

TO: Board of Public Works  
FROM: G. Frank Teas, Commissioner  
Joel Ackerman, Commissioner  
On behalf of the facilities subcommittee  
DATE: November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
RE: DPW – Operation ‘Shelter’

**GOAL:** To evaluate, address, and make recommendations for the needed improvements to several of the Public Works facilities.

**OVERVIEW:** The Division of Public Works is in need of improvements to several facilities. After years of patching problems, the City made a bold step in purchasing a 29-acre parcel on Burke Street with the idea of redeveloping the building to put all departments under one roof in a parcel adjacent to the WasteWater Department. Due to escalating costs, that project was abandoned.

Reported air quality issues, safety, and aging infrastructure at several of our physical plants (boiler at Street Department, offices at Parks, facilities at the Landfill) have raised concern of needed improvements in the very near term. The landfill offices also are filled with rodents which make it an unhealthy workplace environment.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the buildings as they exist today do not address future growth of any of our departments.

At a special meeting of the Board of Public Works held April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, the Chairman, Mayor Donchess, appointed Commissioners Teas and Moriarty to work with Director Fauteux to develop a plan to address the potential construction of a building at the landfill. Subsequently, Commissioner Moriarty was replaced with Commissioner Ackerman. A committee was developed and populated by many stakeholders:

Frank Teas and Joel Ackerman, BPW Commissioners  
Lisa Fauteux, Director of Public Works  
Lori Wilshire, Michael O’Brien and Rick Dowd, Nashua Aldermen  
Tim Cummings, Director of Economic Development  
John Ibarra, Superintendent of Streets Department  
Jeff LaFleur, Superintendent of Solid Waste  
Lauren Byers, Public Relations Administrator  
Carolyn O’Connor, Finance and Administration Manager  
Andy Patrician, Assistant Director of Public Works

**PROGRESS:** On April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Moriarty, Fauteux, and Teas discussed organizing a plan that was inclusive of all stakeholders. We are desirous of organizing a plan that is inclusive of all stakeholders.

On May 10, 2019, Fauteux, Teas, Moriarty, Aldermen Dowd, Wilshire and O’Brien, Director Tim Cummings, as well as staff members of the DPW met to discuss possible solutions to provide an appropriate work environment for the DPW departments.

All members in attendance at the May 10, 2019 meeting, were sensitive to the financial impact to the taxpayers regarding any solution. There was significant discussion at this meeting regarding the possibility of making repairs to existing properties. On the surface one might think that repairing existing properties to be the most cost effective, however after further examination, the group believed that there were factors that needed to be considered in evaluating repair versus the potential of a ‘new build’. Four prominent factors were:

- Operational inefficiencies caused by departments working remotely
- Energy efficiencies (gained through new construction)
- Opportunity costs (specifically deterioration of equipment left uncovered)
- Continued band-aid mentality versus a strategic direction

The group heard from the Director that not having her staff under one roof is a concern that results in operational inefficiency. While tough to quantify, we were in general agreement with the Director.

Discussion of the group shifted to the potential of development of a building located on land at the Landfill. This topic was discussed favorably by all in attendance. Costs, and the financing of those costs, are very important to the group particularly in light of other pressing needs within the City. Tim Cummings raised the point of the potential of selling the Burke Street property and rolling proceeds into the development of a new facility, or repair to existing facilities, for Public Works. (The proceeds of the sale of the Burke property would need to be reinvested within a two-year window to ensure compliance with the bond issuers). It was also discussed that regardless of new construction or repair of existing buildings, the sales proceeds could be used for improvements.

The group did not make any decision regarding scope of project or location. We simply exhausted all possible solutions. We were interested in learning the costs of repairing existing infrastructure and expanding to address future growth, and we wanted to learn what the cost would be for a new home (new construction). We had an excellent discussion regarding traffic impact should we chose to consolidate all departments under one roof. A great point was made: in order to consolidate, we would need a large parcel of land at a minimal cost.

**PRESENTATION TO BPW:** Our results were presented to the board of public works on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019 for consideration. There was a lot of concern regarding possible location of a new building at the landfill – all present were reminded that no decision had been made but rather facts were being presented. After much discussion, the board voted to hire a third party to review our properties and provide estimates and a solution.

Three firms were interviewed and a vote of the committee resulted in the engagement of Harvey Construction. The scope of work included reviewing all properties and report back to the committee the cost to maintain these as habitable buildings. They were also charged with providing us the cost for a new building (location unknown) to consolidate most departments under one roof.

**MEETING OF October 30, 2019:** The committee met on this date to hear the report of Harvey Construction. The report from Harvey Construction was eye-opening and outlined the fact that our existing infrastructure is riddled with safety and health concerns, and does not provide room for expansion. As Harvey is the expert in this area, we will let them present their findings and conclusions to the entire BPW. The summary for costs and concerns are outlined below:

	Refurbishment	New Construction
Total Costs	\$15.9	\$9.9
Concerns	Current health and safety. Does not address future growth. Structural concerns.	Does not include costs for a location
Efficiencies gained	Likely minimal	Energy, Workplace efficiency, ability for future growth

After Harvey made their presentation which included their 100% endorsement of building a new administrative building versus refurbishing existing infrastructure (keep in mind that they would rather have a \$15.9 million contract versus a \$9.9 million contract), our discussion turned to ‘where do we build’.

Given the ultimate, long-term goal of housing all human capital and equipment at one facility, the committee asked Director Cummings the size of property needed for the project. The response was 25 acres. Director Cummings further commented that at \$250,000 an acre, the total land cost might approximate \$6 million. The inventory of large parcels is low and by purchasing an existing property, we would be retiring a property from the tax rolls (to the tune of \$120,000 annually).

Discussion regarding building at the landfill was once again proposed. Several comments were brought up about increased traffic. Wayne Husband, DPW Senior Traffic Engineer and Hoyle Tanner are both finalizing a traffic study but have enough data to confirm that a consolidated DPW facility at the landfill would not have a significant impact on traffic in the West Hollis Street corridor.

**CONCLUSION:** After a very thorough and analytical approach, the committee is convinced that the financial impact to the residents are best reflected by building a new administrative office on a parcel of property that is owned by the City – thereby not taking a property of the rolls via purchase and decreasing the annual tax revenues. This approach, coupled with leveraging the proceeds from the Burke Street sale, will provide our staff with a safe and healthy working environment.

Upon hearing the facts the committee voted UNANIMOUSLY to pursue building a new administrative home for Public Works and to consolidate the operation under one roof. The group further discussed possible locations. After understanding the financial impact, the committee once again voted UNANIMOUSLY to recommend construction of a new facility at the Landfill.

Reasoning behind unanimity included:

- We care about a safe and healthy work environment for our staff while also being fiscally responsible. Attention to our infrastructure was long overdue.
- Refurbishing does not address future growth.
- New construction allows for the re-purposing of existing buildings.
- Allows to capitalize on the funds being ‘freed’ from sale of Burke Street (has to be redeployed within 24 months). The funds available approximate \$3.9MM.
- Building a new administrative office will cost us 38% less (\$9.9MM versus \$15.9MM).