

Major projects

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Chairman Jonathan Dennehy.

Town Hall construction is expected to last 10 to 12 months, so the goal would be to move back into the building early next summer.

"We're far better off getting started as early as possible," said Town Hall Renovation Committee Chairman David Sargent.

M. O'Connor was the project's low bidder at \$2.247 million. The restoration of the windows will be part of a separate bid and is expected to cost about \$100,000.

Sargent represented the committee at the selectmen's meeting.

The goal would be to let contractors get all of the outside work done before the weather turns cold again, so that the inside work could be completed during the winter.

Town Hall employees will move into two classrooms in the back of Oakmont Regional High School during construction.

Town Administrator Kevin Paicos and Superintendent of Schools Michael Zapanis are still working out the details of the lease, which include the security policy at the school.

"We're shooting for leaving here mid-May," Paicos said.

The next step in the process is a pre-construction meeting with the contractor, the project manager, the architect and town officials. This is so that contracts can be signed, dates can be discussed and other mobilization issues can be finalized.

Selectmen signed a letter of intent for the public safety building, instead of awarding the contract to see if voters will vote to allow the town to borrow more money to complete any one of three options on the building.

The basic bid — \$4.7 million — can be used to build the public safety build-

ing. The building committee is reviewing three options for other work, which would require a vote of the town meeting to appropriate more money.

"It is not the intent of the committee to go out for any type of ballot vote for any additional funds," said committee member Lincoln Stiles.

At the moment two of the three options can be accomplished without a Proposition 2 1/2 override.

The first option would add money to buy things such as equipment for the dispatch center, window coverings, lockers for the police officers and firefighters, as well as to do a final paving of the parking lot.

The second option would also allow the committee to finish the locker rooms and the police detention area.

The third option would complete the training room and a masonry exterior to part of the building. This option would require an override.

Police Chief Larry Barrett, a member of the committee, told selectmen they would like the board's feedback so they could recommend an option at the annual town meeting on Saturday, May 5.

"It's my opinion that we need to do what we can to complete this building," Dennehy said. "I'd like to see option two. ... We've studied this long enough. We've known the numbers long enough."

Selectman Mark Carlise said he'd "like to see everything done." But he was concerned about funding the rest of the project within the levy limit.

"This is a capital expenditure. The correct way to do this is an override," Carlise said. "But clearly the people have said no to that."

The construction of the building will last between 12 and 15 months and the signing of the letter of intent will allow the company to begin the paperwork for the project and the site preparation.

Easter's on its way



(Top) State Sen. Stephen Brewer and state Rep. Lew Evangelidis spent some time with the Easter Bunny during the Bunny Breakfast held at Overlook Middle School in Ashburnham on Sat. March 31.



(Left) Morgan Lewis, 8 of Ashburnham, gives the Easter Bunny a big hug during the Annual Bunny Breakfast.

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JEFFREY W. BOUDREAU

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