

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS PERTAINING TO THE PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A SENIOR CENTER AND PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

The following are responses from the Long Range Facilities Planning Committee (LRFPC):

Q1. Why is it ok to renovate the Slade building for town offices, but it cannot be renovated for the police? A.

1. Location:

- a. Conflict with School and Library: The location to respond from the current police station is awkward at best. During a school year, if a police cruiser is responding in morning or afternoon hours they conflict with the school and library traffic and parking.
- b. Mandated Reporters: Certain types of people must register with the Police Department on a regular basis. The location of the police station next to the Elementary School creates a conflict and in particular, one that should not be allowed from a public safety perspective.
- c. The current location does not allow for any secure police operations. There is no police staging area, no safe prisoner transfer area and release is through the public doors on the side and along Main Street. Police personnel park in generally available areas, which is discouraged; as all interactions with police personnel should be in a controlled environment, not in a parking lot.
- d. The current location is marginally well-lit around the periphery. Adequate night lighting would impact the neighbors if it were increased to meet standards.
- e. Public Convenience: Having the Police and Fire Stations as one building will increase public convenience for public safety concerns and routine business operations.

2. Building:

- a. The building was built as a temporary classroom structure that was not intended to remain active this long. It does not meet many of the criteria for a secure and safe public safety space. The frame is 2" x 3" construction with no basement or attic. To renovate it to current standards it would likely require that it be torn down altogether, not renovated in place. A principal of design for any police station is that it consists of a variety of secure areas that are suitable for police/public and arrested people to safely interact. That means bullet-proof glass at entry areas, secure areas to process arrested persons where they cannot interact with the public (even eye contact is not supposed to be allowed). Prisoner processing areas need to be safe and secure for arrested persons and the police.

All of the above stated requirements require walls, ceiling and floors of durable, secure surfaces, usually of masonry. Masonry walls require footings and foundations to carry their weight (masonry is the most durable, least expensive material available). The existing building doesn't even have a basement, so that new carrying walls would be

required to support the masonry. These walls would essentially require the demolition of the Slade Building to permit their construction.

- b. Expansion: The plan currently proposed accommodates the expansion of the police station in the future on the new site. Under State Law, we are required to have our own “lock-up facilities” once the population of the town exceeds 5,000. This site has little expansion capabilities. The current proposed plan also seeks to incorporate common needs of both the Police and Fire for public meeting rooms and training spaces, saving money by not having separate facilities.
 - c. Technology and Infrastructure: Combined facilities also saves on other infrastructure items such as generators, technology, communications and fire protection systems, all of which are expensive items. If we do not build a new police station, the Fire Department will have to have all of these items as well at a separate location. In addition, each of the above have on-going maintenance and replacement criteria. Having two location means doubling up on these on-going and required costs.
3. Costs: While this is a new question and we have not investigated the costs involved, it is our belief –as stated above- that the “renovation” of the Slade Building to convert it to a police station would essentially require its reconstruction. Why build something new on a site which conflicts with so many operational and locational issues, when a site that meets all the criteria is available nearby? We believe that the costs to build at the Slade would be more than at the new site: Why?
- a. It would require the demolition in-place of the building, this would require the protection of other site users.
 - b. It would require the relocation and temporary housing of the police department while the building is being “renovated” Temporary housing must meet current standards for a “new” police station. You can’t just put them in a store front.
 - c. There is little space for a contractor to “lay down and store materials, all of these inconveniences add to the cost of construction
 - d. There is increased liability for construction adjacent to schools and active uses including the library; this translates to increased costs.

Q2. With so few residents filling out the survey and/or attending the long range committee meetings, why can’t we do a new survey to be mailed to residents, and have the committee hold new meetings based on this new survey and suggestions from residents? A. The LRFPC received 86 completed surveys. That number represents 2.72 % of our registered voters. According to QueryGroup.com, the industry average for general public surveys is between 1 and 20%, so our response rate, while not great, is within acceptable limits. The survey was placed on the website, and was available at all town offices. It was advertised on the cable TV. Numerous public meetings have been held already. Attendance at these meetings ranged from 8 to 37 people. The current (but soon to be remedied) lack of the ability to televise these meetings makes it very hard to get the word out to our citizens who are unwilling or unable to attend public meetings.

Q3. What happens to fire station #1? Will it be demolished and if so, how much will this cost? If it is used for storage, then why is that ok, but not ok to renovate and add on to the fire station? A. The LRFPC report states the following as possible options for Fire Station 1: a) use as a possible centralized

site for storage of DPW's facility maintenance equipment (such as Parks and Cemetery mowers and other equipment). This use would require little modification to the building other than maintaining the building envelope, b) demolish the building and use the land to enlarge the existing adjacent park area, c) sell the building and land as is for appropriately zoned uses. The site is very small and cannot easily accommodate a larger structure unless land is acquired from adjacent properties. The estimated demolition cost of the existing building would be between \$20,000 and \$30,000 (with most of the cost coming from the obligation to properly dispose of the demolition materials in licensed landfills).

