

**FIRE FACILITY ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
COMPANY #1 FIRE STATION, 25 DARLING DRIVE
DECEMBER 14, 2016**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The first meeting of the Fire Facility Assessment Committee was called to order by Jim Speich at 5:30PM in Company 1 fire station, 25 Darling Drive. Members present: Rob Shillington, Jim Speich, Jamie DiPace and non-voting member Brandon Robertson. Member absent: Michael Trick. Also in attendance was staff member Assistant to the Town Manager Grace Tiezzi.

II. COMMUNICATION FROM AUDIENCE

Mr. Speich noted that there was no audience.

III. SELECTION OF CHAIR

VOTE: Mr. DiPace motioned to nominate Mr. Speich to serve as Chair, Mr. Shillington seconded and all agreed to elect Mr. Speich as Chair of the Committee.

IV. REVIEW CHARGE

Mr. Robertson referred to the background documents that were included in the committee's packets. The first was a memo to the Town Council, dated October 28, 2016, regarding a fire facility need. He continued that this is where he made the recommendation to appoint the committee. The charge was then adopted at the November 3rd Town Council meeting. The package also included some selections from the updated Plan of Conservation and Development, specifically regarding Company #2. Mr. Robertson noted that the Fire Department has been requesting funding for a new fire station in the northwest area of town for some time now, formerly mentioning the request in the 2006 POCD. He continued that it would be good to look at what would be driving the need for a new station, what's the problem we are trying to address, how does the station solve for that problem, what other solutions may also solve for the problem and report those findings back to the Town Council.

Mr. Speich asked if there was any kind of budget or time frame. Mr. Robertson said not at this time as next year's 2018 budget was in process. He did say he recommended pre-funding in the Fire Department's capital budget for self-contained breathing apparatus and some equipment and maybe some for facilities but more for improving existing facilities, though not for this project. Mr. Robertson noted there were two line items in the current budget for \$100,000 for capital improvements for the fire stations, and \$50,000 for facilities' studies. He explained that if we needed special consulting services to help us then we had monies available. Mr. Robertson also noted that if it wasn't used then it could go to capital improvements. Mr. Speich affirmed with Mr. Robertson that the money was already available for the committee's findings without having to go to the Town Council with a separate request. Mr. Robertson affirmed the committee could go out for consulting services with an RFP without Council's additional approval as the monies were there. Mr. Speich reminded that there was a process in town to go get services. Mr. Robertson concurred.

Mr. Robertson summed that there could be other options to building a new facility such as an addition to an existing building or looking at our mutual aid agreements with surrounding towns to see if perhaps they could provide a higher level of service or acquiring a piece of property and adding a butler building to house equipment. Mr. Robertson cautioned that he was only suggesting, recognizing that the others are more familiar with the needs. Mr. Speich reiterated that the needs of Company #2 had been around for a while, noting the narrow streets, increased size of the apparatus, or people getting to the station.

Mr. DiPace suggested looking outside of the box, perhaps adopting ordinances for sprinklers in every house in order to reduce the load on the fire fighters, and would it be beyond the scope of the committee. Mr. Speich answered that the scope here was to establish the need for the station, is there a need for a new station, what are we trying to solve, be it response, safety, manpower, what would the new station solve for us. Mr. Robertson felt it was beyond the scope, that the need was to identify if there is a problem or a combination and identify the solution. Mr. Shillington said there was data to support response times. Mr. DiPace suggested we could also use the GIS system as a resource. He continued that they used a "circle" system which he felt was not adequate to show the road miles or differences in speed limits around town. Mr. Robertson agreed that if it's a response time issue then the way we think of public safety infrastructure is one of a risk management issue, comparing response time to actual times to goals in order to see where the variances are, then determining if these are acceptable. Mr. DiPace offered that the NFPA does have some standards for response times for volunteer fire departments. He noted that it had to deal with the number of people who went into a building, not necessarily a response time issue. Mr. Shillington agreed that you'd then have to have the necessary resources or tools before you can have an entry and that kind of thing. Mr. DiPace noted that for career departments there is a time frame but not for a volunteer department and it reaches the point of what does the town expect. He clarified that it really is the level of protection they can provide to what the town desires. Mr. DiPace continued that the speed bumps and stop signs create the need for more time to get into and out of Secret Lake, getting the fire fighters to the equipment and out. He noted that over time the roof and floor have been modified to accommodate larger equipment. Mr. Robertson questioned call volume, what kinds of responses does the facility provide. Mr. Shillington said they roll quite often. Mr. DiPace said it depends on what type of call it is and the time of day and whether they're dispatched or not. He continued that during the day all the apparatus are dispatched because you don't know who is around and, nights and weekends depending on the type of call, there may be a limited amount of apparatus depending on the call list unless it's a structure fire.

