

Barnstable Fire Department - Fire Station Building Committee Frequently Asked Questions Summary

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Project Overview

How did this proposal get put together? The Barnstable Fire District Prudential Committee voted to create a Fire Station Building Needs Committee and they asked resident volunteers to be on the committee. The committee performed an internal feasibility study considering different locations and options and concluded that station replacement is the best course of action. The current station is non-compliant in areas including firefighter safety, ADA accessibility, apparatus storage, and room for additional staffing.

Why is this project being proposed? In March 2021, Municipal Resources, Inc. conducted a Fire District Organizational & Staffing Analysis to determine whether the existing organizational structure, staffing, facilities, equipment, and deployment of resources were adequate to provide a level of service within the BFD, that was in line with generally accepted standards and benchmarks utilized by comparable fire departments in similar communities; and based on standards and best practices for modern-day fire services currently in practice in MA and the US. This report advised the district to look at a new facility in the next 5 to 10 years.

What is the proposed plan? To demolish the current Barnstable Water Department office structure at 1841 Phinney's Lane and construct a new modern fire station to serve the residents and guests of the Barnstable Fire District for the next 50 years. Once the construction is complete and the fire department relocates, the Water Department and District offices would be moved to the old fire station building at 3249 Main Street.

Why do we need a new station? The station, originally constructed in 1935 and remodeled over the years, does not have enough room to house all the department's

apparatus, equipment, and staff. The current station footprint cannot be expanded. After several remodels, the current building is inefficient, non-ADA compliant, has inadequate working/safety conditions, lacks office space, sleeping quarters, meeting rooms, service space, training space, and can't house all existing fire vehicles. The existing bays height also requires apparatus to be modified to fit in the doors.

Why do we have to replace the fire station now? With the projected growth of calls, more room is needed for additional staff to handle those calls. It's possible an additional ambulance will be needed with this additional growth in calls. There is no room in the current station for it. The new station will not be completed until 2027. By then the call volume will require additional staff who will not fit in the current station.

Why do we need a new station location? To accommodate the expanding population and growth within the fire district, and with additional development in the Industrial Park area, the calls for EMS and Fire Services are expected to shift away from the Village. In the past, most residents lived within a 1/4 mile of 6A and Phinney's, so the station location was optimum. As the population has grown, the station must be located so response times can be fair to the entire district.

What will happen if we don't replace the fire station now? There will be continued wear on the current equipment because they cannot be kept out of the weather. Escalation of construction costs have averaged between 5 and 8 percent per year and are expected to increase again by 5% in the next few years. This will make waiting much more costly.

Why are you proposing "flipping" the Fire Station and the water department locations? The fire district owns both properties and would not require new land. It would optimize the use of both locations, while adding needed community space in the village. The plan recommends repurposing a portion of the existing station building as an 1,800 square foot, 1st floor community space for annual district meetings, village functions, and other community needs.

Why can't the Water Dept. be in the new building with the BFD? It could be. However, the parking space requirements for the combined fire & water staff plus the Community Hearing room exceeds the space available on the site.

Can we sell the existing building to help fund the project? Preliminary cost estimates for a new building for the Water Department and District offices add about \$5-8m to the overall project. The valuation of the existing building is estimated to be about \$3m. It makes more sense to keep building and renovate the existing building.

Project Benefits

What are the benefits of the proposed fire station?

- Meets response time mandates
- Continue the current level of service given the growth within the district
- Allows for 50-year future staff levels
- Reduced wear & tear
- Standard order, less costly, equipment doesn't fit in the current station
- Better utilizes district owned properties
- Training space not currently available
- Increases the health and safety of our members by building in industry standard safeguards to help reduce the amount of FF cancer in our department

What are the benefits of relocating the water dept?

- Keep a presence in the heart of the village
- Increase the convenience for the public to attend Water Commissioner's and Prudential Committee meetings
- Provides a community meeting space with parking
- Space to accommodate future staff as needed.

Building Committee

Who is the project manager & background? Steve Rizzo is a registered professional engineer with over 50 years' experience in construction both in designing and specifying mechanical and electrical building systems and as a facilities and project engineer at multiple medical facilities in Boston. Before retiring he was President of Synergy Consultants, inc. a building commissioning and project management consulting company.

Who are the members of the Building Committee?