Q4. Why can't the complex be for safety and town offices, and the Slade building renovated for the seniors? Why would we build a new building that only benefits one portion of the community, when the new complex should be built that would benefit the entire community? A. The land swap we are finalizing with DCR was based on the premise that we would use to the land to build a Senior Center and other municipal buildings. While the actual vote of the legislature does not state that a Senior Center building must be built on the lot, it is generally agreed that this was the intent of the Town and one of the key reasons for initiating the DCR land swap to begin with. Additionally, the \$497K grant we received was donated by the State on the premise that we would build a new Senior Center on the DCR lot. These monies can only be used in the process of designing and constructing a senior center, and must be spent before June 30, 2016.

Q5. What would be the cost to renovate all buildings, rather than building new? A. See the table below.

Costs to Update/Repair Existing Buildings		
Building/Department	2012 Estimated Cost	Updated 2015 Estimated Cost
	LPA Report	Hale Architects Report
Fire Station	\$2,750,000	\$2,997,500
Town Offices	\$1,595,000	\$1,738,550
Police Station	\$1,100,000	\$1,199,000
Library	\$4,462,000	\$4,863,580
Highway Department	\$1,050,000	\$1,144,500
Council on Aging	\$1,375,000	\$1,498,750
Totals:	\$12,332,000	\$13,441,880
<p>Note: These costs do not take into account any external utilities or infrastructure improvements, such as water supply, septic or parking. Additionally, appropriate cost escalators must be applied to the 2015 costs to determine what project costs might be in any projected construction year. Industry standards call for the use of a 2.5 to 3% escalator for each year of delay.</p>		

Q6. Why was maintenance of these buildings not done to prevent this situation from happening? Does the town purposely ignore repairs to the buildings so that the town could go for new buildings instead? A. The Town has completed a series of town building needs analysis over the years. Each resulting report has identified the building deficiencies that needed to be addressed. While not all of the deficiencies noted have been addressed, the Town has attempted to address drainage, and handicap accessibility issues. Within the past two years the Town has also addressed leaking roofs, completed asbestos and mold abatement, increased insulation, and replaced several drafty windows in various town buildings.

Q7. Will money be used from the Holden Hospital Fund to offset the cost of a new ambulance? A. Yes. There is approximately \$18,000 in the Emergency Equipment portion of the fund, plus additional annual allotments of about \$5,000 per year that can be used to reduce the annual principal and interest costs of borrowing.

Q8. The 10 year capital plan has not been used since 2010. It did not mention a senior center, only a lease to purchase 10 Gardner Road, which would have been paid off by now. Is there a new master plan that incorporates all aspects of what the town needs? A. The 10 Year Capital Plan is being used, and is updated annually. Due to the 2013 \$1.3M Road Paving Project being bonded using funds from the Capital Stabilization Fund, there currently is no capacity in the fund to pay for these proposed projects. Once the paving debt retires in 10 years, the Capital fund may then have some capacity to assist in paying for some of these large purchase or projects costs.

Q9. What are the costs per household for each building (cost for just a senior center vs. the cost for just a safety complex)? A. The costs for the Senior Center, assuming a 20 year level principal bond (that has decreasing costs each year) the average home (\$226,863 assessed value) would pay approximately \$112.83 in additional taxes in the first full year of borrowing; with decreasing amounts each year thereafter. The costs for the Public Safety Building, assuming a 20 year level principal bond (that has decreasing costs each year) the average home (\$226,863 assessed value) would pay approximately \$277.69 in additional taxes in the first full year of borrowing; with decreasing amounts each year thereafter. If both projects are approved, and we are able to construct them at the same time, and achieve the estimated 20% savings in total project costs, the average homeowner would pay approximately \$343.46 in additional taxes in the first full year of the 20 year borrowing; with decreasing amounts each year thereafter.

Q10. What were the cost estimates for any other alternatives? What were the other alternatives? A. Please see above chart under Q5 showing the costs of the update and repair alternatives reviewed by the LRFPC.

Q11. Why is the \$50k for architectural plans not part of the budget for the construction of the safety complex? A. If the debt exclusion for the Public Safety Building passes, we will not need the \$50,000 requested in the Special Town Meeting warrant Article # 3, as the \$5,619,705 requested in Article 2/Ballot Question 2 includes the funds for the full design. Even if Article # 3 does pass, if the \$50,000 is not needed, it will not be spent. If the debt exclusion does not pass, but Article #3 does, the \$50,000 will be used to complete the conceptual design of the Public safety Building, and any future debt exclusion for the Public Safety Building design and construction can be reduced by the cost of that conceptual design.

Q12. Why are these numbers we are seeing for the Senior Center and the Public Safety Building so much higher than what we saw at the annual town meeting? A. The annual town meeting assumed we

would construct the two buildings at the same time, which would affect approximately 20 % savings in overall project costs.