

GOFFSTOWN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MINUTES TO PUBLIC HEARING
CHURCH STREET FIRE STATION IMPROVEMENTS BOND
GHS – Craig Hieber Auditorium
January 13, 2016

In attendance were Chairman Peter Georgantas, Vice Chairman Mark Lemay, Selectman Collis Adams, Selectman Allen Brown, Selectman Scott Gross and Town Administrator Desruisseaux.

Also in attendance were DPW Director Adam Jacobs, Police Chief Rob Browne, Parks & Recreation Director Rick Wilhelmi, Library Director Dianne Hathaway, School Superintendent Brian Balke, and Assistant Town Administrator Derek Horne.

Chairman Georgantas opened the hearing at 6 pm.

He asked those interested in speaking to speak at the microphones, and he pointed out where they are located within the auditorium. He explained Fire Chief O'Brien would make a presentation regarding the Church Street Fire Station improvements. There are handouts for the planned improvements available to review.

The Board said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Georgantas said one of the advantages of going ahead with the bond at this time is that, in 2017 we will have two bonds that will be all done. One is the land closure bond, which is \$170,113 per year. The other is the South Mast Drainage project which is \$85,336 per year. This is a total of \$255,449. These two bonds expire in 2017. If the bond should pass for the fire station improvements, our first payment won't be until 2017. That payment would be approximately \$177,265.00 over 20 years. We would go from \$255,449 in bond payments to approximately \$177,265.00.

Fire Chief O'Brien said we presented a similar project at a bond hearing a couple of years ago. At that time the project was to cover the expansion and renovation of the three stations. That vote, in 2014, achieved the majority vote. But a bond has to achieve a three-fifths majority for passage. That's 60%. It didn't achieve that 60% so we are here today. After reflection as to what we could do to get future passage in discussion with the CIP, Budget Committee, and Board of Selectmen, it was decided a station by station approach would be more appropriate.

We did an evaluation to determine which station would most need the expansion and renovation, and it was decided the Church Street station was the one to be addressed first. The handouts will be posted on the Town's website in the next 24-48 hours for everyone to review, or you can stop by the Church Street Fire Station to get a copy. If anyone would like a tour of the Church Street Fire Station they can stop by any time during business hours of 7 am to 4 pm.

Page two of the handout describes the process. Over ten years we have been studying the best ways to renovate or find out what is best for a modernistic or busier fire department. Studies have been forwarded through UNH or other private studies and all said our current stations are inadequate.

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Chief O'Brien said the Church Street Station was actually built in 1959. There is a picture in the handout of it shortly after that. He took a picture of it the other day and put them next to each other. Not much has changed since 1959. The electrical, mechanical, and other systems have been relatively unchanged. We have been good stewards of the building and have taken care of it the best we could. But it has come to the point where we either have to expand the building, or take it down and build a new one. In 1959 the Goffstown Fire Department responded to 68 calls. Today we respond to over 2300 calls per year. Back then they responded only to fire calls. Today we are a multi response agency that handles everything from hazardous spills to fires to medical emergencies. It gets to be a pretty busy place when you look at the activities at the fire station. The Church Street Station is our busiest.

Chief O'Brien said page four of the handout shows existing photos of the existing conditions of the Church Street Fire Station. It shows how tight it is and gives you an idea what we are dealing with today. Our apparatus isn't getting smaller. Our apparatus was designed in the day when the apparatus was quite small. They were probably the size of a large pick-up truck today.

Today they are designed with additional safety features and for more than just one response type. In the past one truck could be just a pumper truck or a hose truck. Now one truck can do all aspects of a response. The pictures show how close the trucks come. When they come out of the building they almost strike the building, and when visibility is bad, they have struck the building. The pictures show how cramped it is in the offices. We have single paned windows. This station is grossly inefficient when it comes to energy. An energy audit was done a year or two ago and it was determined this station has an R value of a 5, when a typical residence should have a 30 to keep your heat in or to cool it. The pictures show the crampedness where our gear is stored and the fact that the apparatus is very near to each other. When we open a door it often strikes the other vehicles.

Chief O'Brien said page five lists the conditions that show a renovation is sorely needed, and the fact that they are structurally sound but are outdated in safety and function. The current doors are not large enough to accommodate current fire apparatus and ambulances. When we purchased the tower ladder vehicle in 2010 we had to have it specially designed to fit in that station. At that time, it was estimated to cost about \$150,000 to do the work that would make it fit in that station. In today's dollars we estimate about \$200,000-\$250,000 to modify a vehicle like that to fit in that station.