Committee Chair Bill Quinn - retired Chief of the Orleans Fire

Peggy Bernard – Current Barnstable village resident

Peter Bergin – Former volunteer firefighter of Amherst, NH Fire Department and current President, Cummaquid Heights Association

Rich French – Historical Perspective

Brain Hickey – Retired call firefighter & paramedic

Non-Voting Members:

Bill Jones – Currently Chair of the Barnstable Fire District Prudential Committee

Chris Beal – Chief of the Barnstable Fire Department

Kevin Brailey – Deputy Chief of the Barnstable Fire Department

Ryan Jones – Firefighter Union Representative

Steve Rizzo – Owners Project Manager

BFD District & Population Demographics

What area is covered by the BFD? The department services approximately fourteen square miles. The district is bound on the east by Yarmouthport, on the west by Route 132, to the north by Cape Cod Bay and to the south by Cape Cod Gateway Airport. The district covers 5 miles of Route 6, and although mostly residential, it includes the industrial area of Independence Park, three court houses, Barnstable Harbor, and the Sandy Neck Colony.

What is the current population? The Barnstable Fire District has approximately 2,200 residential units currently. The US Census Bureau uses 2.46 persons per household for Massachusetts. With 2,200 residential units this equates to roughly 5,500 residents in the fire district. (2,200 X 2.46 = 5,412)

Anticipated population growth is exponential. How do you estimate & prepare for that? We work with the Town of Barnstable Planning Division, Building Department, Cape Cod Commission, and other partners to get a head start on planned development in District. Most times the process takes years before opening and that allows us to plan for needed staffing and equipment. We look at available land and to project future uses.

What are the Cape people demographics estimated in the plan? Age, family vs single, etc... and how is fire staffing going to change to accommodate increases? The demographics are very difficult to get at in the district. The US census data is sorted by zip code and some residences get their mail delivered by zip codes outside of the district. We estimated that there are approximately 5,500 residents in the district based on the number of buildings in the district. We know that there are approximately ,3200 registered voters in the district. This is from the Town Clerk's office. Depending on the zip code the median age of the residents in the district varies widely. In the two primary zip codes in the district 02637 and 02632 the median age is 66.2 and 51.3 respectively according to the 2020 US census data. The growth of the district is a little harder to get at. The total year-round population of the Town of Barnstable has been relatively stable at 50,000 residents. There have been two areas of growth in the district: 1: the increase in second homes as the result of the pandemic and 2: the increase in multi-unit housing in the Industrial Park.

Proposed Station Location

What other locations were considered for the proposed new station? Would it be possible to buy land from the town in a better location? The Committee evaluated 5 locations and discussed purchase with two property owners. Of the locations studied, only the current location and locations along Phinney's Lane fell within the "travel time" mandate of 8 minutes. The property owners we spoke to were unwilling to sell at this time or were offering conditions which made purchase unattractive.

Why can't we build on town owned land in the industrial park? The sites we studied included 2 in the industrial park area. Both were outside of the 8-minute travel time mandate. The "travel time" mandate is a requirement that all calls within the district, no matter how far from the station, fall within this time frame.

Who owns the properties around the existing fire station? Why not buy the land necessary at the current location? Lands adjacent to the existing fire station are owned by the Commonwealth, the County, and the Town. Purchasing additional land sufficient to increase the station adequately is not feasible.

Of the 4 options the committee reviewed, why couldn't the existing fire station be remodeled to accommodate needs? Wouldn't that be less expensive? Will the town work with you? Couldn't you take land by eminent domain? The existing station is "land-locked" by Town and County owned lands. This land is not available to the district.

Have you definitively selected the Phinney's/existing water dept. location? Yes

Call & Run Volume

What is the call volume today? With recent developments in offshore wind energy production, and multi-unit housing, the district finds that its existing fire department and water department facilities are not adequate to the challenges presented by this growth. The annual run volume of the station has risen from 1,362 in 2020 to 1,781 in 2023. By 2024 we will be responding to 2,000 calls per year and by the completion of the Hanover apartment project we will be responding to an estimated 2,500 calls per year.

What is the definition of a call? A call is any alert or alarm that requires a response by personnel and/or apparatus from the fire house. These include ambulance calls, boating and other marine incidents, structure fires, flooded basements, high water rescue, motor vehicle incidents, etc.

What percentage of calls are for fire and what for ambulance? 72% of our calls are EMS related. This is within the industry standard.

Do we break even on the cost of running the ambulance service? We do not break even on the cost of running our two ambulances. Ambulance runs are paid for through health insurance. We bring in an average of \$700,000.00 per year in ambulance receipts. This represents about an 85% recovery of what is billed out by our ambulance billing company. We average about 80% of our calls for service to be EMS related. So roughly 80% of our annual budget is geared towards EMS. With this current budget that equates to roughly \$2.4 million dollars.

