

GRAFTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE BUILDING COMMITTEE
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
December 20th, 2024

PRESENT: see attached sign-in sheet.

J. Oakes called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

1. Introductions and Roles

- Dan Hamilton – Lieutenant, Grafton County Sheriff's Office
- Holly Elsholz - Assistant Administrator, Grafton County *
- Amanda Perry – Chief, Probation & Parole, NH Department of Corrections (P&P NHDOC)
- David L. Cady - Deputy Director, Probation & Parole, NH Department of Corrections
- Jim Oakes - Maintenance Superintendent, Grafton County *
- Katie Hedberg - Commissioner, Grafton County *
- Rick Colbeth - Assistant Maintenance Superintendent, Grafton County *
- Thayer Paronto - Communications Director, Grafton County Sheriff's Office
- Stephen Lorentzen - Special Projects Manager, NH Judicial Branch
- Sarah Lineberry – Superintendent, NH Judicial Branch, Dept. of Admin. Services, Bureau of Court Facilities
- Angela Bemis - Deputy Court Clerk, NH Judicial Branch, Grafton County Superior Court
- Marcie Hornick - County Attorney, Grafton County Attorney
- Julie Libby - County Administrator, Grafton County *
- Omer Ahern – Commissioner, Grafton County (joined by zoom)
- Alison Evans – Director of Office Administration, Grafton County Attorney (joined by zoom)
- Kristin Ross – Member, Grafton County Bar Association (joined by zoom)
- David Cole – Member, Grafton County Bar Association (joined by zoom)
- Nick De Mayo – Citizen (joined by zoom)
- Jeff Stiegler – Sheriff, Grafton County Sheriff's Office (not present)
- Luke Kraus - President, Grafton County Bar Association (not present)
- Viktoriya Kovalenko – Clerk, NH Judicial Branch, Grafton Superior Court (not present)
- Pamela Kozlowski – Clerk, NH Judicial Branch, 2nd Circuit Probate Division, Haverhill (not present)

- Janet Bouchard – Deputy Director, NH Department of Safety (not present)
- Samantha Norcross – Grafton County Administrative Assistant
- Robert Robicsek – Principal, Lavallee Brensinger Architects (LBA)
- John Harper – Project Manager, LBA
- Doug Shilo - Project Architect, LBA

** Denotes Grafton County Courthouse Building Committee members*

2. Project Team

- Key stakeholders, focus groups.
 - Grafton County Sheriff's Office/Dispatch
 - Probation & Parole, NH DOC
 - Grafton County Superior & Circuit Courts (NH Judicial Branch, Dept. of Admin. Services, Bureau of Court Facilities)
 - Grafton County Attorney
 - Grafton County Administration (Courthouse Building Committee)
 - Grafton Bar Association, NH Bar Association
 - NH DMV
- Design Team
 - Architect: LBA
 - Civil Engineer: VHB
 - MEP/FP: DuBois and King
 - Structural: Foley, Buhl, Roberts and Associates (FBRA)
- Construction / Cost Estimating Team
 - Jobin Construction Consultants
- Communications/Point of Contact:
 - LBA: John Harper, copy to Robert Robicsek and Doug Shilo
 - Grafton County: Jim Oakes, copy to Julie Libby

3. Project scope

J. Harper and B. Robicsek outlined the project scope for a 60,000 GSF +/- building:

- Division of space
 - Courts – approximately half of the space
 - County and other state agencies (DMV and P&P NHDOC) – approximately half of the space
- Potential for Shared Spaces - J. Harper explained that the smaller and more efficient the building is, the better it will serve in the long run and be more cost-effective as well. J. Harper and B. Robicsek reviewed the following list of potential shared spaces within the building. They stated that the building conceptual design will commence once they have answers for these, but do not need answers today. There will be a questionnaire for each of these functions that will ask for their department's needs. There is a page in the questionnaire that also talks about shared spaces. These will be compiled into the final program.
 - Lobbies
 - A single entrance could work well if everyone is screened at the entrance. Screening to different degrees by “wing” (such as courts wing) was discussed, but is not preferred.
 - Circulation (Stairs, Elevators)
 - Degree of sharing will be limited by secure separations.
 - Public and Staff restrooms
 - Briefly discussed – this may not work for at least some departments. To be discussed further on department-by-department basis.
 - Conference
 - Two conference rooms assumed to be dedicated to each court room, for privacy and safety. The example of potential interactions occurring for family law was discussed.
 - MEP/FP spaces
 - Departments may share building system equipment and spaces to for efficiency.
 - Some areas, like demarcation points, may still have to be separated for security purposes.
 - Jury Assembly as large multi-purpose space
 - These spaces are currently used twice per month.
 - Currently using courtrooms for training, which is not desirable.