There is no proper decontamination station or showers available to ensure personnel and equipment are properly decontaminated after responding to a medical, fire or hazardous material incident. Our crews often come back and are covered with soot, oil, or bodily fluids. We want to make sure they are decontaminated as effectively as possible. Right now they are decontaminated in areas that are very close to kitchen, living and office areas. That is inappropriate. All stations have a shortage or storage spaces. Many times we don't have the benefit of ordering in discount bulk because we don't have the room. Electrical stations at the Fire Station are grossly overtaxed. For example, the lights in the office dim when the fax

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machine kicks in to receive a fax. Also, we do have an emergency generator at the station but it doesn't cover all the outlets in the station. The critical functions are diminished greatly when we lose power. That happens frequently as we saw today with the wind. If anyone stops by after a storm where we've had week-long outages you'd see a web of extension cords going through the station to power up critical needs in the building. Administrative areas and office spaces are inadequate for current operations. People bump into each other when picking up a fire permit, for example.

The current heating and cooling systems are inadequate for our current facility. They are not energy efficient and at times when it is too hot or too cold, they can't keep up. We are currently servicing them just to maintain. The current conference and training rooms are inadequate and do not meet ADA accessibility standards. We have underground fuel tanks in the back yard of the station that need to be addressed. In this type of weather we will wash the vehicles inside to get the salt off. The water goes into a drainage system and into a holding tank. That holding tank was installed decades ago and doesn't meet current EPA standards. Public accessibility and safety are always a concern when it comes to a public building like this.

Chief O'Brien said we are looking at renovations using the existing foundation. All the engineers said the base building is good but we need to upgrade all these other issues. We are fixing a lot of the ills to the current station during the upgrade. When you look at the plans in the handouts, it includes fixing the tanks out back, removing the tanks, and the drainage system. They are retrofitting the electrical system and heating system in the current structure to fit a modern building that attaches to it.

Chief O'Brien said page six of the handout has a rundown of how much the project will cost. It's \$2.3 million. Of that, \$1.8 million is actual construction costs. \$136,000 is for design, administration fees, and \$50,000 is for relocation and temporary storage. \$112,000 is for furnishings and equipment. We do add in a contingency fund knowing that when you are working with a building like this there could be hidden costs we didn't plan on. We have been looking at this cost estimation for a long time. We have been working with a design builder that specializes in fire stations. We feel that this budget will hold true. This company just got finished building a station in Manchester. It came in under budget and within the required time frame. The cost includes renovation of the current station and a two-story addition that will house the larger doors that can accommodate the larger apparatus.

Chief O'Brien said the last page shows the proposed elevation drawings and the drawings for the layout. In this project we are adding approximately 6,500 square feet and are adding the features we desire. There are the larger doors, more storage, function areas, office areas, and training room. The training room will also act as a back-up EOC in the event of a disaster or emergency within the town. Currently the EOC is at the police station but at a more recent disaster the generator failed there and we had to relocate to the Church Street Station for a back-up EOC and communications. This will allow us to have ample space for that. It also make energy improvements on the station. We are hoping we won't be consuming so much propane. We'll

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also be using budget doors on the existing side to hold the ambulances and avoid having door strikes.

Chief O'Brien said page eight shows a sample bond schedule for this project. It's a 20 year bond and a level principle. When last checked it was approximately 4.5% interest. Once we get closer to approval and kicking off the project we'll have a bond schedule that reflects the latest rate.

People who stop by the Church Street Fire Station quickly realize the current conditions. Even though the building was built in 1959, staff has been good stewards of the building. That is why they can use it as a foundation for a renovation and expansion versus a tear down and rebuild, which would cost three to four times the amount.

Chairman Georgantas opened the hearing to questions and comments.

David Pierce, of 21 Mill Street, asked if there are any features that have not been incorporated in this design that might have been highly desired, but you left them out to keep costs low or reasonable.

Chief O'Brien said we approached this design with the design builder and said obviously there could be larger spaces. That would mean more cost. We incorporated things we were initially going to cut out, such as an elevator going to the second floor. We knew it was important to be ADA compliant for that meeting room on the second floor of the addition. As one of the three stations in town, this design will suit the town very well for the next 30-50 years.

Chairman Georgantas closed the public hearing, absent additional questions and comments. He reminded those in the audience that the Budget Committee public hearing starts at 7 pm.

The public hearing ended at 6:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Labrecque
Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on 3/14/16 with two corrections: in the second paragraph correct the spelling of "Balkie" to "Balke" and in the sixth paragraph add the word "about" or "approximately" before \$177,265 in two places.