How is ambulance money used? To reduce the tax burden on the district voters and offset the operational costs of the Fire Station, to purchase ambulances, general equipment, and specialty items that would normally increase the tax rate.

Run volume compared to prior years? The run volume is expected to rise by an additional 300 -700 runs in the next two years with the opening of 2 new apartment complexes. This anticipated growth is based on the current 400 apartment units having an average response rate of 1.16 calls per unit per year. Considering the 2 phases of the Hanover Hyannis Apartment complex we have used the same multiplier to estimate the call volume for those apartments. Phase 1 is 272 apartments, and it is estimated we will respond 315 times per year for calls for service (EMS, fire, assists, etc.) Phase 2 will potentially include another 328 apartments creating another 380 calls for service. When both are completed, they will have 600 units that will create an anticipated 696 calls for service per year.

What % of calls are for non-residents? This is a hard item to define but we can look at EMS records and try to determine where people live to determine this. We respond to multiple health care facilities and have many visitors to our district so we will try and figure that out soon.

How do you handle the variation in summer vs winter populations? In the past we used to see a slowdown in call volume but with the increase in year-round residents that is no longer the case.

New Fire Station Costs

How much will the new station cost? The first estimate on cost for the new fire station is \$35 million. We are working on getting the best price possible by using a Construction Manager at Risk that will enable us to get the Maximum Guaranteed Price. We are also looking at other avenues for funds to offset the cost.

Do you have to abide by MA procurement laws? Yes, the Fire District is a public entity as such it must abide by the procurement laws of the Commonwealth.

How is this project going to be paid for? The Barnstable Fire District uses bonds to pay for large items and this would be the way we would pay for this project. A bond is a municipal loan that we would pay off over a determined amount of time. The cost is then calculated into the tax rate to raise the funds to pay the bond annually. Over time the annual bond amount reduces, effectively reducing the tax rate over time.

Who specifically is paying for this project? The taxpayers of the Barnstable Fire District ultimately will pay for the project out of district taxes.

Over what period? The design fee bond is a ten-year term. Construction bonds carry a 30-year term. The bonds are repaid through the district property tax.

How much is it going to cost me? Residents? We are estimating that the impact to the taxpayer rate will be close to \$0.39 per \$1,000 of valuation or \$390 the first year on a home valued at \$1 million. As we get closer to a true cost, we will be able to estimate a better cost to the taxpayer.

What happens if the new building is not approved? How will the delay impact the cost? The cost to build will continue to increase each year roughly 5-8% or \$1.5 million a year we delay the project. Other costs include continuing wear & tear on the apparatus and equipment and reduction in ISO rating that affects home insurance rates.

What's my tax impact on the \$1.2M design fee request? The tax impact on the design fee request will be \$12 per year for the first year decreasing over time to year 10 when it is paid off. This estimate is based on an assessment of \$500,000.

What will the tax rate impact be for the construction cost? Based on a \$1,000,000 assessment, the first-year tax burden would be approximately \$390 per year decreasing to zero in 30 years.

What money has been spent on this project to date? Feasibility study, survey, design, etc.? So far, all studies have been done by the Building Committee at no cost to the district. A survey of the property to confirm the actual distance to Well #1 was conducted for \$5,000.

Are there grants the fire department can apply for to help reduce build impact on taxpayers? No, there are no grants available for the construction of new fire stations.

What price per square foot is being used for planning? How was that determined? We are currently carrying a cost of approximately \$1,100 per square foot in 2024 dollars.

Will a new building reduce maintenance cost? It is hard to look at the current fire station and use the maintenance budget we have now and try to convert that to the new building. We will try to use current technologies to keep the costs of maintenance and upkeep to a minimum. Since most of the existing equipment and apparatus will be relocated to the new station the cost to maintain that portion will not be affected except by inflation. Some credit can be accrued to moving equipment indoors. Regular building maintenance and utility costs for the station will be affected by the final design. Every feature of the building will be evaluated as the design progresses to keep operating and maintenance costs to a minimum. This would include using sustainable building practices and energy saving cost options.

Will a new building reduce insurance cost? The location of the new building may help us to decrease our ISO rating which will in turn reduce homeowners' insurance for the residents. A good description of the ISO rating can be found at: www.bankrate.com/insurance/homeowners-insurance/iso-fire-ratings/

Why don't the Barnstable fire stations consolidate to save money? There was a study performed in 2003 by an outside consultant for the Barnstable Fire District that concluded "there is no savings in consolidating the 5 fire districts in the Town of Barnstable." Because of the requirements for response time and travel distance, the elimination of any of the current stations cannot be done. Additionally, the report concluded, while some anticipated staffing at the chief levels would provide some savings, additional supervisory and clerical support staffing would offset those savings.

