

Fire Department Capital Budget Review

Response to Ways & Means Committee questions

1. \$7,000,000 for Fire Headquarters Replacement

- a.) All project planning documentation to include project assessment study, or studies, used as the basis for this recommended course of action, to include professional engineering assessments

In December 2019 the Town published a Request for Qualifications for the services of a qualified Owner's Project Manager (OPM) to oversee renovations to Fire Headquarters, located at 1 Union Place. The initial scope of work included a review of existing studies, budget development, designer selection, design development, pre-qualification of bidders, bid and award, construction management and final close out of the Project. All prior studies, including Phase I (2015—Habeb and Associates Architects) and II (2016-STV Incorporated) Feasibility Studies, were included as part of the RFQ and can be found at <https://braintreema.gov/Bids.aspx?BidID=36> and <https://braintreema.gov/Bids.aspx?BidID=46>.

The existing facility was initially constructed in 1931 and served as a combined police and fire station. In approximately 1975, the facility was converted to serve solely as a fire station and there have been no major renovations to the site since that time. Issues with the current facility relate to a lack of administrative spaces, insufficient apparatus bays and deficiencies in the living quarters. Additionally, a walk through of the site in 2016 confirmed that most, if not all, of the building support systems required replacement due to the age and life cycle of these systems.

As it stands today, the structure is approximately 20,000 square feet, including an apparatus floor with four bays (2 for pumper trucks, 1 for a ladder truck and a 1 for a command vehicle). The remainder of the first floor is used as a gear room, exercise room and fire dispatch. The gear room is extremely small and crowded, limiting its usefulness by the fifty-two (52) fire fighters assigned to the station.

The second level is currently shared by administrative personnel offices and firefighters' quarters. The sleeping quarters include six very small living quarters and one dorm that houses four firefighters. There is one communal bathroom, with two toilets and one urinal that require regular maintenance and service. There is also a roughly 20 x 18 room that serves as an outdated kitchen, tv room, storage room and training room.

The Contract for OPM Services was subsequently awarded to The Vertex Companies in May 2020 and, in July 2020, the Town published a Request for Qualifications for Design Services. The priorities for the Fire Department, as indicated in the RFQ, included a renovation of the existing fire station with improvements to the 2nd floor living quarters, updates to the mechanical and electrical systems and window replacements. Additional priorities would be determined in consultation with the OPM and designer upon selection. In November 2020, following an evaluation of the proposals, the Contract was awarded to Context Architecture, Inc.

As part of the design process, the Fire Department established a Building Committee to participate in design meetings and assessments to establish additional priorities for the renovation. Also present were the DPW Director, Building Inspector, Facilities Director, Fire Chief and representatives from Vertex and Context.

The design plans are currently undergoing value engineering to make sure that the project plans stay within the proposed budget for the renovation. Current improvements include, but are not limited to, a two story addition on the east side of the building, additional dormitories that meet the industry standard and are designed for single occupancy, proper shower and restroom facilities, a renovated wellness/work out room, the addition of an elevator, renovated decontamination spaces, and roof replacement. Also, by working with the Facilities Department, the Town is able to convert existing space at the Gallivan House, located next to headquarters, for use as temporary housing for fire fighters during the construction. This will result in a savings of approximately \$500,000 to \$600,000 in overall costs.

- b.) The project charter that includes this project's scope of work to be performed and completed

See the documents referenced above.

- c.) The total estimated cost of all project work to be performed

In 2018, the Town allocated \$1,000,000.00 for capital improvements at headquarters (there was an existing balance of \$339,082 remaining from a 2015 allocation of \$425,000). In 2020, an additional \$3,500,000.00 was authorized by the Town Council. This is the third time since Chief O'Brien was appointed Chief that the Town has undertaken the process of rehabilitating headquarters and the \$7,000,000 requested (in addition to the prior authorizations) would allow for meaningful renovations to the building.

- d.) Any and all related cost analysis work performed that was utilized as the basis of determining the full project costs to be undertaken in this stated scope of work

As noted above, the Town, through Chief O'Brien, Russell Forsberg and Mike McGourty, are working to value engineer the design plans in order to meet the needs of the Fire Department and stay within the requested budget amount.

- e.) Risk assessment studies and potential costs pertaining to the need to mitigate possible high levels of asbestos, lead or other contaminants existing in the building presently

This work is included in the design plans currently being developed.

- f.) Project timeline, to include key milestone dates established to monitor, manage and control project performance, costs, reporting and the expected completion date

Once the design plans are revised in accordance with the value engineering performed, additional funding is approved and the work at the Gallivan House is completed, the Town can continue to the next phase of the renovation.

- g.) The name of the party, or parties, responsible for the ongoing management and oversight of the project (project owner) and the name of any professional service contracted to act as the project owner's representative

The Vertex Companies is the Owner's Project Manager.