

Southampton Senior Center Building Committee Meeting No. 36

On October 30, 2025, Meeting No. 36 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 12:33 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 (via Zoom)
Chris Fowles, Selectboard Rep.	Kate DiSanto, COA Director
Ted Palmer	

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

1. Open Time for Public

- a. None

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. Minutes from Senior Center Building Committee Meeting #34 were approved with all members voting in favor.
- b. Minutes from Senior Center Building Committee Meeting #35 were approved with all members voting in favor via a roll call vote.

3. Update on Public Safety Building Committee

- a. The Senior Center Building Committee reviewed the discussions held at the last Public Safety Building Committee (PSBC) meeting at which there were many ideas for the building presented by members of the public. Some of the discussions at the meeting included ideas for constructing a new building & hiring an OPM for less costs, using a Butler style building for the fire station garage bays, constructing only a fire station now then adding a police station in the future, etc.
- b. The PSBC voted to set aside the current plan for a new public safety complex due to cost concerns, and evaluate other alternatives. That committee will use the existing plan as a guide when deciding how best to move forward. The PSBC is open to different options.
- c. The Selectboard will evaluate and decide what the PSBC's charge is and how to move forward.
- d. There is a community group that is obtaining input on the public safety complex project, but it is not an official town committee, and it is not clear what that group's role is in the project.

- e. In addition to public discussion at the PSBC meeting, there were also public comments at the latest Selectboard meeting regarding both the public safety complex and the senior center projects.

4. Next Steps for Future Senior Center

- a. All Senior Center Building Committee members agreed that moving forward in September or October of 2025 was not fiscally responsible, given the financial issues the Town currently faces.
- b. Discussions were held regarding what the next steps are for the Committee, given the current financial challenges. The Committee discussed and agreed with the following:
 - A new public safety complex is a more pressing priority for the Town than a new senior center; therefore, we should hold off on developing a new plan for the senior center until the PSBC's plan is more fully developed.
 - The current situation in the existing senior center is untenable for several reasons:
 - Usage of the senior center has increased substantially in the last few years and there is not enough space for programming (refer to feasibility study).
 - The office spaces are inadequate and extremely crowded. There are also plumbing and electrical issues in the office areas.
 - The kitchen is used frequently but cannot be used to prepare foods due to septic system constraints.
 - We should continue working towards the construction of a new stand-alone senior center because that is what will ultimately be needed, even if the construction does not occur for several years.
 - We should improve some of the current issues in the senior center in the interim while we work on a plan for a stand-alone building in the future.
- c. J. Cain noted that she has worked on supporting Southampton seniors for many years. She noted that it is difficult to understand how those from the public who have not been involved in the past can fully understand all of the challenges presented in the current space.
- d. J. Cain noted that she contacted the attorney for the Parsons Estate Will to ask if the funds from the will can be withdrawn since the plans for the new senior center are in limbo. The attorney noted that she did not think the funds could be withdrawn at this point in time since the estate is closed and the money has been disbursed.
- e. L. Baldwin asked if the adjacent church could be used to house a part of the senior center. Since the church charges rent for use of its facilities, and there may be liabilities to the Town if the classes are not supervised, this is not a practical option.
- f. A Committee member noted that they heard mention that the existing police station should be used for a new senior center. This is not feasible due to ADA regulations and potentially very expensive renovation costs. Refer to this analysis in the feasibility study.

- g. The following interim options were discussed:
 - Using the existing adjacent hallway for the senior center
 - Using the adjacent selectboard meeting room for the senior center
- h. The Committee agreed that we should review the existing Town Hall building plans for potential renovation options for interim improvements before a new building can be constructed. The path forward might include hiring an architect or builder to develop a conceptual renovation plan, then going out to bid for the renovation work.
- i. The Committee also discussed whether or not we should ask Abacus to evaluate a smaller stand alone building but decided to hold off on that idea.
- j. L. Baldwin, K. DiSanto, & D. Vogel will meet on November 10th at 3:30 pm at the senior center to go over the existing plans to determine the feasibility of renovating the space.

5. Committee Charge

- a. The Committee evaluated the charge for the Senior Center Building Committee. The charge indicates that we should solicit funds, meaning that we should look at funding opportunities, not necessarily raise funds ourselves. The committee charge extends through the end of the bidding process, and does not include activities during construction. When the project reaches that point, a new committee will likely be formed with a new charge.

6. Next Meeting

- a. The next Senior Center Building Committee meeting will be held in person at Town Hall on November 20, 2025 at 12:30 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:36 pm.

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