What is the Regional Emergency Communication Center and how can the REC center help to reduce costs? The proposed RECC is a joint communications center covering Sandwich, Barnstable and Yarmouth. It will coordinate the dispatch of emergency and police. The project is being funded by the state under a grant and will be providing communications equipment to the participating fire departments. We need to coordinate the construction of the new fire station with the RECC to be sure to take maximum advantage of the project.

How can the district, town, and county coordinate planning for future growth better? We will continue to work with the Town of Barnstable Planning Division, Building Department, Cape Cod Commission, and other partners to get a head start on any planned development in the Barnstable Fire District.

What is the impact to the closure of the fire academy? Where will training be done? Can training be regionalized so that expenses can be shared across stations & reduce overall costs? Some cross training between departments is being done. However, such training requires staff to be out of the district requiring additional staff be brought in to cover. The state of the art today for most stations is to train as much as possible "in-house" to maintain coverage.

Are the large apartment buildings and businesses in Independence Park paying their fair share of the expense for the new station, since their growth is driving the need for improvements? Yes, all developments add value to the district and as such will pay for the new station in the same way as all the other properties in the district.

Can the fire department get impact fees from developers? No. There is no mechanism within the Fire District to charge impact fees to developers. Only utilities. All properties pay their share of property and district taxes based on the value of the properties.

How long will the current fire dept equipment last? Or will the BFD be coming back for additional large ticket items in addition to the new station? There is a request in this year's warrant for a new ambulance. The new station will not be purchasing any fire equipment as part of the project. The current fire apparatus is all up-to-date or replacements are planned and ordered. The next large apparatus to be replaced will be Deputy's car in 2027, Chiefs car in 2029, and an engine(rescue/pumper) planned for 2032. Full Capitol Plan is available.

New Fire Station Design & Appearance

What is the planned size of the proposed new fire station? And how was it determined? The planned size of the new station is approximately 30,000 square feet. The Committee studied recently built fire stations in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Connecticut. In addition, manuals available online from the US Air Force regarding fire station standards of construction provided a wealth of information about sizes and details of stations. The committee also toured recently constructed fire stations on the Cape and interviewed the occupants of those stations regarding what worked well and what they would do differently. From these studies the Committee endorsed a Preliminary Space Program developed by the team. This Preliminary Space Program included spaces to meet the projected future call volume.

Can we house all our current equipment and apparatus in the current fire station? If not, where is it? Can't we continue doing that? No. The current equipment does not fit. Leaving equipment outside reduces the useful life of that equipment and increases maintenance costs to keep the equipment available when needed.

What will the new station look like? How will it fit into the current residential area? The architectural team that the Building Committee has chosen from the 6 applicants who submitted qualifications, are the most experienced with designing fire stations within residential communities and within historic districts. We can say that the fire station will not be a brick building like the COMMS or Hyannis stations. It will be sensitive to the area in which it will reside.

What is the time frame before the community will get a look at the new station? Site plans, drawings, and floor plans are available on the fire department website. www.barnstablefire.org We will be presenting to the Old Kings Highway Historic District Board in December 2024.

Can you speed up the design process, so we can see what you are asking money for? No, the design process is as compressed as it is possible to be.

What is the square footage of the current fire station? And the proposed new fire station? The current station is 10,300 square feet. The proposed station is 30,000 square feet.

Will new lighting, alarms, etc. be required on Phinney's in a residential neighborhood? And what's the anticipated impact to abutters? Will they be compensated? We anticipate installing a traffic signal on Phinney's Lane like the one on Route 28 at the COMMS Fire Station. This light has the advantage of allowing the fire apparatus to exit the fire station without having to use sirens or horns at night. This should keep noise for the residents of the community to a minimum.

How do we know the building will be big enough for 50 years? What measures are being taken to allow for growth? Growth in the immediate future, 5 years or so, is a known quantity estimating beyond that requires a certain amount of guess work. We looked at the land available for future development in the district and gamed out how this development might look. We also studied the district's population dynamics. This provided a certain amount of guidance. In addition, we will plan flexibility into the new building to allow adaptation of the space within to change to suit the environment.

What best practices are being followed for building design? The building plan will follow the Office of the Inspector General Commonwealth of Massachusetts - Designing and Constructing Public Facilities, Legal Requirements, Recommended Practices, and Sources of Assistance - November 2023. This would include using sustainable building practices and energy saving cost options.

