asked if each department was comfortable with the space provided in these plans, and Mr. Collins confirmed they were.

Mr. Campbell also asked about the cost estimates. Due to such a high cost, would it be possible to do the Town Hall one year and then do the Town Office the next year? Mr. Dean said that part of the problem with treating one project as two is that if one passes and the other doesn't, we would run into issues.

All four Selectmen present conceptually agreed with Option D but would like to see some alterations to the current plan. Mr. Dean agreed to have the Town Office/Town Hall Group come back with updated plans for the next meeting.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES OCTOBER 30, 2006

7. Town Office/Town Hall Project Update.

Chairman Binette explained that he asked Mr. Dean to add this to the agenda this evening, because Chairman Binette has been hearing a number of things, including that money is being spent that the Board of Selectmen never approved. He said he's hearing that plans are being made and no one on the Board is being consulted. He said there's a committee that was formed for this project and the committee has only met once. Chairman Binette asked Mr. Dean to explain what was going on.

Mr. Dean recapped that a few meetings ago, the Board had a presentation from the architecture firm consulting on this project. Mr. Mac Collins from SMRT reviewed with the Board the plans recommended by the employee committee. Since that time, Mr. Keith Noyes, Public Works Director, was charged with working directly with the architect to get a more detailed schematic of what those plans will look like.

Mr. Dean said that in the Board's packet for tonight, they received information from Mr. Noyes on his recommendations on how to move forward with this project. Mr. Dean explained the option of renovating the Town Hall first and then relocating some of the Town Office employees into that area to save money on temporary relocation of Town Office employees.

Chairman Binette asked Mr. Dean for clarification on the Town Meeting held this past March. Chairman Binette said the Town approved a study for a new Town Office. He said the new Town Office reconstruction project had been defeated. Then an electrical box is installed; now the box is down. He heard it apparently cost \$8,000 to do this. Chairman Binette reminded Mr. Dean that there is a policy in Exeter that any project or item over \$2,500 must go out to bid after being approved by the Board. Mr. Eastman said he brought this electrical box to Mr. Dean's attention. He shares Chairman Binette's concern that there is money being spent without the Board's approval.

Mr. Pace asked Mr. Dean to explain what work had actually been done, so they have the facts versus hearsay. Mr. Dean asked Mr. Noyes to review all of the work that had been done. Mr.

Noyes explained that the electrical outlet installed was to help power a number of servers going into the office of Mr. Andy Swanson, IT Coordinator. Mr. Noyes stated that this is an old building and there's not enough power in Mr. Swanson's office as it stands to power these servers that need to be installed. Aside from that, he did not know of any decisions that have been made. His personal opinion is that he would like to see some interim changes to help improve the workspace for Town Office employees, but nothing has been approved.

Mr. Dean assured the Board that nothing would be done without the Board discussing it first. Mr. Campbell stated that the electrical box was put in without their approval. Mr. Noyes said that was a separate situation, as that box was installed to meet an immediate need. The motivating factor for installing that electrical box was to help Mr. Swanson have the tools in place to do his job.

Mr. Noyes said the Building Inspector had been consulted on this project. Mr. Eastman said Mr. Doug Eastman, Building Inspector, was in the audience shaking his head. Mr. Noyes apologized for the mistake and clarified he meant the Electrical Inspector.

Mr. Bob Eastman said he keeps hearing references to the Town Clerk's Office and their need for additional space. Mr. Eastman said he spoke with the Town Clerk and she does not feel she needs to expand at this time, as she has made due with the space she has and can continue to do so until a final resolution is made. Mr. Eastman suggested they stop using that as a reason to make any interim changes. Mr. Noyes stated that he has heard a much different story, as the Town Clerk has voiced many times over the years her need to expand due to her lack of space.

Mr. Dean asked the Board if they would prefer that any Town Office maintenance get their approval before they begin. Mr. Campbell thought it would be beneficial that the Board be aware of these situations before they take place. Mr. Pace said there's a wide range between changing a light bulb and moving a wall, but the Board needs to decide to what extent they need to be involved. Mr. Pace would not like to see the Town Office maintenance delayed just so the Board is aware of every minute detail. Mr. Eastman agreed. Mr. Ingram felt it would also be beneficial to speak with Ms. Hartson to figure out which story is correct. There seems to be two stories and we need to determine which is accurate. Mr. Ingram also agrees with Mr. Pace and Mr. Eastman that we need to decide to what extent the Board needs to be involved. He also believes we need to support our IT Coordinator and make the necessary changes for him to do his job.

