

In a recent Letter to the Editor (<https://www.thebedfordcitizen.org/2023/03/letter-to-the-editor-concerns-expressed-about-the-new-fire-station-design-process/>), Mr. Joe Piantedosi alleges that the process of selecting and organizing the Fire Station Building Committee was rushed and not in keeping with the vote that established the Committee at Annual Town Meeting 2022. Mr. Piantedosi's claims are inaccurate. The Town has consistently and fully followed the state-required procurement process, as well as the dictates of the Town Meeting vote.

Given the interest shown by the public, the Select Board appointed six resident representatives to the Committee at its February 13th meeting, exceeding the amendment's requirement of "three town citizen representatives at large." The Select Board also appointed the Fire Chief and the Facilities Director to the committee, as prescribed in the Town Meeting vote, two additional members of the Fire Department, a representative from the Select Board, the Town Manager, and one additional member of Town staff to be named at the Town Manager's discretion. The Select Board also voted to appoint the Town Manager as Chair of the Committee, in keeping with past practice for other Town building projects, such as the 2017 Davis School Building Committee chaired by then-Superintendent Jon Sills. All votes were taken publicly by the full Select Board. The process above took place prior to the commencement of the designer selection process.

The Select Board appointed an Owner's Project Manager at its September 12th meeting to facilitate the design and construction process of the fire station. Hiring an Owner's Project Manager (OPM) is required at such an early stage (prior to designer selection) under Massachusetts General Law for any public construction projects valued over \$1.5 million dollars.

At its first meeting on February 22nd, the Fire Station Building Committee voted a representative from the resident members, former Planning Board Chair Jeff Cohen, to a smaller subcommittee including the Fire Chief, Facilities Director, OPM, and Town Manager, to interview designer candidates. All committee members received a list of proposed interview questions, developed by the Owner's Project Manager and required under Mass. General Law, and were invited to provide input. The designer selection subcommittee expects to make a recommendation to the full committee on March 8, and the full committee will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the interviews as a whole before making a recommendation to the Select Board. At the March 8 meeting, the Committee will also determine a standing meeting time going forward, taking into account the needs and availability of all members. All of these actions contribute to the full Committee's "participat[ion] in the designer selection process" and "oversight of the project until completion of construction," as outlined in the establishing amendment.

As an aside, Mr. Piantedosi states that the Select Board's Public Comment policy should allow comments on any matter, not just items on the meeting's agenda. The Select Board has included Public Comment on its agendas, limited to those items in front of the Board for business that night, since 2020. Prior to that time, there was no designated time for members of the public to be heard during a meeting. This is a common practice across many municipalities, and will continue unless recommended otherwise by Town Counsel.

We recognize Mr. Piantedosi's long history of volunteering for the Town on several committees, and like all residents, he is entitled to his opinions on actions of the Town. These recent assertions, however, are simply untrue, and could corrode public confidence in the process of building the new fire station. We understand that this Project is deeply important to all Bedford residents, and we will continue to

maintain an open and collaborative process with all stakeholders throughout the design and construction phases.