

## **Safety Services Building Public Hearing Wednesday, January 22, 2014**

A public hearing regarding the proposed Safety Services Building was held on Wednesday, January 22, 2014 at 7:00 pm at the Franconia Town Hall.

Regular members in attendance were Bob Montagno (Selectman), Deb Maes (Facilitator), John Monaghan (Police Chief), Rick Gaudette (Fire Chief), Paul Schmucker (Life Squad Chief), Jeff Woodward (Resident), Dawn Steele (Resident) and Ted Kupper of Provan & Lorber.

Guest Presenter: Chris Carley of CN Carley Associates.

The meeting was called to order by Bob Montagno who gave a brief introduction of the project/objectives, including the 2013 Warrant Article that charged the Selectman with preparing plans for the Safety Services building to be presented at public hearings.

### Objectives

- Determine if we could build a larger building on the site given the wetlands situation
- Determine if the existing building could be modified and expanded to meet existing requirements
- Develop and refine the space requirements and layouts for each department so that we could come up with an estimated cost for Town Meeting for a new/refurbished building.

Bob then introduced the committee and resources/personnel hired to assist us. He then introduced Deb Maes, Facilitator who asked that all questions be kept until the end of the presentations. She also introduced the consultants, Ted Kupper and Chris Carley.

Ted Kupper explained their role, the programming process, wetlands situation and he reviewed the exiting building space. It was emphasized that our fire trucks are custom due to the size of the apparatus bay and that surrounding towns cannot fit their engines into our bay which creates issues when they cover the town. Since there are no back doors, all equipment must be backed in and the space is tight.

Roof framing on the building is slender and condensation forms. Current heating costs are approx. \$8000 per yr. Heating costs based on the new building design are estimated at approx. \$4700.

Ted reviewed specifics of renovation vs building a new facility on the current site, including code requirements. ( i.e., elevator/stairs for second floor, etc.) With a 15% contingency fee, costs to renovate are estimated at \$2.1 million for the renovation and a total cost estimate of approx. \$2.4 million. (site work, etc.)

Chris Carley reviewed the proposed new building that is designed as a barn structure with the apparatus bay in the middle and the Police and Fire/EMS depts. on either side. The estimate for a new building is approx. \$1.7 million including contingency fees. Additional fees for site work, etc. bring the total estimate to \$1.9 million.

Chief John Monaghan followed with a discussion of the needs of the Police dept., including a review of last year's statistics. For example, last year there were 51 arrests vs 10-15 before he arrived. Presently we cannot safely hold people and must transport them to Littleton. We also have no evidence room to protect the chain of custody.

Juveniles must be separated so that no one else can see them, but to save space and expense, John advised that the proposed interview room can be used if necessary.

Documents must also be kept in secure areas.

Chief Rick Gaudette spoke about the needs of the Fire dept. and stated the biggest improvement is the apparatus bay. The current building only allows 10-20 inches between vehicles and this will be expanded with the new proposal. Doors on both ends of the building are also a significant improvement.

Chief Paul Schmucker indicated that their current space only allows for lockers and apparatus and that the proposal with an added office and storage will meet their needs. He also echoed Rick's comments on the apparatus bay.

Jeff Woodward followed with a discussion of the financial impact and loan specifics. Franconia does not qualify for a rural development grant as our median income is too high. We were grandfathered for the Water Project.

A 30 yr. fixed loan from Rural Development with no fees is 4.375%.  
Union Bank offers a 20 yr. fixed, no bank fee loan (\$1500 in atty fees only) for 3.75% and no prepayment penalties.

With a total project cost estimated at \$1.9 million which includes \$190,000 in contingency fees, we would look to borrow \$1.7 million. The tax rate impact would be 43 cents per thousand or \$43 per year on a \$100,000 assessment. Since many people deduct real estate taxes, the impact would decrease by 11 cents to 32 cents per thousand. At a valuation of \$250,000, the impact results in \$1600 for the 20 yr. period.

If the project comes in less than the estimate the tax rate would decrease.

The Town of Franconia portion of the tax bill is currently \$4.93 and would increase to \$5.36.

The meeting was then open to questions from the public which included the following:

1. Temporary housing of the depts.

2. Green energy followed by a discussion of the heat loss in the current building when the doors are opened, especially for the police cruisers.
3. Additional savings of LED lighting and other energy considerations with the new design.
4. New septic system
5. Space would be available for State Police in the area and would enhance our town coverage in off hours.
6. Ensure we make the distinction between a new building and renovation and that the recommendation is clearly for a new structure.
7. Anticipated savings with equipment lasting longer when not exposed to the elements and condensation. No longer a need for custom fire trucks due to limited space.
8. The building cost includes all features, fixtures and furnishings required by each department ready for occupancy.

The meeting ended at 8:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Dawn Steele  
Safety Services Building Committee