

Commissioners' Journal
September 11, 2017

The Geauga County Board of Commissioners met for a special meeting with Elected Officials, Departments and Richard L. Bowen and Associates on September 11, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. in the Building 8 meeting room located at 470 Center Street in Chardon, Ohio.

It is declared and determined that all formal actions of the Board of County Commissioners concerning and relating to the adoption of all resolutions that were adopted in this meeting, and that all deliberations of the Board of County Commissioners that resulted in such formal action were open to the public and were in compliance with all legal requirements, including section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.

President Ralph Spidalieri opened the special meeting at 9:35 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Spidalieri asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of our first responders and those that lost their lives on September 11, 2001.

Mr. Spidalieri asked for a moment of silence for all of those currently in harms way from the Hurricanes in Texas and Florida. May God be with them.

Representatives from Richard L. Bowen and Associates introduced themselves, including Ken Emling, a Principal and registered Architect at the firm who has been there for over 21 years. Robyn Wolf is a project Architect at the firm and has been there for three years, but practicing for over ten years.

Commissioner Claypool explained that the Commissioners have embarked on a Feasibility Study and that a lot of rumors have been going around. Today, we'd like to express that this is an opportunity to set things up for the future. Mr. Claypool stated that we have many buildings that are older and have ongoing maintenance costs. We will hear about challenges from citizens about how they have to run back and forth to get things done, along with storage and security issues. The Board felt it would be healthy to take a look at all of it and ask if this was the best we can do, can we make some investment, what would something different look like, can some of the properties we have be leveraged, or can we do something with the thirty-five acres we own. Right now we don't know the right outcome but all of us can work together. The Board asks you for your input, insight and thoughts. How do we know what we have is good, unless we make the effort to look into it? The Board has brought a smart partner in to help us figure it out. Mr. Claypool stated that we need to start the process of where we can go from here for the future, so that it's good for our kids and our grandkids.

Mr. Emling thanked the Board and everyone in attendance for coming, explaining that this is an introduction to what we are doing, and over the course of the next few months we will be meeting with many of them and want to make the study useful and fruitful for everyone.

Mr. Emling presented the following power point:



Geauga County
Needs Assessment

Elected Officials Meeting



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Richard L. Bowen + Associates (RLBA)

- Founded in 1959
- Headquartered in NE Ohio
- Full-Service Firm (A, E & CM)
- Experience with County Projects, Government Projects, Facility Assessments and Planning Studies

Geauga County



Mr. Emling gave a brief over view of the firm, noting that they have a full service staff that includes Engineering disciplines, contractors and cost estimators. Mr. Emling showed a few of the examples that the firm has completed.

Government Experience



Geauga County



Projects include Federal, County and Municipal levels.

Bedford Municipal Center



Geauga County



This project brought together Courts, Police, City Hall, Fire and was a very successful project.



This project was completed about three years ago.



This project included many departments including the IRS, SSA, and Federal Courts.



A current project under construction, noting that ABB is currently in Wickliffe and are relocating to Highland Hills.

Project Objective

- **Assessment of Facilities**
- **Understand Function & Needs**
- **Develop Recommendations**
- **Opinion of Probable Costs**

Geauga County



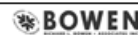
The objectives for the study include the assessment of the facilities, the departments and how they function. The first thing that is done is to look at what you have, how you operate and where you are at. The next step is to understand each department's needs to function on a day to day basis. One thing that needs to be done is for a Questionnaire to be filled out, that asks you what your current needs are and what the needs could be five to ten years down the road, is something missing, what could help our department work better. After they are completed, we hold interviews to review the questionnaires to add to ask additional questions for your needs. From that we create a Program of Requirements that outlines every space that is needed, puts a square footage to that need. Mr. Emling expressed that he is hopeful and eager to work with them and ask them to help them understand what they do. Any recommendations that are made will come with a probable cost.

Process – Phase 1A

Data Gathering

- **Visual Assessment of each Building**
- **Confirmation of Building Layouts**
- **Inventory of Existing Space Functions and Sizes**
- **Identification of Space Utilization and Efficiency**
- **Obtain Maintenance, Repair and Operating Costs**

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Currently we are in Phase 1, which is Data Gathering. We are in the process of doing the visual assessment that confirms layout of space on the blueprints. Mr. Emling went on to explain that they are also identifying who is in what space and want to start looking at efficiencies. Maintenance costs, repair costs and operating costs is also an important part of the financial picture. Once that data is gathered, then we start looking at bubble diagrams, who and what departments would function better together, safety and security is looked at and is important. Concept diagrams are then started to be created and eventually develops into what can be and would be best for the county. There is no preconceived idea that is not how they work as an architect.