Chairman Binette said he's listened to the other members of the Board but he believes there are a number of problems in the Town Office building. He feels there are some employees in this Town that want to run this Town the way they want to regardless of the Board of Selectmen. He feels he gets a different story from department to department. He said all requests should be going through the Board. He added that there is a policy that anything over \$2,500 has to go out to bid, and suddenly \$8,000 appears out of nowhere to pay for these renovations.

Mr. Ingram thought Mr. Binette may be taking this too far. Mr. Ingram said there has been no talk of renovations and no allegations of useless spending. Mr. Noyes added that they have just done the work approved to be done to help Mr. Swanson move forward on the installation of the servers.

BOARD OF SELECMEN MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 27, 2006

Mr. Dean then moved on to the Town Office/Town Hall Renovation Project. He reviewed that the Budget Recommendations Committee did not recommend the project as submitted by SMRT. SMRT has not done anything further with the plans, as they are waiting for the Board to have a chance to discuss the topic and give Mr. Dean direction.

Mr. Pace said their initial idea was to renovate the Town Office building and also the lower level of the Town Hall. At the Budget Recommendations Committee meeting, Mr. Gerry Hamel brought forth some additional ideas which included using the entire Town Hall to house departments. Chairman Binette asked the Board where they felt the Town should go from here. If the Board is supportive of the plan as it is, they can continue moving forward.

Mr. Gerry Hamel was present and stated there were two ideas presented during the budget process. One is for a complete renovation of the Town Hall, and he acknowledges that this is a touchy subject as this is a major public meeting space. He also noted that there has been talk of moving elections to another building. Mr. Hamel believes there is a great deal of unused space at the Town Hall, and the Town has already put so much money into that space. His idea would be to split the main area into two separate floors, which would give us enough square footage to house what the various departments needed, all in one building. He thought the Town could gain revenue by renting the Town Office space, and this way the Town could still utilize the Nowak Room for televised meetings. The bottom line was that the Budget Recommendations Committee did not feel the Town would be getting their money's worth for the amount of money it would cost.

Mr. Jay Childs, another member of the Budget Recommendations Committee, added that the overall feeling of the Board was not against the concept, but felt the plan was underwhelming based on the cost. He clarified that the Committee was not against spending that amount of money, but they thought there were other methods that were not explored.

Mr. Campbell felt that Mr. Hamel has done a lot of thinking on this subject and he appreciates his attempt to get the best 'bang for the buck.' He felt personally that he needed to warm up to the idea of losing the Town Hall's meeting space. Mr. Campbell thought it would be helpful to get additional opinions on this. Mr. Pace felt Mr. Hamel's idea made sense and it's hard to refute, but acknowledged it's a difficult discussion because it's such a great historical space and there's a value associated with that. He felt it will certainly cause controversy but he's not sure how it would actually shake out.

Mr. Hamel agreed, being a native of Exeter, that it would be a difficult change but he said the exterior would not be changed and he feels a lot that can be done, and done right, to make it work.

Chairman Binette asked Mr. Hamel if he felt the Town Hall structure would be able to withstand a renovation such as he's suggesting. Mr. Hamel thought it could easily withstand it, as the building is just as sound as the Town Office, except there are more options by renovating the Town Hall. He reminded everyone that the Town Office is an old vault, which really restricts your options of renovating.

Chairman Binette then asked Mr. Hamel what his thoughts were on putting out a survey to residents to get their opinion on this idea. Mr. Hamel thought that's exactly what they need. He felt there is a good mix of people who would see it as practical, and there are also those who look at the Town Hall as more of a sentimental place. Mr. Childs agreed the survey would be a reasonable approach to help them have a better gauge on which direction the Town should go. Mr. Hamel added that he also thought they needed to be practical. He doesn't think it makes sense to table the project for another year, since it has already been on the table for so long. Mr. Childs felt the employees working in the Town Office deserve to have something done. Mr. Griset came forward and also presented an idea which mirrors what they did in San Francisco, which was to use glass cubicle walls to preserve the internal historic features at a much lower cost.

Mr. Pace felt there are a number of ideas, and he worried that having people choose on or the other may not be the right method either. If someone answered they do not want to change the Town Hall and the Town decides to go with that plan regardless, it could cause even more

controversy. Mr. Ingram believed when the Board made the decision to explore options, they did not look at it from various perspectives. He feels if they try to push it for the 2007 Warrant, they will botch it. He agrees that he would like to do something for the employees in this building, but thinks the Budget Recommendations Committee threw a monkey wrench in their plans, but he believes it is a good monkey wrench. Mr. Childs felt they should take 2007 to work on developing a sound, viable Warrant Article for 2008 that will finally resolve this issue and provide a long-term solution for Town departments. Chairman Binette agreed and thought the Town is spending too much money on studies and surveys, and they need to develop a solid plan that the voters will approve.

