Facility Review Committee

November 29, 2021

Sanford Hall

***Members present:*** Tim Harris, Mark Robinson, Larry Muench, Brian Cowan, Cindy Sullivan, and Lenny Mitchell

***Members absent:*** Glenn Trindade

***Community members present:*** Michael Boynton, Matt Reardon, Allison Potter, Bill Kingsbury, Mike Fasolino, and Jeff Lynch

**Call to Order:** At 6:33PM, Mr. Harris called the meeting to order.

Mr. Harris thanked the present officers for their service and shared that the committee looks forward to hearing from them about how the committee can best support them.

**Agenda Item #1: Fire Stations 1 and 2**

Mr. Boynton addressed this topic, expounding upon the need for the committee to fully grasp the functional needs of all municipal buildings. In particular, he shared that he feels the biggest challenge facing Medway is that many town buildings appear to be in good condition, but lack appropriate space, accommodations, and updates. He referred to the DPW spaces in particular, as well as the fire station. Many of these buildings were constructed on a conservative budget and therefore have design flaws such as poor orientation and accessibility. He underscored the need to renovate the existing fire station, as well as rework the parking lot, as the fire station was not originally designed for its current capacity and responsibilities.

In regard to the police station, Mr. Boynton stated that the existing building is not large enough to accommodate the growing number of the staff. He reiterated the need for more space and improved safety resources to reflect the expanding nature of the police department. He stressed that he does not intend to sound critical of the existing buildings but rather to inform people that the building was designed in 1991 and is not reflective of the department’s needs in 2021. He stressed the need for more land and a potential renovation to address this issue.

Mr. Harris reviewed the agenda, sharing the importance of learning about each department’s short-term and long-term needs, as well as prioritizing these goals.

Mr. Lynch and Mr. Fasolino of the fire department shared that their biggest issue is growth. There is not currently adequate space at the station to accommodate their employees and resources. Their department has 5 people at the station doing 24-hour shifts; they also have acquired more administrative staff and are in the process of hiring another. The department also employs both men and women, which requires additional bunks and lodging. Mr. Lynch shared that there is no privacy for the employees during the shift as a result of the limited space. Mr. Fasolino shared that the staff no longer has appropriate space to meet as an entire department. They also shared that they have training classes of 30 people, which would ideally require more space, too.

Mr. Muench asked if the department would need to expand if the population stayed the same; Mr. Lynch shared that the demands of the department transcend the population, as their responsibilities exceed putting out fires.

Mr. Boynton shared that he does not foresee the department increasing their staffing in terms of individuals per shift any time soon, but this may be possible in the future. He cited increased call volume and potentially decreased interest in the profession as evidence of this.

Ms. Sullivan inquired about the current location of the fire station; Mr. Lynch shared that the Adams Street/Winthrop Street intesrsection would be an ideal location in regard to response time. He shared that the middle of Main Street (in the area of the plaza) would also be a logical location. Mr. Muench asked if having one station or multiple stations would be best. In response, Mr. Lynch shared that efficiently running one station is best for response time.

Mr. Robinson asked how the fire department's response times compare to averages within the industry. Mr. Lynch stated that this has not been an ongoing problem, but that they could be better and that some of the response times do not meet the 4 minute standard. He shared that the only part of Medway that might be difficult to reach within 4 minutes are on the Millis and Holliston lines.

Mr. Boynton shared that not only is the location relevant, but also the space required. He also stressed the importance of all resources and employees being housed under one roof.

Mr. Muench asked how important handicap access is to the fire department. Mr. Lynch suggested that a community survey would be a helpful way to answer this question.

Mr. Mitchell asked for further details about the existing spaces; Mr. Fasolino shared that many spaces have been repurposed and therefore do not have adequate ventilation or storage. He referenced the training rooms, bunks, and the kitchen as particularly problematic. Mr. Lynch shared that the department does not have any current storage due to the size and layout of the building. He stated that one of his biggest concerns is how cramped the egresses and parking lot are, as it could risk injury.

Mr. Cowan asked how many bays would ideally be in the station; Mr. Fasolino shared that approximately 6 bays would be ideal. This would be a 12,5000 square foot space, which would include storage and equipment. This would be enough space to hold at least 12 vehicles. Mr. Boynton estimated that this layout would be a 50-year solution, at which point the department would likely reassess their needs.

Mr. Fasolino addressed the issue of decontamination. Right now, all of the gear sits on the floor; it should ideally be in a separate space to be washed. He expressed concerns about contaminants and decontamination therefore being impossible. As a result, contaminants often enter the living space which raises health concerns for firefighters.

Mr. Harris asked if a drive through space outside of the station would be helpful; Mr. Fasolino confirmed that it would.

Mr. Robinson asked how often the department cross-trains with other groups in town. Mr. Fasolino shared that they do joint training with the police department 3-4 times a year.

Mr. Harris inquired about leaks; Mr. Fasolino shared that all of the doors and windows are from the original structure and are very prone to leaking. Mr. Robinson asked if the department reaches out to the DPW with requests; Mr. Fasolino confirmed that it has been effective and timely up to this point.

Mr. Harris inquired about specialties; Mr. Lynch replied that there is no place for the department to meet with the public. Right now, they use the existing meeting room, which is not conducive to these conversations or private for the meeting members.