Mr. Robertson asked if they've done coverage scenarios. Mr. Shillington said they have. Mr. DiPace questioned if that really is feasible by volunteer's time or could an outside company do that for us. Mr. Shillington added to at least evaluate the scenarios to see if they are realistic. Mr. Speich noted that you wouldn't want to pick the wrong location for a new building. Mr. Speich asked where the data comes from. Mr. Shillington said Mr. Klein has the data. Mr. DiPace said the response times are done through the CAD system the PD has and then is fed over to the Firehouse system. He added that the PD doesn't necessarily grab each apparatus with the time they are arriving on scene. Mr. Shillington said the Firehouse software shows the location through the address. Mr. DiPace suggested plotting a 5 year activity scenario. Mr. Robertson asked what the data would really tell us. Mr. Shillington agreed that not really knowing enough

about each response wouldn't tell you much. Mr. DiPace said you could do it by type of call as well. Mr. Shillington said yes by level of risk of call saying water in a basement would be considered a low risk compared to smoke in a house for instance. Mr. Speich asked if we would know if there was a response from Company #2. Mr. Shillington said you could if they filled out the paperwork properly. Mr. DiPace said the CAD system could show which equipment was assigned to what call. Mr. Shillington said it would be difficult to go through all of the log books. Mr. DiPace added that the data is not gathered anywhere and maybe he could talk to Mr. Klein to see if it could be. Mr. Shillington suggested too that it might be easier to now start gathering data in a different way.

Mr. Robertson asked what prompted the need for a new station back in the 2006 plan. Mr. Speich said it grew out of concern for expansion in the area, the roads were getting narrower, equipment larger and speed bumps going in created a safety concern for the trucks going in the area, people going in and getting the trucks out. Mr. DiPace noted that it wasn't the little village anymore but the fire fighters were having to come in from other places. Mr. Speich said half of them used to walk to the station because they lived in Secret Lake. He continued the department feared it was creating a hazard so they suggested an open area where the trucks could get in and out easier. Mr. Speich added that the station is just too small for the apparatus they have and the age of the structure Mr. DiPace noted that the AVFD owned the building.

Mr. Robertson noted solving the traffic issue couldn't be done without relocating the fire station. Mr. Speich said the roads can't be widened. Mr. DiPace referred back to the regionalization aspect, noting that if there's a fire in Canton, we don't go. Mr. Speich said they would respond only if we asked them and vice-versa. Mr. Robertson questioned if there was a good solution for that. He added that the station was really there to respond to the Secret Lake area. Mr. DiPace said now it goes everywhere. Mr. Robertson concluded it's really the location issue, the infrastructure around, the narrow roads, speed bumps. Mr. Speich posed it's also the age of the building and would the fire department keep the building. Mr. DiPace said Lovely Street would be good for a new station location.

Mr. Robertson asked how we'd look at it from a coverage perspective. Mr. Speich supposed taking the trucks out of Secret Lake, locating them near Craigmere for example, would get to RT. 44 more easily and cover behind them to the west, improving the area to Company #4, accessing Country Club better, foreseeing the build-up on the Brighenti's property. He summed getting trucks in and out of Secret Lake safely bore the whole thing. Mr. Speich added that the direction of development drove where to place a station.

Mr. Robertson looked to summarize. Mr. Speich said we must establish why we don't need the station in Secret Lake anymore, why it doesn't work and how do you still protect the area, would smaller trucks work but still people need to get to it and will the neighbors like it. He continued, that serving Old Farms Road would not be under consideration right now, and how could we make it safer, the facility is not adequate to house what we need today, and would moving out where we have vision, would that help or hinder the coverage and do you pick up extra coverage on the west end of town. Mr. DiPace asked if there was another way to doing it with Canton responding to that area, fearing they wouldn't be able to. He added mutual means we get something but we also give something. Mr. Robertson suggested working with staff to look at

the frequency of use of the station, what kind of calls are rolling in and out of the station and look at how that might be affected by relocating and the interaction with Company #4. Mr. DiPace offered that the station covers 1/3 to 1/2 of our commercial area of town.

Mr. Robertson asked if there were many volunteers who respond who live in the area of Company #2. Mr. Shillington guessed 7 or 8. Mr. Speich noted that it changes over time. He suggested capturing the activity that goes in and out of there and that the police could offer a safety statement on the roads. Mr. Robertson offered to also look at the facility for the size of the apparatus it can house, noting its utility is limited by the fact that the bays are not very large. Mr. Robertson suggested having staff do some work and bring that to the next meeting in order to go about finding solutions.

V. DISCUSS FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

Mr. Robertson suggested having the next meeting after January 1st. Mr. Speich suggested the middle of January, keeping the 5:30 meeting time.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

VOTE: Mr. Shillington motioned, Mr. DiPace seconded and all agreed to adjourn the meeting at 6:35PM. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted:
Chairman James Speich

Attest: Susan Gatcomb, Clerk