

Southampton Senior Center Building Committee Meeting No. 34

On September 4, 2025, Meeting No. 34 of the Southampton Senior Center Building Committee was held in the second floor conference room in the Southampton Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by Janet Cain at 1:00 pm. The following people attended the meeting.

MEMBERS

Janet Cain, Co-Chair	Libby Baldwin
Dennis Vogel, Co-Chair	Scott Szczebak, Town Administrator
Karle Kushi	Darcie Gasperini
Chris Fowles, Selectboard Rep.	Kate DiSanto, COA Director

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ted Palmer

PUBLIC

Dana Lituri
Francine Tishman, Friends of the COA Rep.
Renee Nevue
Art Bergeron

The following is a summary of the discussions held at the meeting.

1. Open Time for Public

- a. A. Bergeron asked about a breakdown of costs for the new senior center. J. noted that this discussion may occur during the meeting and that specific questions could be answered at that time.
- b. A. Bergeron asked who would pick up any difference in revenue if all funds for the project are not approved. F. Tishman indicated that the COA will provide any help that they are able to, if funds are available.
- c. F. Tishman noted that the Friends of the COA are looking forward to a new senior center due to restrictions on size, programming, etc. with the existing senior center. Other Towns have larger spaces available for use by seniors. She appreciates the work of the Committee to move this project forward. She also discussed the role of the Friends of the COA.
- d. Other comments and questions by the public are noted below.

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Minutes from Senior Center Building Committee Meeting #33 were approved with all members voting in favor.

3. Special Town Meeting Planning (STM)

- a. The following is a summary of discussions held regarding planning for the Special Town Meeting on September 30, 2025.
- b. Cost Breakdown:
 - The Committee discussed the project cost breakdown since this information should be provided to residents prior to the STM. S. Szczebak outlined the anticipated project costs including building costs and soft costs (approximately 30% of construction costs). These 2 items total approximately \$14.17 million. The donation from the Parsons estate (~\$2.2 million) will be deducted from this amount, resulting in approximately \$12 million for the total project cost. The Estate donation amount is larger than \$2.2 million, but some funds will be held from this account to pay for certain project costs that may arise prior to borrowing.
 - The project costs noted above include interest rates for borrowing. These rates are assumed based on best available information since actual borrowing rates are not yet known. S. Szczebak provided a draft handout showing the approximate yearly tax increase for various property values in Southampton. A. Bergeron asked if the borrowing rate will be fixed or variable. S. Szczebak noted that it will likely be a likely variable rate.
 - The Committee also noted that it will also look at other resources for additional capital funds to offset the project costs.
 - Funds from the estate will be used to pay for the architect and Owner's Project Manager (OPM) so the actual borrowing will not occur until after the design is complete, likely in 2026 or 2027.
 - A discussion was held regarding identifying the cost requirements that will have a big impact on the building costs. It will be a good idea to have this information available at the STM presentation.
 - The Committee discussed certain grants that may be available to provide funding for operational costs.
- c. The following public information sessions will be held prior to the STM:
 - A Q&A session about the project will be held at the existing senior center on September 10th at 10 am during coffee hour.
 - An open house will be held at the senior center on September 16th. D. Gasperini made a motion to hold this session from 6 – 8 pm. D. Vogel seconded the motion, and it passed with all members voting in favor.

4. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- a. A subcommittee was formed to work on the list of FAQs about the existing senior center. The Committee discussed and made edits to the list of FAQs. This will be used as an additional educational piece and will be posted on website.

- b. The Committee discussed the fact that usage in the new facility will likely increase in the future since other Town's usage increased substantially after their new facilities were constructed.
- c. K. DiSanto noted that membership & usage of the senior center has expanded over time. Close to 500 people are active members. A discussion was held regarding how membership and usage is defined.
- d. The following are specific questions asked by the public about the existing senior center and the FAQs:
 - How many people would the senior center like to accommodate in rooms in the new center? K. DiSanto noted that we would like to be able to serve 100 people and not mix food and exercise in the same room.
 - Will the Town be required to have person who is certified in food preparation for the new kitchen? K. DiSanto noted that she is ServSafe certified. However, we will need to figure out what level of food service and what level of certification will be needed for the new facility. A "gourmet level" kitchen will not be designed, but the new senior center will need an industrial level kitchen. The Committee noted that the Town could potentially be eligible for grants if we have more food service capabilities.
 - Why not use the Southampton Country Club or the Town church for various programs? K. DiSanto noted that both facilities charge a usage fee and the existing budget for the senior center is not adequate to use these facilities long term.
 - Have we looked at partnerships with YMCAs? K. DiSanto reached out to Northampton YMCA and is trying to coordinate some programming with that facility.
 - Do we know what the operational costs will be for the new facility in the future? S. Szczebak provided general cost estimates based on current operational costs of the Town library.
 - How will the new senior center be constructed on the 0 College Highway property if the public safety complex is not constructed prior to or at the same time as the senior center? D. Gasperini and K. DiSanto have been attending meetings with the land use planner for this property and noted that the senior center will be located behind the public safety complex. The senior center can be constructed prior to the public safety complex, with space reserved for the public safety complex. The new senior center was located in this manner so that there will be cost savings for shared parking and septic systems.
 - How does the new senior center size relate to existing Town buildings? The new senior center will be roughly double the size of the Town library. Possibly this comparison could be available to the public prior to the STM to help visualize the size of the new building.
 - The public noted that the 0 College Highway property layout should show only the senior center & public safety and not necessarily show the housing that will be constructed in the future.

- e. The list of FAQs and answers should be completed prior to the public information session on Sept. 10th
- f. Subcommittee will meet again to finalize the list of FAQs prior to meeting on Sept 10th. The answers to the FAQs should have more bullets and less text.

5. Timeline for Project

- a. The Committee discussed the project timeline that was developed previously and determined that it should be updated to show the extent of work that has been completed on the project. This updated timeline might be posted on the Town website.

6. Next Meeting

- a. The next Senior Center Building Committee meeting will be held in person at Town Hall on September 16, 2025 at 5 pm prior to the open house.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm.

Submitted by Libby Baldwin, Clerk, Southampton Senior Center Building Committee