

FACTS AND INFORMATION

Our current public safety professionals are housed in very old buildings never originally intended to be used as Police or Fire departments. Working conditions in both buildings hinder recruitment of qualified professionals. The current Police and Fire department buildings lack appropriate security and state-of-the art utility infrastructure and fail regulatory standards. The Fire Department is far too small. Renovation would require enormous gutting at great cost to approach basic serviceable value and could never be brought to meet current public safety building requirements.

Under the direction of the Public Safety Building Committee, HKT Architects have prioritized function and safety over non-essential features in the development of a proposed new facility.

The cost to maintain and heat the old Police and Fire Department infrastructure is inherently inefficient and unpredictable. A new building designed to house both the Police and Fire Departments together will not only meet the building code and be OSHA and ADA compliant, but the design will result in more efficient heating and cooling technology and will reflect projected expansion needs.

The Town's property behind the current Fire Department is not suitable for a new facility. It cannot support the septic or parking requirements for a new public safety building. Site development costs due to the presence of ledge, the need for a multilevel building with an elevator, and the added costs of relocating the fire department during construction would increase the expense unnecessarily.

The actual construction costs of a new building are not yet known. When a plan to build a new Public Safety Building in 2015 was proposed, and the vote failed, the anticipated cost approached \$12 million. That figure has already doubled. All funding opportunities, including grants, outside of borrowing will be sought as they become available.

Property taxes will rise. As with any capital project where the cost exceeds what can be funded with the tax levy, a debt exclusion or loan must be voted for by the Town. Payment of the debt over multiple years is incorporated into the property taxes - a debt exclusion goes off the tax rolls upon completion.

Recommendations for up-to-date green technology were sought during the Feasibility Study phase and will be required with the final architectural design prior to construction, per regulation, cost efficiency and in recognition of global climate change. The expectation is to move away from reliance on fossil fuels.

There are multiple reasons why a "Butler"- style, or pre-engineered structure is not recommended. Public safety facilities are designated as "essential facilities" and are assigned the most stringent structural "risk categories" in the State Building Code. Since pre-engineered metal buildings achieve their cost savings by engineering the structural steel framing members to be the absolute bare minimum required, building manufacturers' designs must be customized to meet the needs of public safety projects adding to the construction cost and reducing the savings another project type might realize. Pre-engineered metal buildings are also very difficult and expensive to modify in the future.

There are several steps that must be taken before construction can begin. The Town has already approved acquisition of land at 117-125 College Highway. It must now identify and approve funding to hire a land use planner, an OPM (Owners' Project Manager) and an architect. When a design proposal has been finalized, voters must approve funding for construction.