



GLENN A. CUNHA
INSPECTOR GENERAL

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Inspector General

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May 20, 2013

VIA FACSIMILE & U.S. MAIL

Robert O'Keefe, Chairman
Board of Selectmen
Winchendon Town Hall
109 Front Street – Dept. 1
Winchendon, MA 01475

Re: Winchendon Police Station Site

Dear Chairman O'Keefe:

This Office has received a recording of the April 30, 2013 Board of Selectmen's meeting. Based on that recording, I understand that the Town of Winchendon (Town) has selected a site for relocating the Town's police station. From that recording I also understand that the Board of Selectmen has directed the town manager to enter into a purchase and sale agreement with the owners of the selected site and to ultimately affect the conveyance of the property by May 30, 2013.

This Office has concerns regarding this proposed acquisition. As the record before us is not clear, our primary concern is related to the uncertainty of the cost estimates for converting a century-old building into a modern public safety facility compliant with all applicable environmental regulations (including but not limited to the Massachusetts Oil and Hazardous Material Release Prevention and Response Act (M.G.L. c. 21E)) and all current building codes. This uncertainty in cost estimates coupled with the fast-track approach in closing on the conveyance of the site exposes the Town to undue financial risk and the potential for the wasteful expenditure of public funds.

Robert O'Keefe

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Given these risks to the Town and its taxpayers, this Office suggests that the Board of Selectmen postpone the conveyance and make the purchase and sale agreement contingent upon detailed cost analyses supported by appropriate architectural, engineering and environmental studies. Any studies and analyses should be prepared based upon best practices and should be able to demonstrate that the total project cost for acquiring and converting the site does not exceed the budgeted amount of \$2,750,000 approved by Town Meeting vote. While this may delay the ultimate conveyance of the site, a thorough analysis will protect the Town's taxpayers by ensuring that the project does not exceed \$2,750,000.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Glenn A. Cunha".

Glenn A. Cunha
Inspector General

cc: Mark Reich, Esq.
Board of Selectmen