

Ways & Means Committee Special Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME: March 15, 2023 – 5:30 PM
LOCATION: Legislative Chambers, 6th Floor, County Office Building and
5 Taylor Street, New Paltz, New York
PRESIDING OFFICER: Deputy Chair Ronk
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Natalie Kelder, Legislative Financial Analyst
PRESENT: Legislators Bartels, Cahill, Roberts, Ronk & Walter
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Legislators Criswell, Erner, Hansut, Hewitt, Greene, Levine, Litts, Maloney, Nolan, Petit, Stewart, & Uchitelle, Legislative Counsel Gordon, Pascale & Ragucci, Comptroller Gallagher & Deputy Comptroller DeMarco – UC Comptroller’s Office, Director Erichsen, Deputy Director Peterson, Andrew Cafaldo, and Michael Gaffney – UC Emergency Management, Director Doyle – UC Planning, Director Macaluso – UC Information Services, Chris Young – Urbahn Architects, Rick Alfandre – Alfandre Architecture, John Montangue – GPI, Patricia Doxsey – Daily Freeman, Matt Eyler – Realtor, Matthew Gruber, Cheryl Schneider – Resident

Chair Gavaris called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM

Chairman Gavaris asked that all Legislators save questions until the end of the presentation and gave the floor over to Chris Young of Urbahn Architects, Rick Alfandre of Alfandre Architecture, and John Montangue of GPI.

Chris Young provided an overall update stating that the project is currently about 30% of the way through the design phase and just beginning design development with an estimated go live date of Fall 2025. Chris Young explained that the original cost estimates were very high level, but estimates will continue to become more specific as the process moves forward. Chris Young went on to explain the overall layout of the building and property.

Chairman Gavaris opened the floor to questions from the members of the Legislature.

Legislator Walter asked about the various water options and the costs associated with digging a well vs connecting the building to the village water.

John Montangue of GPI explained that the site is near both Water District No. 2 and 3 and it would be about 135 feet in length, under the thruway, to connect to the municipal water, and cost approximately \$430,000 compared to the excavation and materials needed for a well system at around \$371,000 but if contingencies are included the sum is \$446,000.

Legislator Maloney noted that there are issues with the water quality on this property and asked if they have anything to do with the push for municipal water on this project.

John Montangue of GPI explained that the containments primarily come from road salt stockpiles from the Department of Transportation and is common when road salt is not contained.

Legislator Ronk confirmed that the existing water districts have the capacity to take on the needs of this site.

Legislator Walter informed the committee that there is indeed concern from the Village of New Paltz on the additional water needs as there are currently existing water issues within the Village. Legislator Walter also asked about the process of going under the thruway for municipal water and what that process entails.

Rick Alfandre of Alfandre Architecture clarified that it's really going under the thruway ramp, not the thruway itself. John Montague of GPI explained that a directional drill must be used and as well as a carrier pipe with another pipe that is run through the first.

Legislator Criswell asked if there would be a cost savings over time with the municipal system. John Montague of GPI explained that a water pump and well all has to be maintained and the storage system needs to be disinfected but doesn't have value associated with the maintenance cost.

Legislator Cahill questioned the water usage cost from the Village but there was no estimate at this time. Legislator Cahill summarized that there is currently no estimate on the annual maintenance of a well system and no estimate of the annual usage fees associated with the municipal system.

Legislator Maloney noted that there used to be a shell gasoline station nearby and the DEC recognized it had been leaching into the ground and questioned if it could have contaminated the aquifer. John Montague of GPI noted that the old gas station is downhill but noted he cannot comment as he is not the one who completed the study but added that the current well on the property only has salt contamination.

Chairman Gavaris stated that he was previously told there is high iron and manganese on the site as well, which could complicate the filtration process.

Legislator Uchitelle asked if clients ever utilize a well system over a municipal water system and John Montague of GPI stated that has never happened.

Discussion ensued on the water testing, as well as the benefits of a well system vs municipal water.

Legislator Gavaris applauded the accelerated timeline of this project, confirmed the thruway access was still under consideration and noted the extremely high price per square foot.

Legislator Maloney informed the committee that there is at least 40 acres that have tested positive for arsenic, lead, and other containments and asked how much was planned to be spent on and the plan for remediation. John Montague of GPI explained that the containments that have been found are considered 'heavy metals' and they do not seep into the ground but stay within the first 1-3 feet of the soil and the plan is put a cover of 4-6 inches of topsoil over some areas, while in others it will be pulled to help create berms around the building for protection. Legislator Maloney questioned the associated costs and Rick Alfandre of Alfandre Architecture explained that the entire site is not being remediated, only the 6-acre portion being used for the Government Operations Center. Legislator Maloney noted that the original scoring matrix gave this site a favorable environmental score, causing it to beat out other potential project locations.

