

Building Committee Meeting: Minutes

Thursday, September 9, 2021 6:00 pm at the courthouse

Members present:

Richard Harsh	David Nollner	Shane Burton
Bubba Gregory	John Oliver	Dwight Jewell
Steve Whittaker	Ken Buckmaster	Mayor Chambers

Others: Cliff Sallee

Not present: Amber Russell, Beverly Atwood

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.

Old Business:

-Chairman Harsh turned the meeting over to Mayor Chambers for an update on the windows at the courthouse. The mayor reported that he had someone look at our situation and they said the old windows needed repair work, such as glazing and painting and that was preferable to replacing them, especially from an historical viewpoint. Maintaining original features to buildings on the National Register of Historic Places is an important consideration.

There were questions concerning if it was worth it to try and keep the building on the national register or if it would be better to just replace the windows. Being recognized on the national register allows us to apply for grants that we would not otherwise qualify for. An example was the grant we received to restore the courtroom about fifteen years ago, which amounted to several hundred thousand dollars. Also, the recent downtown streetscape grant was helped by the designation.

It was agreed that hiring a person to do the work, one window at a time, was likely the best solution. Any action will be left up to the mayor.

-The mayor continued with an update on the heating and air-conditioning of the courthouse.

The mayor has had several people look at the old system and the cost of replacing it entirely would cost around \$680,000. Yet, constantly repairing it is also expensive. Using individual systems for each office, much like the split system used at the high school, might be the best solution.

-Discussion then was focused on the renovations to the old Register of Deed's office for the Election office. Mr. Sallee reported on problems with leaks in the old hot water system that are keeping him from putting down a new floor... the previous floor being damaged, as well as some floor joists, from the leaky system. Mr. Sallee also reported problems with the suspended ceiling in one of the rooms.

-The mayor reported that the Election Commission had requested that an outside door be added to the south side of the office, to assist them in handing out election materials during an election. That would require making an existing window into a door and adding steps or ramps to the side.

In the discussion it was suggested that perhaps it would be best to have the commission conduct another election process first and see if they were able to function reasonably without the door and if so, the door would not be necessary. If not, then they could request the door again and it could be taken up at a future meeting.

Motion by Bubba Gregory, seconded by David Nollner to delay any action on a new door until after the upcoming national election and voting in 2022 and then readdress the situation. Passed

New Business:

-Historical Society president, John Oliver, updated the committee on their plans to turn the old Tax Assessor's office into a museum. Work has been delayed due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Oliver noted that the county had large items stored in the room that needed to be removed before they can begin to paint and prepare displays. They have already begun taking items and display cabinets into the room.

He noted that there is no set time to have the museum ready.

-The mayor then gave each member of the committee a copy of an assessment of our jail and what needs to be addressed if the county decides to build a new jail.

The report was well done and revealed much about the jail, its inmate population and needed improvements,

The mayor said that tentatively, a new jail would cost between 20 and 25 million dollars. The budget committee and his office will be looking at ways to pay for the facility in the coming months. One suggestion was to continue our wheel tax, which will expire soon after paying for the new high school, and to use that in addition to the money we receive from Core Civic.

Once that decision can be made, the building committee will have the duty of finding a location, etc.

-The mayor reported on improvements to the courthouse internet and the possibility of taking the old downstairs courtroom, removing the judge's podium and making it more flexible for use by the county and by other groups. It too, needs floor and ceiling work.

Meeting adjourned

John Oliver, Secretary