Mr. Campbell voiced his concern that reasons keep arising for them to continue to put this project off. Mr. Ingram thought that when they initially put the project together, it was based on five people's opinions. Now that it's been opened up to others, they came up with other good solutions as well; solutions that haven't been presented in the past. He believes they need to further discuss alternative ideas and get resident feedback and input in order to create a realistic, long-term solution.

Mr. Arthur Baillargeon said there is a lot of sentimental value across the street and he feels he does not have enough information to make a decision if they should use the Town Hall in this fashion.

Mr. Dean said they did not look at the situation from all angles, and one thing that complicates the situation is that it involves two separate buildings. Mr. Eastman was happy that they are not moving forward with the plan as it was presented because he was not personally satisfied with the plan as it is. Mr. Eastman believes there should be two Warrant Articles – one asking the voters to recommend keeping the Town Offices downtown or not, and the second to create a Building Committee comprised of a group of residents to evaluate options. Currently the Committee is made up of all Town employees who all have their specific concerns with what they need.

Mr. Campbell also felt they should ask if residents approved of using the interior of the Town Hall for office space. Mr. Pace was concerned about asking people to vote one way or another and then the Town being "wrong" if they decide to go in another direction. Mr. Ingram agreed and felt they should let the committee run with it and decide on their own how they would like to receive feedback on the topic, whether by public hearing, a survey, etc. This will give them the ability to think widely to come up with various ideas without restricting them from the get-go.

Mr. Baillargeon questioned how often the Town Hall is actually used, and Mr. Dean said they did not have a specific number off-hand but they can find out this figure for him.

Chairman Binette said it felt like the consensus of the Board was to postpone the project, form a committee to evaluate options, and get updates on where things stand. All members of the Board were in agreement.

BOARD OF SELECMEN MEETING

MINUTES

March 24, 2008

d. Town Building Committee Interim Report

Chairman Rob Corson from the Town Building Committee presented the preliminary report of progress to the Board. The presentation included a review of the resident and staff survey and site visit information and the next steps of the committee. Mr. Corson spoke of visiting four different communities; Dover, Londonderry, Derry and Portsmouth, to observe their operations and space utilization. He stated that the visits were very informative. There was a preliminary concept floor plan for the reorganization of the building reviewed by the board. The plan is to add offices and to lessen the traffic flow on the first floor. The final report will be presented in May.

BOARD OF SELECMEN MEETING MINUTES April 28, 2008

e. Interim Town Office Improvements

The Town Building Committee presented a follow up report from the April 7th report on interim solutions to the Town Offices. The report was on the option 7 building plan. Mr. Eastman wanted it to be known that the clerk's office was not to be expanded because it is State Mandated. The clerk's office is to be expanded to fit the printers which are state mandated. The Building Committee went on to say that the plan is going to be very functional for the addition of the new hires and for the flow of traffic patterns. Mr. Campbell was concerned that the Welfare space would not be large enough and wanted the committee to reconsider the size of the room before agreeing to the plan. Mr. Eastman agreed with Mr. Campbell on the subject. Mr. Pace decided that the issue will be tabled until next week to find out if the extra space will be needed for the Welfare Office.

BOARD OF SELECMEN MEETING MINUTES May 5, 2008

Option 8 was presented by the Building Committee. The new Welfare office will be expanded to increase the square footage for needed space. Mr. Eastman was concerned that there was no second door for safety. He was reassured that the office door will be half glass and there will be an emergency button installed. There will be space taken from the IT room for more storage. The receptionist will have a glass partition instead of an open doorway. Mr. Eastman stated that he thought waiting to follow through with the project until 2009 would be in the Town's best interest to make sure the budget is there. Mr. Campbell was concerned about going over budget. Mr. Dean stated that the funds are there now to accommodate this project and the concern about going over budget has already been accounted for. Mr. Quandt stated that the Building Committee did an outstanding job with the plans and said he does agree with Mr. Eastman about waiting till 2009. Ms. Gilman and Mr. Pace felt it is important and necessary to go ahead with the Interim changes.

Ms. Gilman made a motion to accept option 8 as presented, Mr. Campbell seconded.

VOTE: 3/2 in favor of passing option 8.