**To:** **CCAC**

**From:** **Project Management Committee**

**Re:** **Council Chambers Discussion**

**Date:** **September 26, 2016**

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The Project Management Committee met to discuss a list of items concerning the interior design of the council chambers which originated in an email from George Rodericks. Below is the recommendation for future direction based on our committee meeting today.

In terms of perspective, George encouraged us to consider the full use of the chambers, not just the use of the town council. He said "With due respect to the various committees/commission/Council that operate from the current Council Chambers, it (and the new Town Council Chambers) is/will be used far more by staff for training, educational meetings, staff gatherings, subcommittee meetings, staff meetings, regional staff meetings, consultant team meetings, and neighborhood meetings (cell towers, encroachment permits, building pre-construction meetings, etc.). The current chambers is used for these purposes because the only Conference Meeting room in Town Hall accommodates 8-12 people max. The conference rooms in the new buildings are no bigger. While we will still have the ability to use the historic Town Hall."

1) **Audio Visual:** We will continue to work with staff on AV and IT for the council chambers. Hillsborough is currently renovating their AV and IT and will be coming out with an RFP in November, which they plan to share with us. They have researched other new council chambers, for example San Mateo, in coming up with their new model. We will return with more details on these items in a few months. The general idea is that we would have either one very large screen in the front (center) or two medium screens at the front to each side, and then a couple of screens further back in the room (with one screen on the middle of the east wall and one in the middle of the west wall above the loggia doors). The committee thought that all the screens should be LED so long as they are easy to use and accessible. Specifically, George would like to minimize the need to assign staff to operate the system every time a group needs to use the room or to bring in an IT professional to come and reset the system every time the Town needs to use it.

2) **Technology:** Per George, technology should be built in - not ad hoc to the maximum extent possible. Ad hoc technology has a tendency to not function when you need it to most. We will do this review in coordination with the AV.

3) **Refreshments:** According to George, we have a need for space to place refreshments (a sink, counter, plug setup would aid significant functionality to the room whereas now we cart in water bottles, cafe boxes, and other items). They should be screened. Perhaps a counter top built into the rear of the room (lower cabinets only) that can be screened by folding doors. Hillsborough

uses their Council Chambers quite frequently as their active community room space - mahjong, bridge, etc. I think the Town would likely use the Pavilion for these type of activities; that said, if there were a community-operated function in the Chambers, the only real place for their use warming up food, storing cold items, etc. would be the Cafe area and/or the staff lounge. Depending on the time of the event and/or the actual cafe operational activities, that could be challenging. Not sure what the frequency would be as an ROI on the cost of building in a break area (stove, refrigerator, micro) into the Chambers. As an EOC it would be wonderful to have but we (at least staff) would have access to the PD and Admin lounge areas (and we would take over the cafe in such an event). Perhaps minimally a sink setup, with a counter top to place coffee pots and/or warming trays. ***Recommendation: staff to ask WRNS to recommend a more concealed place to handle these functions***.

4) **Furniture & Storage:** George wrote that public chairs need to be stackable, sturdy and presentable. Cloth chairs, while nice, not the best due to staining and spillage. Tables and chairs need to be accessible and able to be arranged in numerous configurations.  The room should be "clean" - meaning, chairs should either be setup or stored, same with tables and materials on the dais and staff tables.  ***Recommendation: Staff to ask WRNS to verify and produce a layout drawing showing how the recommended/selected folding tables and stackable chairs would actually fit in the storage room.  Not a guess but an actual layout drawing showing how the approved tables (round ones and rectangular ones) and stacked chairs and their carts would fit into the storage room.  The room will probably grow - whatever is left over is what the EOC storage room gets.***

5) **Walls:** George wrote that it would be appropriate for the walls to accommodate small photographic displays (Town history, awards, etc.).  ***Recommendation: Staff to ask WRNS to maintain adequate spaces on the walls for such items.  Currently, it appears that this space is available in the plans.***

6) **Electrical and Lighting:**  George wrote that plugs and electrical outlets should be well distributed. Do not skimp. Exceed code requirements. The room needs to be incorporated into the generator system. Lighting needs to accommodate full room use as well as dimmed uses. ***Recommendation: Staff to emphasize these recommendations.  Additionally, the committee supports the use of pendant lights in the chambers and the addition of buss ducts in the floor of the room to permit more flexibility in layout for future events, particularly for the EOC use..***

9) **Accessibility:**  George wrote that the room needs to meet current ADA code requirements. We should not build in deficiencies to accommodate aesthetics.  ***Recommendation: the committee confirms this need.  Additionally, we request that the ADA ramp be (a) reduced in length to accommodate only one stair up to the dais (6" to 7.5" tall) and (b) be moved to the side of the room in order to maximize the usable length of the room.***