What standards are being followed for optimum equipment & apparatus fleet? It is anticipated that all existing apparatus will be retained and moved to the new fire station. By building the new station to current and expected standards, new equipment can be purchased from the manufacturer's standard equipment models without the special modifications the current station requires. This does two things; it saves time on delivery of new equipment in the event one of the existing pieces breaks down and it saves costs caused by the special modifications.

What metrics are being used for the space design standards? See the answer above regarding the US Air Force online information plus our own investigations.

What green initiatives will be in the project? The building will comply with all state building code requirements for energy performance. Some items such as solar arrays and geothermal energy systems have a large impact on the project cost. Items such as these will need to be evaluated on a cost / benefit basis.

How is the existing water dept. property zoned? Residential or business? The overlay district of the area is residential RG. The current use of the property is a business use. The new Fire Station will continue that Business use.

What commonalities are being taken advantage of with the other fire districts if any? Radio dispatch is currently via the Barnstable County Sherriff's Office. The district is also participating in the new Regional Emergency Communication Center (RECC) being developed. This allows the new station to save on the expense of having a Dispatch Center and staff within the building. Those functions will be performed elsewhere.

Water Department Building & Move

What is in the existing water department building? Originally constructed in 1940, the facility houses the offices of the district treasurer, district clerk, the water superintendent, the water department billing and clerical office, water maintenance shops, and garage. Prudential and Water Commissioner Committees hold monthly meetings at this location that are open to the public.

How much square footage is in the existing Water Dept. Building? The Water Department AND District offices currently occupy about 2,600 square feet of space.

And do they need additional space? Our preliminary study shows they need about 6,000 square feet due to growth needs. The Prudential and Water Commissioners do not have adequate meeting space and with the addition of the new water treatment plant and other projects on the horizon space will be needed.

Is the existing station overkill for the future location? The 10,500 square foot fire station may seem too big on the surface, but the water department is growing with the addition of the new Water Treatment Facility at wells 2 and 5, and other upcoming projects such as replacement of 100-year-old water mains in the district. These projects will add to the space requirements of the department. Also, the public meetings of the Prudential Committee and the Water Commissioners are held in the current Superintendent's Office which is inadequate for the purpose.

How will the extra space be used? Creating space for public hearings within the district is a priority. Renovating the existing building for this purpose satisfies the need and maintains a District Office in the Village. Our studies have indicated that this option is less expensive than building out new space for the Water Department and District offices.

Does this project cover costs for relocating the water dept? The Water Department will need to work/reside in temporary space, either rented or office trailers. This cost will be included in the cost of the new fire station. We don't have a number yet on the temporary space costs, as it will depend on rental rates at the time.

Does this project cover remodel costs for new water department space? No.

Renovations to the existing fire house for the new District Offices will be performed separately and are not included in this phase of the project. It is too early in the process to estimate how much work will be required to move the Water Department into the building on Main Street. The building does need an elevator. But it may be possible to move the water department and renovate the spaces around them. Evaluation of this renovation will proceed once the Fire Station Design and cost impacts are fully known.

Could we move the existing water dept. building to be used elsewhere less expensively? No. The existing structure is not conducive to moving easily. Most of the building is built on a slab, which means that moving it would require adding structure to the buildings to reinforce them. The building does not have the space currently needed.

Water Department Wells & Water Treatment

Do we have enough water to accommodate a larger fire department and all the new building? This was asked again. Yes. Currently the water system uses 3 of 5 wells to meet peak demand in summer. The current developments will probably require a 4th well occasionally.

Where are all the wells? Well #1 is located on the property at Phinney's lane. Wells 2 & 5 are on property off Breeds Hill Road in the Industrial District. Wells 3 & 4 are on property between the Hyannis Golf Club and Hathaway's Ponds. **(Asked again)**

Will additional water treatment facilities be needed? Most likely given the new EPA PFoA's standards water treatment will be required at additional wells. A warrant for a pilot study at Wells 3 & 4 is included in this year's annual meeting.

Will the new fire department put our water supply at risk? And what protections are built into the plan? No. The new building will be outside of the 400-foot zone 1 well protection area and will have all the required safety features to protect against accidental spills.

Are all the presentation materials online to be shared and reviewed by others who cannot attend the meetings? Not yet, but we are working on it.

Will there still be chili in front of the existing building during the Christmas Stroll once the BFD has relocated? Yes, we will continue to try and provide chili at the stroll.