

# **Swanzey Fire Department Fire Station Project**

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

### **What is the Fire Station Project?**

The Town of Swanzey Board of Selectmen and the Swanzey Fire Department propose to build a new one-story fire station that will be made of durable, low maintenance, and energy efficient materials designed for a useful life of more than 75 years. The new station will be located on Safford Drive and will replace the current Swanzey Center Station 2 located in the basement of the Town Hall. Stations 1 and 3 will not be affected.

### **Where did the idea for a new station come from?**

The project has a long history. In 1988 the Town established a fire station replacement capital reserve fund. Later the 2003 Town Master Plan called for improving overall fire service and constructing a new fire station to serve as headquarters. Since then Fire Department and Town Capital Improvement Committees (CIP) and others have reviewed Town fire, police and municipal facilities and determined that the first step of a Town Improvement Plan will be to move the Fire Department from beneath the Town Hall and build a new facility.

### **What are the issues at Station 2?**

The current facility is too small and does not have room for essential functions such as decontamination, training, truck maintenance, offices, meeting with the public, and storage. The apparatus bay is too small for today's trucks and there is no room for proper storage of turnout gear. In addition, the fire station is in poor physical condition with many building and life safety code violations. There is no sprinkler system, the facility is not ADA compliant, and ventilation and egress are inadequate. Renovation is not recommended due to limited space at the site and the building's condition.

### **How will the new station be an improvement over the current facility?**

The proposed fire station is the result of a careful planning process that included a review of the rooms required to carry out the work of the fire and emergency response services. The proposed 16,930 sq. ft. building has been designed with the proper "firematic" spaces for use by our firefighters and a training/meeting room that can be used by the community and as an emergency operations center.

The new headquarters would allow us to consolidate program and equipment without giving up needed decentralized coverage from three stations. Functions not currently available could take place at the new station such as ambulance service, community para-medicine, training and recertification of firefighters with State Fire Academy courses, vehicle maintenance, and bunking in. Here are some of the building's features:

- Included in the plan are specialized decontamination spaces and equipment so that firefighters exposed to toxic, hazardous materials can clean up immediately after an incident.
- A training/meeting room will double as community meeting space. Other town organizations could conveniently use the meeting room as it's properly separated from the business side of building.
- The apparatus bay will hold up to nine fire and EMS vehicles with proper clearances for movement around the trucks when responding to a call and for maintenance. There will also be space for proper storage of firematic equipment.
- The apparatus bay mezzanine will provide indoor space for firematic training and the site provides ample space for outdoor training. Health and safety requirements for firefighters have changed over the years resulting in many hours of mandated classroom and physical training each year.
- The offices and conference room will provide space for incident paperwork, planning and meetings.

- There will be ample storage to secure sensitive records.
- The fire station will be constructed of durable masonry materials that will lengthen the useful life of the building and help minimize future maintenance costs. Insulation levels will exceed current standards and the energy efficient design will save utility costs in the long term. The durability of materials will allow the fire station to serve the community for many years and serve future generations.

**Where will the new station be located?**

The proposed station will be located on a 2.8-acre parcel on the soon-to-be-completed (May 2015) extension of Safford Drive. This site allows for coordination with the other two stations and also allows for quick access to major routes and connecting roads. The site is in proximity to the busiest response district while providing access to all areas of the town and providing alternative routes that navigate around Swanzey’s four covered bridges. With this location the Fire Department will be able to maintain the Town’s 6-6y ISO rating (Insurance Service Office ratings that measure municipal fire-protection efforts in communities throughout the United States). Another positive is the availability of municipal water and sewer services. The site is being made available through a generous donation by John Burk.

**What is the projected time table?**

- Public Education: January-March 2015
- Bond Hearing: January 13, 2015 at 7:30 PM
- Public Information Session: January 29, 2015 from 6:00-8:00 PM
- Deliberative Session: February 3, 2015
- Town Meeting: March 10, 2015
- Groundbreaking: Fall 2015
- Ribbon-Cutting: Fall 2016

**What is the projected cost?**

Estimated costs for the project are as follows:

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|--|--------------------|
| • Building Construction Cost                 | \$3,919,100        |
| • Contingency (3%)                           | \$117,573          |
| • Land Expenses                              | \$42,000           |
| • Professional Fees                          | \$431,910          |
| • Miscellaneous Costs                        | \$23,500           |
| • Bond Costs                                 | \$7,000            |
| • <u>Furniture, Fixtures &amp; Equipment</u> | <u>\$317,835</u>   |
| <b>PROJECT TOTAL</b>                         | <b>\$4,858,918</b> |

**How will the Town pay for the Project?**

Estimated revenues to pay for the project are as follows:

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|--|---|
| • Future Fire Station Capital Reserve Fund | \$390,000                                 |
| • Proposed Grant funding                   | \$50,000                                  |
| • <b><u>Proposed Bonding</u></b>           | <b><u>\$4,418,918 (\$4.5 million)</u></b> |

**What is the tax impact of the bond?**

The bond payment for a 20-year \$4.5 million bond at 3.998% is \$400,500 in year one and \$319,500 in year ten. Adding these payments to the 2014 budget would result in a tax increase for a home with an assessed value of \$200,000 of approximately \$148 in year one and \$118 in year ten, respectively.