8) **EOC:** George wrote that The EOC function will involve the setup of a minimum of 5 6-8'round tables with 6-8 individuals at each table section (planning, operations, finance,

logistics, administration). The operations, planning, and logistics tables are the three busiest tables. During an actual event, people will be moving in and out of the room to connect with field personnel and volunteers. Every 15-30 minutes there will be a briefing with the EOC director (city manager). The EOC direction then provides direction to the room for next steps. On the wall are whiteboards and screens (sometimes electronic depending on the functionality of the room), these boards and screens contain sensitive information. It will be important for the doors to the room to be able to be screened so that the press and/or public is not peering into the EOC operations room and reporting on what's on the boards (#dead, morgue, injured, etc.) Before the EOC the PIO holds a press briefing. Each table has a phone or phones that are hardline connections. The town's reception desk serves as the central operator. The hardline phones are used to communicate to the county and state offices of emergency services and other agencies. The storage area must have space to store at a minimum the whiteboards (4-5), separate storage containers for each section containing their essential supplies (phones, paper, maps, markers, disaster plans, etc.), emergency rations for at least 48-72 hours for the EOC workers, and go bags for dedicated EOC personnel additional material/supplies may be added to the storage room as situation dictates. The room needs to be separate and secured - or at least some of the material in the room (i.e. secure/caged shelving).

During an event, staff come into the room, open up the EOC closet and begin setting up the sections of the EOC. The items in the EOC closet are supplies for the EOC only - whiteboards, phones, table supplies (paper, forms, pens, markers, etc.) - but these will be in specifically labeled bins by EOC section. Tables and chairs, easels, etc. - are multi-purpose, not just EOC.  It is likely that there will be storage creep in that some of the emergency response materials that are not actually used in the EOC but are used elsewhere (PD, PW, etc.) may end up being stored in the EOC storage room - this could be radios, radio chargers, megaphone(s), etc. The EOC storage room will be locked. The other storage room is publicly accessible. We should not be storing anything in the EOC room that is part of the general operation of the chambers. In terms of the chamber's basic needs (chairs, tables, etc.) these should be in the public storage area. EOC operation will use the same tables/chairs.

It is intended that all EOC operations will occur in the  chambers room which will get noisy and active. During operations there are briefings made to the group and to individual sections. The elected officials are not part of the EOC as the policy board. They are convened as necessary in a separate location (conference room in town hall, etc.).

Floor (not sidewall) connections for power, network and phone need to be planned. Wall-board mounts, whiteboards, etc. need to be accommodated.

***Recommendation: staff to work with WRNS to layout the EOC needs, both during an event and during interim storage.***

10)   **Dais and Clerk Station:** George wrote that as we mentioned, should have built in screens and tech (plugs - network and electrical) screened from view. I like the trench on the dais at Hillsborough that works well with the lip on the dais table that screens the monitors from view as much as possible. That's a typical arrangement. Dais chairs need to be large and comfortable.

Sitting for 3+ hours into the night is much better when one is comfortable. *Recommendation: Staff to ask WRNS to proceed (a) a single step, (b) moving the ADA ramp to the side, (c) curve the dais, (d) any movable staff tables should look related to the dais and not just like folding tables, (e) the front lip of the dais should just be tall enough to hide the computer screens (which can be depressed a bit into the counter) but not so tall that they interfere with site lines between council members and the public, (f) that the front lips be designed to accommodate the nameplates of all the various committees that will use the dais.*



11) **Window Coverings:** George wrote that there will need to be window coverings to darken the room. *Recommendation: if we go with LED screens, these will not be necessary. They installing window coverings at the side doors would also be problematic.*

12) **Misc:** George wrote to be sure to think about flags, podiums and microphones. Shelving as well as open space in the storage areas need to be considered. *Recommendation: we agree.*

13) **Town Logo:** At least two council members have asked if we can consider a leaded grass town logo on the wall behind the dais like they have in Hillsborough (see below): *Recommendation: staff to ask WRNS to investigate this option.*

13) **Security:** Elizabeth Lewis received an email from Jeff Gee (council member, former mayor, RWC and construction industry professional): As you design your new chambers, I would suggest that you have a security consultant review the plans also. While the issues in Atherton are very different than RWC, safety is important everywhere. I have asked our staff to include in a future CIP meeting to "bullet-proof" the dais, so that if we need to "duck", we have some place to go. San Carlos did this when they renovated their chambers. Even places such as Palm Springs requires the audience to go through metal detectors before entering chambers. We also have POD presence at our meetings, and have had for the past 2 years, if not longer. An unfortunate sign of the times. ***Recommendation: while we believe that Atherton is likely a safer community, this would be a good topic to discuss with our police department and their design consultant.***