Legislator Greene asked about greenhouse gases, which fossil fuels will be burned, and if solar would be utilized on the open space noting the reliability benefits for this location. Chris Young of Urbahn

Architects answered that a diesel generator is included and is required for this type of project. Geothermal will be utilized for the heating and cooling of the building itself. Rich Alfandre of Alfandre Architecture added that there is \$150,000 allotment for rooftop solar and there are plans to future-proof the building and allow for battery storage of the solar energy.

Legislator Uchitelle asked if the solar system allows to pump into the grid to achieve a net zero outcome or does it allow to energy into the building when the system is down. Rich Alfandre of Alfandre Architecture explained that with battery storage it can power the building when the power is down. Legislator Uchitelle then asked if the power grid was down for an extended period would the building be able to be powered by solar, noting the need to prepare for long-term power outages in the future. Rich Alfandre answered yes, the system would do that however, more panels are needed to fully power the building as the rooftop solar alone wasn't enough to fully power the building.

Legislator Roberts questioned if the project would be more cost and energy efficient if there were two floors instead of being spread out on one floor. Chris Young of Urbahn Architects explained that you need to have more space for stairwells and elevators on a two-floor construction.

Legislator Roberts then asked, "how can we save money". Chris Young of Urbahn Architects stated that the first full cost estimates need to be completed before value engineering can be done.

Legislative Chair Bartels noted that construction contingency is not included the Trophy Point budget.

Legislative Chair Bartels asked about the "EOC" (Emergency Operations Center) portion of the building and how often it gets utilized. Everett Erichsen, Director of Emergency Services explained that advanced storm monitoring is done for larger storms, and this set up will be more functional and therefore utilized more often.

Legislator Cahill noted that the budgeting process is about 30% of the way through the design phase and the costs have increased \$10 Million and asked what the expected increase in the remaining 70% would be. Chris Young of Urbahn Architects stated there was no expectation for additional large increases. Rick Alfandre of Alfandre Architecture agreed that from the standpoint of the building and the equipment there should not be any larger increases, noting that if the county decides to add a ground solar array or something additional, it will obviously carry extra costs.

Legislator Levine questioned the capacity of the diesel generator, and it was said to be about 72 hours. Legislator Levine also asked about the strength of the building materials. Rick Alfandre of Alfandre Architecture explained that the building is to be made of reinforced concrete and steel and noted that there are standards for PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point) buildings, and it will be built to withstand various natural disasters.

Legislator Maloney asked how many sites that were looked at and how many other similar operations center buildings in the state have dual trunk lines. Everett Erichsen, Director of Emergency Services explained the 911 Center is the central nervous system of emergency response and if someone cannot call for help, help will not be coming.

Legislator Maloney also questioned how the site came up as a potential opportunity when it was not on the market at the time. Director of Planning Doyle explained that the site has been available for some time, and it was known within the team.

Discussion ensued on the type of materials to be utilized within the building, such as desks, chairs, tables etc with concerns regarding the costs as well as the quality.

Legislator Ronk expressed concern that the purchase and sale agreement on the land has not yet been signed and that except for the water conversation the legislature is micromanaging the project and has nothing to do with the purchase of the land.

Legislator Maloney noted that the price has increased from \$25 Million to \$35 Million, and the appraisal completed by the legislature allowed the price of the property to decrease significantly.

Legislator Cahill noted that no one wants another project to end up like the Ulster County Law Enforcement Center build. Legislator Bartels noted that part of the reason that the jail was so over budget is because much of the project was done in secret.

Director of Planning Doyle explained that there is going to be a significant investment in technology that was not made clear to the legislature and is worth \$6 or \$7 Million. In addition, an internal team has been formed to keep the project on track.

Legislator Hansut asked why our facility was allowed to age so much before a new capital project was brought forward.

Legislator Maloney reiterated his belief that this property is not the best for this project.

Discussion ensued on open meeting laws.

Chairman Gavaris asked if there was any old or new business.

Adjournment

Motion Made By: Legislator Cahill
Motion Seconded By: Legislator Bartels

No. of Votes in Favor: 3
No. of Votes Against: 1 (Legislator Ronk)

TIME: 7:59 PM

Respectfully submitted: Natalie Kelder
Minutes Approved: April 11, 2023