- Kitchens and break areas
 - The potential for sharing these areas will be explored during the programming and concept design phase and may depend on separation and security requirements of individual departments and functions.
- Parking
 - Existing parking is currently adequate in size. Separate parking areas are anticipated for Courthouse Staff, County Staff, Public Visitors, along with a vehicle sally port. Security for law enforcement, judges and court staff was discussed and is an important issue for the project. County would prefer a more secure approach including gates and fencing.
 - Mobile Communications Center, which is towed by a truck, as well as other specialized vehicles may require climate control. Any such needs should be enumerated in the questionnaire.
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
 - The existing one is the smallest in the state, and is poorly configured. A space to fit 30-40 people should be added to the program. This could be a shelter-in-place location and needs to be a “hardened” space, which may also require separate MEP systems. This will be explored in more detail during the programming phase.

4. Big Picture Project Goals

R. Robicsek stated he wanted the county to firm up and provide LBA within a couple weeks, responses to the Big Picture Project Goals. The following was discussed in the meeting:

- Vision and Goals – J. Harper asked everyone what would make this study a success and what are the lesson’s learned from the previous 2021 study that we do not want to duplicate. Members of the meeting discussed items that they felt were important to have in the new courthouse. J. Harper noted the answers to these items should be included in the space needs questionnaire responses.
 - Security is the top priority, including: site, parking, building entrance, and departmental level.
 - Acoustics is the next priority.

- Efficiency, with streamlined and direct access between related functions, is the next priority.
- Success Factors – J. Harper stated that one key success factor is making sure the County can afford this project. This study will not be productive if what comes out of it is not actionable. He added that the design should be appropriate to a municipal facility constructed in Grafton County.
 - The public must believe this project is worth their tax dollars.
 - Separation, for both functional and security purposes, is imperative to maintain.
 - The existing building does not comply with CJIS. In the new building, CJIS compliance is imperative
 - Sally port is run by the county, so their input will be imperative.
 - Any EOC must be category IV to receive federal funding.
- Energy & Sustainability Goals – D. Shilo stated that a key downfall of the current building is how much energy it loses. If the County knows what they want or have other goals for energy, that is important for them to know. He asked what the lifespan is that the County wants out of the building; they can specify criteria based off that goal. If the County has goals, they can design to that.
 - D. Shilo said the new building must meet NH Energy Code minimums
 - D. Cole noted that technology has changed a lot and the design of the courthouse needs to reflect that. B. Robicsek stated that they would build that into the conceptual design costs. He noted that technology is now taking up 10-15% of project costs.

5. Project budget Considerations

- J. Harper stated the probable construction costs will be tested against the building program once the program is complete, utilizing current \$/SF benchmarks for similar NH projects. It will also factor historical construction costs as well as escalation, considering when the project is expected to start construction. This is a key first step to allow design to commence.
- J. Libby stated that the most important thing is making it an efficient and affordable project, as the taxpayers are going to be paying for it.
- R. Robicsek stated cost, efficiency, and ease of maintenance will have to be balanced.
- N. De Mayo stated that in terms of project cost, this current building is 52 years old, and communities are putting off projects because of this courthouse. He stated that this is going

to go directly on the taxpayers and they will be paying for it many years to come. N. De Mayo urged them to do the best they can to cut the cost of this project and make it affordable to the taxpayers.

6. Design Schedule

- J. Harper and B. Robicsek reviewed the design schedule and noted that the anticipated completion date is early June, 2025.
- Next meeting is to validate questionnaires. “Page-turn” will be conducted via Zoom/Teams meetings with 1-3 representatives of each department.
- The program will go through several drafts before being completed by the first week of February.
- Blocking Diagrams will be conducted in the next phase once the program is finalized.

7. Facility Construction Standards

- State Court Standards – J. Harper and B. Robicsek stated that they will be using the State of NH Construction Standards as a design guide for the Courthouse. J. Oakes stated that the County does not have any specific design standards they follow other than the current editions of the IBC and NFPA.

8. Next Steps

- Task #1 – Program validation:
 - Complete County Agency Questionnaire and review of Court Draft Program
 - J. Harper and B. Robicsek went through the programming questionnaire with the stake holders and answered their questions.
 - Questionnaires must be returned to LBA: 1/10/2025
 - Schedule Interviews with all departments – in person and or via video calls
 - Complete Building Program – end of the first week of February
 - Complete survey and geotechnical report as soon as possible.

With no further business, J. Oakes adjourned the meeting at 12:00pm.