Process – Phase 1B

Programming / Needs Assessment

- User Group Input
- Review and Analysis of Input
- User Group Follow Up & Discussions
- Prepare POR (Program of Requirements)

(your input is important!)

Process – Phase 2A / 2B

Conceptual Design Studies

- Study Adjacencies, Access, Safety, Flow of all Groups and Departments
- Prepare Concept Diagrams of Optimum Efficiencies and Operational Costs
- Evaluate the Best Solution for the County
 - * Renovation
 - * Addition
 - * New

Process – Phase 3

Final Report

- Summarize Work Efforts & Results
- Evaluate Various Options Proposed in Previous Phases
- Final Recommendation Based Upon all Pertinent Information and Data

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Schedule

- **Phase 1A October 6, 2017**
- **Phase 1B October 20, 2017**
- **Phase 1 Report November 3, 2017**

- **Phase 2A December 8, 2017**
- **Phase 2B December 22, 2017**
- **Phase 2 Report January 12, 2018**

- **Phase 3 Final Report January 26, 2018**

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This is our current schedule, and we will try and stay on schedule as much as possible. Any changes will be updated when meeting with the Board bi-weekly. Mr. Emling expressed that they want to be open and honest and look forward to working with everyone.

Mr. Claypool inquired about how this impacts Chardon, saying while we are working to manage tax dollars for the residents of this County, Chardon is a big part of it. Mr. Claypool added that people always have trouble with change, but in the end it is often for the better. Mr. Claypool feels that this could be a great opportunity for Chardon that could bring a new income stream. Mr. Claypool added that we will work with Chardon to mitigate any changes.

Planning Commission Director Dave Dietrich inquired if a survey of the residents would be completed. Mr. Emling expressed that community meetings are held when they want to share information. Mr. Emling stated that thousands of responses could be daunting, but they do need to be involved. Mr. Claypool added that there is timing for everything; this is a feasibility study to discover what the options are to move forward. Once we discover what the best idea for a solution is then we take it to public for their opinion.

Treasurer Chris Hitchcock asked what the total cost of the study was, to which Mr. Claypool replied that the initial cost is around \$30,000.00 with an additional option that could be a total cost of around \$60,000.00. Mr. Hitchcock inquired about the fox guarding the hen house, with a recommendation of a new fabulous facility, and wanted to know why the Commissioners didn't choose an organization that would have no vested interest in the project. Mr. Claypool stated that they don't have a vested interest; we didn't hire an architect. We had to hire someone who has the background and experience to do the study. This is a feasibility study. The criteria architect opportunity will go out to bid once we determine what we want or need to do. County Administrator David Lair added that this is always going to be driven by cost, financial viability, does it make financial sense or do we continue to do what we have always done. If you can't make a case that it makes sense for the investment, than it doesn't happen. Commissioner Lennon stated that it has to fit within in our current budget, that we are not going to raise taxes or go out for a levy. An option to consider would be Notes, and pay it down quickly or in conjunction with the possible sale of properties. Mr. Lennon added that he is curious about the potential of this county. Mr. Claypool thanked Mr. Hitchcock for his question, there is no perfect way, or answer. We know we are being judged and we will run into problems, have road bumps but the Board asks that they cooperate with the process so that it comes out the best way it can. Mr. Lennon noted a recent request from the Library Board for a levy, and that they had an architectural study done instead of feasibility and they provide different opinions. Mr. Lennon briefly explained the process that was followed to reach the decision of using Bowen and Associates for the study. Right now, this is a checkup to look at all the pieces of the puzzle and see where we stand today. Mr. Claypool added that you need to do this, because if you don't, at some point, you can be forced to do something.

