

Town of Newfields - Public Safety Building Committee
Meeting Minutes
8/12/2026

Members present: John Hayden, Tom Grella, Brian Knipstein, Bill Meserve, Jack Steiner, Fire Chief Jeff Buxton, Police Chief Wayne Young, Police Lt. Bill Blais and Select Board Representative Hoby Harmon (left at 6:30pm).

Members not present: Bill Meserve

- **Meeting Start:** John Hayden called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.
- **Public Safety Building Committee Project Planning:** Committee members met with representatives from Turner Group, Tecton Architects, Martini Northern, and Placework to discuss the process, requirements, and budgeting for a new public safety building, focusing on site selection, conceptual design, space needs, and cost estimation to prepare for a town vote.
 - **Project Scope and Goals:** John Hayden explained that the committee's goal is to develop a proposal for a new public safety building, including site selection, conceptual design, needs assessment, and a cost estimate, all within a set budget, to present to town voters for approval.
 - **Team Introductions and Roles:** Representatives from Turner Group (Bill Hickey, Doug Proctor, Jonathan Smith), Tecton Architects (Jeff McElravy), Martini Northern (Ben Middleton), followed by Placework (Alyssa Murphy, Josh Lacasse) and Jobin Construction Consultants (Mark Jobin) introduced themselves, outlining their experience in public safety projects, cost estimating, and project management.
 - **Site Assessment and Programming:** The committee discussed the need for a site assessment, including surveying and soil analysis, and the importance of programming to determine space needs, with Turner Group and Placework emphasizing the necessity of understanding functional requirements before design begins.
 - **Budget Constraints and Cost Management:** Committee members and consultants reviewed the available budget (approximately \$50,000 for pre-design work, with \$30,000–\$35,000 remaining), discussed strategies for staying within budget, and highlighted the importance of early cost estimation and contingency planning to avoid overruns.

- **Public Engagement and Communication:** Both Turner Group and Placework offered support for public engagement, including preparing materials for public meetings, helping with presentations, and ensuring clear communication with residents to build support and address questions about the project.
- **Design and Cost Estimation Strategies:** Consultants from Turner Group, Tecton Architects, Martini Northern, and Placework explained their approaches to space programming, cost estimation, and the importance of aligning design with budget, including the use of bid alternates, contingency planning, and lessons learned from previous projects.
 - **Space Programming Process:** Consultants described a process of interviewing stakeholders, assessing current facilities, and analyzing operational needs to develop an efficient space program, emphasizing the need to balance ideal requirements with budget realities and future growth projections.
 - **Cost Estimation Methods:** Cost estimators explained that they use current market data, historical costs from similar projects, and detailed takeoffs (e.g., counting doors, windows, and specialty equipment) rather than relying solely on square footage averages, to produce accurate total project cost estimates.
 - **Bid Alternates and Contingency Planning:** The team discussed including bid alternates in the design, allowing certain features to be priced but not immediately included, so they can be added later if the budget allows, and building contingencies into the budget to cover unforeseen expenses.
 - **Lessons from Previous Projects:** Consultants shared experiences from other towns, highlighting the importance of maintaining the same team through design and construction to avoid scope creep, and the need to plan for escalation and inflation, with recent projects carrying 4–5% annual cost increases.
- **Grant Funding and Financial Considerations:** Committee members and consultants discussed the potential for grant funding, including state and federal sources, and the associated challenges such as compliance requirements and the impact on project costs.
 - **Grant Opportunities and Challenges:** The group reviewed possible grants for emergency management equipment and construction, noting that while some grants (e.g., EOC grants) have few restrictions, others come with

significant requirements (e.g., Buy America clauses, Davis-Bacon), which can increase project costs and complexity.

- **Project Schedule and Next Steps:** The committee and consultants outlined a condensed project schedule to meet the March town vote deadline, emphasizing the need for efficient meetings, stakeholder engagement, and clear decision-making in the coming months.
 - **Condensed Timeline and Stakeholder Commitment:** Placework presented a schedule starting in September, requiring focused effort and frequent meetings to complete needs assessment, conceptual design, and budgeting by November, with all stakeholders expected to participate actively to meet the deadline.
- **Prior Meeting Minutes:** The committee reviewed minutes from the August 12th meeting. Tom Grella made a motion to approve the minutes. Jack Steiner seconded the motion which carried unanimously.
- **Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for August 19th at 5:30pm
- **Motion to Adjourn:** Tom Grella made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brian Knipstein seconded the motion which carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 6:47pm.