



CITY OF WAUWATOSA  
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**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**Tuesday, January 8, 2008 – 6:30 p.m.**

PRESENT: Alds. Krol, Meaux (6:37 p.m.), Minear, Purins, Stepaniak, Becker, Birschel, Didier, Donegan, Ewerdt, Grimm, Hanson (6:43 p.m.), Herzog (7:04 p.m.) – 13

EXCUSED: Ald. Krill, Maher, Treis

ALSO J. Archambo, City Admin.; A. Kesner, City Atty.; Fire Chief D. Redman; Dep. Fire  
PRESENT: Chief W. Rice

Ald. Becker in the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**Continuing discussion on the new fire station**

Ald. Becker asked the Council if anyone had any motions they wanted to make in order to see where the committee was going.

Ald. Donegan commented that he remained unconvinced that \$12.5 million was needed for the fire station project. He had 3 areas of concern: 1) the total amount of parking space needed, 2) the proposal of moving one or more functions to other locations, and 3) he couldn't discern a well founded set of principles consistently applied that could determine the amount of space needed for the project. He was not convinced according to the presentation by the fire department that there was a serious lack of space. In the end the fire department says it can live with an amount equal to 66% of the originally planned amount of space. He asked if the department can also with just 66% of the program. He thought the amount of space needed was exaggerated and felt that there was no concern for economy. As if the department were saying that public safety was their concern the cost was the Council's problem. He thought the fire department was asking for more than they need and hoping for the best. He believed this was most evident in the proposal for 55 parking spaces. Parking is at a premium in the village. He felt the strategy was that they only need 35 parking spaces, but they would try asking for 55 spaces. He felt there was a clear disregard for economy not consistent with the community's values.

Ald. Donegan asked if money could be saved by putting the building in any other location. He expressed the deepest respect for the Wauwatosa Fire Department, but he didn't believe a good job was done regarding this matter. In response to locating elsewhere, he believed the fire department has reacted with the attitude that they do public safety best and they don't do budgeting. When asked about locating the administration elsewhere, they answered that they can't save any money by doing that. They also said the amount of acquisition can't be reduced. Ald. Donegan felt that the Council can't go to the public and say they need \$12.5 million. This needs to move forward and go to referendum. He proposed that the Council express an appetite for \$10 million for this project. That would be an approximate 20% reduction. That is the position he believes he has been put in. He also believes that the request for parking space is more than 20% exaggerated. He also didn't want to spend too little on the project. He asked for the City Administrator to review this information.

Moved by Ald. Donegan, seconded by Ald. Ewerdt to send the matter of a budget for the fire station project to the City Administrator with the expression that the Council's appetite is to spend \$10 million on the project and to come back in two weeks so there will be 2 more meetings to discuss if \$12.5 million or \$10 million is the appropriate amount to budget for the project --

Mr. Archambo noted that he has watched the struggles the committee has had with this issue. It occurred to him that some of the questions fall more easily into the design process. The Council is striving to create a budget for the project that dictates to city and fire department staff the amount of budget that is the appetite for the Council. He did not want to take the focus off the budget number as the basis on which the facility is designed. He began looking at this issue from a simple question; is it cost effective to separate out some part of this facility on an alternate piece of property. How would that work out in terms of pure financial analysis? He noted a letter regarding a piece of property owned by St. Matthew's Church that had been distributed to the Council. There isn't a desire to alter the arrangement they have with the existing piece of property.

Mr. Archambo focused on the cost related to the whole of the project being located in greater Underwood. Using the "Construction Estimator's Guidebook" he was able to focus on the cost of 2-story fire stations. This is a second look at the estimated cost. The body of the report describes a financial conclusion and could ultimately set a budget figure for this project that would appear on the referendum. He looked at construction costs per square foot for 2-story fire stations ranging from 6,000 to 31,000 square feet. He looked at the differential in the economies of scale, perimeter adjustment, utilities, landscaping, etc. He found that there would be double the considerations for 2 buildings. There is also a regional adjustment with an attempt to factor in from a national survey how much this project is affected by being located in the Milwaukee area. There is also some consideration to be given to this particular site. He found that the larger the building the lower the cost per square foot. If the buildings are being split out the cost comes to just under \$230 per square foot. One all inclusive building brings the cost down to \$174 per square foot. He noted that based on those calculations, he believed the mid range estimate would be appropriate for approximate square footage for general operations, administration and maintenance. He also took all of the different costs per square foot and put them into different configurations.

Mr. Archambo noted that separating out all three operations would have an estimated cost of approximately \$6 million. Just taking out administration or maintenance would bring the cost to approximately \$5.8 million. He stressed that the larger the building is the more savings on the per square foot cost. He noted that even shrinking that differential, at every increment there is a dramatic difference as much as \$600,000 or \$700,000. He asked if it takes \$400,000 to acquire a piece of property does it make sense to build an all inclusive building or to build in another area. He believed that it is less expensive to build all in one. He noted that even with a very conservative projection the additional cost of a separate building is just over \$400,000. The construction cost estimate is about \$360,000. Administrative costs are based on the construction costs. The assessed value on each of the properties to be acquired ranges from \$212,000 to \$312,000 with an average of \$265,000. Demolition, lawyer's fees etc. add from 25% to 50% more so that on average the cost for each property would be just short of \$400,000. At best the city would break even. Breaking one piece out or all inclusive is about the same. He stressed that if this is the best case scenario what would be a reason to move the building. If there isn't a substantially compelling reason to move the building then it should remain.

