

# WILMINGTON PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. Why a new Fire Station?

Critical infrastructure defines a fire station as a “building which is necessary to maintain normalcy in daily life during emergency conditions.” These buildings are now considered “critical infrastructure” according to FEMA and as such, are addressed accordingly by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association). The NFPA produces standards and guidelines for Fire Stations in order to maintain functionality and safety for both firefighters and the public.

Our current fire station no longer meets ANY of the listed health and safety standards and guidelines by the NFPA. To list some of these: The current fire station has inadequate ventilation and a severe lack of space to properly clean equipment and gear, both of which are crucial to helping eliminate the current cancer risks faced by our firefighters. The current fire station lacks the critical space for proper hands-on training in order to respond effectively and efficiently when our residents need us. The size of new apparatus has severely restricted our choices due to lack of sufficient expansion space as our current location does not facilitate expansion or remodeling due to it being in a direct flood plain. As our town continues to look to the future, we hope to continue to properly serve you.

### 2. How was the decision made to build the facility at the new, chosen location?

Several locations in Wilmington were considered and, via committee, it was determined that the present choice was the best option for properly serving you, your family and fellow community members. It is a central location and enhances the feeling of a Town Center, creating a community that is safe for residents and visitors. Its location will also provide for optimum response time for our firefighters. The property is already Town owned with water and sewer and eliminates the need to purchase a plot of land, reducing the overall cost of the project.

### 3. How large is the proposed building?

The current plans for both the Fire Department and the Police Department require 16,000 square feet encompassing two floors. The Fire Department consists of the lower level and the Police Department, the upper level. The building is designed to last for the next 50 years and will incorporate the up-to-date building requirements needed for health, safety, and energy efficiency required for “critical infrastructure”.

### 4. What features are being considered?

Due to the building’s classification as “critical infrastructure”, it will include an automatic sprinkler system, an electrical generator back-up system, an Emergency Operations Center, and an exhaust removal system. Special ventilated storage is provided for firefighter’s gear as

well as specialized washing and drying equipment to help eliminate cancer causing chemicals. Floor space in the Apparatus Bays was increased due to the need to bring in-house, our specialized equipment which is now being stored in separate, unheated sheds with dirt floors. This specialized equipment includes our boat and trailer, our snowmobile and trailer, our ATV and trailer, our Brush Truck (department pickup truck with forestry skid unit), and our portable generator. The importance of having this equipment on-site will greatly decrease response time during an emergency, allow for increased usage and reliability, and extend the lifetime of the equipment.

#### **5. Can't the Fire Station just be a "garage"?**

Fire Stations are no longer simply about housing apparatus and having monthly meetings. These are functional, operational buildings that play a key role in a community's overall emergency response that expands beyond normal everyday emergencies. Stations house more sophisticated and varied equipment. They must be designed with the safety and health of our firefighters in mind, as well as the purpose of being efficient and effective for the community. While Wilmington is a small community, it is not exempt from providing state of the industry protection for its residents and firefighters.

#### **6. Are Federal or State Monies available?**

The committee is currently pursuing several leads. It is the hope that one or more will produce some positive results but, it cannot be guaranteed at the present time.

#### **7. Is the building cost higher than the norm for the area?**

Since the first meeting with the Architects, there has been an "estimated" construction cost per square foot. Using this figure, the committee has tried to keep costs connected with needs. The committee, the Select Board, the architects and engineers have all worked diligently to focus on providing those needs in the most cost-effective manner. The cost of the proposed building is within the range for this building type in our region.

#### **8. How are we paying for the facility?**

The Town is planning to procure a 20 Year bond for \$5,500,000 at a current interest rate of 2.1%. (historically low!) The bond principle is estimated to be \$275,000 per year plus interest. The 1<sup>st</sup> years payment is interest only at \$70,460.

The first "full" payment is due in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year and is estimated at \$358,680. Each successive payment will decline annually to a final payment of \$279,125.

#### **9. How will this affect my Taxes**

Using a home valued at \$200,000. The 1<sup>st</sup> year of the bond payment, a homeowner would pay an extra \$20 (interest due on the bond). In the 2<sup>nd</sup> year, the same house would pay \$100. (principle + interest) Working with todays values and percentages, in the Last Year of the bond it would be about 78% of the amount, or \$78. (down \$22 from the original \$100)

In the first 5 years, the bond payment decreases 1%, in ten years it is reduced by 4%, and in 15 years it is reduced by 10%. The reason for estimation is due the fact that the amount paid in dollars will change, as the grand list goes up or down.

Overall, this year the total Fiscal Year 2022 proposed Town Budget is estimated to increase less than one penny, or \$70,249.00. This tidy increase also includes the interest for the 1<sup>st</sup> year of payment on the proposed bond.