County Auditor Frank Gliha asked what it was going to cost the residents of this county for a facility that is not as outdated as this one, adding that there are issues with each building we own. He stated there will be bigger issues with a new facility, citing employees expecting more

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money because they are in a new facility. Mr. Gliha stated that the feasibility study is important, but the residents' opinions are also important. Commissioner Spidalieri agreed that Mr. Gliha had two valid points, but how do we justify more money to pay people more, but our residents also deserve something better too. People are willing to pay for better service. Mr. Spidalieri added that he experienced the old and new safety center, and that they didn't get paid more, but that there was a level of pride, ownership and service that was extended to the residents even better than what was done before. Mr. Spidalieri cited visitation of prisoners, attorneys meeting with suspects and protection of officers with the construction and layout of the building. Mr. Spidalieri reminded Mr. Gliha that he had come before the Commissioners and expressed concern over security and he agreed then and still agrees. Mr. Spidalieri noted a comment by President Trump about Florida and that it's not worried about cost but about lives. The Commissioners need to worry about both, because people are valuable to this county. Mr. Lennon added that there might be a possibility of paying people more because a new facility might allow you to do more with less, but no decisions have been made, and any outcome must fit within in our budget.

Mr. Claypool added that before any of this started he, himself did his own analysis on the buildings, assets and the idea of consolidation. Mr. Claypool added that one of the biggest things that he learned was the high cost of utilities and how energy inefficient the buildings are. Mr. Gliha expressed his concern for Chardon. Mr. Hitchcock added that it is important to remember the history and that this idea had been looked at before, but Commissioners had differences of opinions and nothing was ever done. Mr. Hitchcock hopes that Bowen and Associates will include space on the square that is available now, adding that he will not leave the square (that he would have to go in handcuffs). Mr. Hitchcock expressed that Chardon is the heart of our county and that if you take government out of the city that it will be the death of knell of the City of Chardon. It was noted that this was the first time any money had ever been appropriated to do anything like this. Clerk of Courts Denise Kaminski mentioned a Courthouse Project that eventually failed by the Commissioners. Chardon City Mayor Nancy McArthur added that the business community needs to be included and considered in this study, adding that the county is the largest employer and if you take the employees out that it will be a ripple effect down on the businesses. Mr. Lennon stated that moving out of Chardon would be a bold move and that it hadn't been discussed.

There was a brief discussion about the requirement of certain offices that need to remain within the County seat. Mr. Claypool expressed that Chardon is not the entire county and the entire county needs to be considered. Chardon is important but there are a lot of people in the county.

Community and Economic Development Director Anita Stocker inquired about technology being included in the study, referring to remote access for communication, and the use of electronic signatures in place of actual signatures. Mr. Emling stated that the technology will be there but it's what you are required to do by statute. Mr. Gliha added that you are governed by the Ohio Revised Code. Board of Elections Director Deborah Reiter expressed that she welcomes the feasibility study as a taxpayer and she applauds the Board for doing this.

Mr. Emling added that in their world projects are handled just as they are. We do this process to find out what customers need and want to do, and then they have to go out again for the next phase of the bigger project. He noted that legally, if they are allowed, Bowen would put their hat in the ring for the ultimate project.

Mr. Spidalieri expressed that he understands the emotional side of things, and that businesses are of concern, bringing up another side, that often times simple things are overlooked, citing not enough parking as an example or the threat of being hit backing out on the square. Mr. Spidalieri asked how many times people have not gone to a business on the square for these reasons. Mr. Lennon addressed Mr. Hitchcock on not moving off the square, stating that it wasn't about him, that it wasn't about any of them, but rather the county and its future. There was some discussion about taxpayers that come from other areas of the county to the square for services. Mr. Lennon asked everyone to put a concerted effort into the study, a genuine effort of sharing the needs of the departments in the future. Mr. Gliha asked the Board to do the feasibility study and then we move on from here.

A brief discussion was held in regards to being cautious about spending the money on the study and then feeling the need to do something based on the outcome. Mr. Lennon added that it is money well spent to do this study. Job and Family Services Director Craig Swenson added that

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he agreed it's like going to the doctor and getting a checkup. Ms. Kaminski expressed that she understood how Mr. Gliha and Mr. Hitchcock felt because she was forced to move off the square, but added that the study is a good idea, and that when the time is right the public does need to be engaged.

Mr. Emling explained that this week a survey / questionnaire will be distributed to all the departments. He asked everyone to spend time on it and answer the best they can and think about current needs, and needs in five years. Please include anything special your department does things you would change and then we will follow up with an interview. We will read it and it is important. Mr. Emling expressed their excitement for the project and thanked everyone for coming today.

BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD

Motion: by Commissioner Spidalieri, seconded by Commissioner Lennon to adjourn the meeting at 10:46 a.m.

Geauga County Board of Commissioners

Ralph Spidalieri

Walter M. Claypool

Timothy C. Lennon

Christine Blair, Commissioners' Clerk

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