Mr. Archambo concluded that the cost for each of the facilities separately is the highest cost. Combining the facilities into one provides the lower construction rate. In his research he found that there were two points worth considering: 1) in establishing a budget number there is a reasonable approach that can be different than the \$12.5 million, and 2) the cost estimates he was looking at were as much as 15% lower than the estimate before the Council. He also found the type of construction and the materials to be of importance. There are a number of design criteria which the Council can use to arrive at a budget number.

Mr. Archambo suggested reducing the cost by 10% to 15% without jeopardizing the whole of the project. The goal is to have a building that will last for 75 years. That would force into the design process the exact prioritization the Council is looking for. It also allows the needs of the fire station to be addressed through the design process. If the budget number is reduced by more than 15% then the design process can be pushed beyond prioritization to the Council dictating what design decisions will be made. He added that the project will progress with a bid alternate in which case decisions can be made such as not adding underground parking and adding to the remnant piece. In effect decisions will be made based on hard bid dollars and not estimates. He added that underground parking can reduce the budget number for referendum without precluding that decision. If the Council decides on a number below a 15% reduction, that option has been eliminated. By keeping the reduction to 10% to 15% , underground parking is still a possibility.

Ald. Birschel noted that the Council may also have to deal with costs associated with Design Review Board requirements.

Ald. Becker noted that there was a motion on the floor and asked if the City Administrator's presentation was a sufficient answer.

Ald. Donegan commented that he felt more comfortable about having an all inclusive building after Mr. Archambo's analysis regarding splitting up the facilities. He asked if Mr. Archambo could find any other costs savings beyond the 10% to 15%. Mr. Archambo responded that he is confident that the budget for the cost of the building could be reduced by that number. Ald. Donegan asked if there was any chance that the numbers won't change between now and February 5<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Archambo reiterated his concern that reducing the budget more than 15% will preclude some of the important elements of the project and the design process would be different. Making a decision on the budget amount will create a situation in which those elements that are important to the fire department long term will have to be prioritized.

Ald. Krol commented that the issue of acquiring property hasn't been adequately addressed. If it was possible to maintain the size of the facility and acquire less properties, that would lower the acquisition costs. He added that he hoped the building would be more than concrete block. He would like to see brick, but that would have an economic impact.

Mr. Archambo stressed that another major concern with reducing the project budget by too much is that opportunities for green technologies are jeopardized. Heating and ventilation can also be a larger cost. He stressed that a decision about the budget for the project has to be made.

Ald. Purins commented that if Zimmerman Design Group had a dollar figure to work with, they would have come up with a different design. By tweaking and making some decisions costs can be reduced. He felt there should be more discussions regarding property acquisitions. He also asked if there would be a better opportunity to locate the building to the south.

Ald. Stepaniak was surprised by the suggestion that the Council would be taking motions at this time. He sensed that there were still a number of questions about the programmatic issues. What they are working on needs some oversimplification. From his experience he believed there are three points before the Council: 1) what should be built, 2) how much will it cost, and 3) what is the referendum question that will be posed to the voters. He felt the Council hadn't actually arrived at a clear conclusion. He was concerned that Ald. Donegan's motion also may not bring the Council any closer. The \$10 million dollar figure or any other number seems like an arbitrary figure and he was not sure if this was the right way to build a fire station. He was not sure there were conclusions regarding putting all the functions together, the amount of parking, etc. Deciding on a budget number may force the Council to back up into conclusions about the program that would have long term impacts on what they actually want. He noted that approximately 2 years has been spent on this issue and he was uncomfortable with the approach.

Ald. Didier thought Ald. Donegan had a good suggestion. She felt that the \$10 million amount could be used as an exercise to see what the fire station would look like. That way they could find out what the real numbers are and the real size needs to be. She asked if anyone has tried to negotiate parking with the parking ramp across the street. She asked if the city could lease some parking spaces. She felt that there may be some opportunities to utilize what exists in the city. She was in support of getting Zimmerman Design Group to meet with an ad hoc committee to find out what \$10 million would look like.

Ald. Donegan felt the City Administrator was ahead of the motion. Mr. Archambo addressed construction costs and whether or not to separate the functions. He asked that Mr. Achambo look into the amount of parking and the size of the footprint as a final recommendation to the budget.

The motion was rescinded by the motioner and seconder.

Ald. Becker felt that people in the community might see \$10 million and \$12.5 million and see a lot of fluff. He suggested bringing back the issue in two weeks at 7:00 p.m. Ald. Purins asked that the 30% reduction in some of the significant spaces be addressed.

Ald. Didier asked if it were possible to phase in the design of the building using the structure that is there. Maybe everything isn't needed right away. She also would like a comment on negotiating on the parking ramps. Mr. Archambo responded that the building might be scaleable.

Ald. Purins asked if it was possible to do an asset swap as an alternative for parking in the church lot. Ald. Ewerdt thought that the church property regarding parking had been addressed very well. He remembered a discussion earlier that there would not be enough turning radius for the trucks. With regard to the project budget, he would like to look at the numbers more closely.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk

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