Mr. Cowan asked if there is an advantage or disadvantage to being close to the police department; Mr. Lynch shared that he likes the idea of a public safety space and felt it would be effective for both the police and the fire departments to be in close proximity to each other.

Mr. Fasolino shared that the interactions between police and fire in the dispatch centers could be significantly better and more streamlined.

Mr. Reardon shared that there should be separate and spacious driveways for both departments if the departments were to consolidate.

Mr. Reardon shared that building redundant functionality between both departments would be helpful in terms of handling dispatch and call volume.

Mr. Boynton asked whether the department would rather renovate or rebuild; Mr. Fasolino and Mr. Lynch agreed that in order to do it right, it would require a full rebuild. They felt that any other solution would be a temporary fix and defeat the purpose of critically reviewing this facility.

Mr. Robinson asked if building on the existing land would be preferable or looking elsewhere. Mr. Lynch felt that the current location is not ideal and is not as central as it could be.

**Agenda Item #2: Police Station**

Mr. Kingsbury shared concerns about security outside of the police station. He felt there needed to be limited access to the public and secure storage for vehicles, in particular.

Mr. Kingsbury also shared that the department was built without an evidence room and is simply not built to reflect the needs of the department today. He explained that evidence rooms are for the secure storage of evidentiary items. He shared that many aspects of the existing building are not up to national standards. He clarified that many pieces of evidence require climate control for temperature and humidity (sexual assault evidence) and/or double security protocol (drugs, jewlery, etc.), neither of which are included in the existing facility. He reiterated the importance of this, as the department maintains evidence for up to 100 years.

Mr. Reardon shared that the department is in the process of digitizing much of their information, but there are certain documents that must be retained in the form of a hard copy.

Mr. Harris asked what fire accommodations the departments have; both the police and fire shared that they have no additional fire suppression beyond simple smoke detectors.

Mr. Kingsbury expressed concern that there is no interrogation room in the police station.

Mr. Reardon shared that the office and administrative spaces need significant electrical work and technological expansion. He shared that the department has attempted to make these fixes, but are at capacity in regard to what they are able to do without the town’s support.

Mr. Muench asked about the department’s growth; Mr Kingsbury shared that their employment has doubled from approximately 15 to approximately 30. Mr. Reardon also shared that the department is currently using all of their locker space for female officers. During the day, Mr. Kingsbury shared that 4 officers are on the road and 8 officers in the building.

Mr. Reardon also shared that the existing space is so limited that there are often officers taking calls and working on documents in the same room. They shared a marked need for a true interrogation room and a separate interview room in order to meet with the public.

Mr. Robinson asked what the department would like to see as different in the new rooms; Mr. Kingsbury shared that it should be alarmed as well as have different furniture and layout.

Mr. Reardon shared that about 4 years ago the department put in a new security system, but it still lacks visibility in a few areas.

Mr. Reardon and Mr. Kingsbury also confirmed that all of their vehicles are currently stored outside; as a result, the weather has noticeably damaged the vehicles. Mr. Kingsbury also shared the need to find winter storage for their equipment. He shared that a carport could help keep the vehicles out of immediate weather, but ultimately does not entirely ameliorate the issue of cold.

In regard to staffing, Mr. Kingsbury stated that he foresees increasing staffing with regional dispatch. Mr. Reardon clarified that from a service delivery perspective, regionalization may yield some gains in regard to dispatch, but the department would therefore need to make adjustments for service delivery. As a result the department would still need to staff the station with an officer or a clerk, depending on the time of day.

Mr. Boynton shared that the department will likely be at 26-32 people in the next 10 years.

Mr. Kingsbury clarified that the department is currently down 3 people.

Mr. Boynton shared that as a result of police reform, there is now a clinician embedded with the police department. The employee is split between Medway and Franklin. Mr. Reardon shared that this program has been so successful and beneficial that both Franklin and Medway are looking into funding for a second clinician.

Mr. Boynton shared that there is only one individual who handles all of the administrative tasks of the department. He felt that in the next 5 years the department would seek at least one more administrative employee.

Mr. Robinson asked if the police department felt they were located correctly. Mr. Kingsbury felt that it is a decent location, but that there is sometimes a disturbance with local neighborhoods in regard to having to travel to scenes at a high speed. Mr. Kingsbury felt that Main Street (on the Millis side) would be a more central location.

Mr. Muench asked if there is a need for more than one police station; Mr. Kingsbury shared that the department is not large enough to warrant that. Mr. Boynton stated that if the police owned the land behind the station, that location could work; however, in order to build a building of appropriate size and caliber, the department would likely need to look elsewhere.

Mr. Reardon also shared that there are 4 holding cells with an average of 100 arrests per year. Mr. Kingsbury clarified the protocols for separating men and women, as well as juveniles and adults; as a result of these protocols, the existing spaces can potentially fill up quickly. Mr. Harris asked if there were any religious concerns in this regard; Mr. Kingsbury shared that this has not been an issue previously.

Mr. Boynton agreed, underscoring the need for safety, not only for the officers, but for the citizens under the department’s care and supervision.

Mr. Reardon shared that there should be a meeting room in the station that holds 50 people, if the department grows as projected.

Mr. Kingsbury also shared that valuable, potentially dangerous items such as ammunition are not currently stored properly, due to existing space and storage issues. He shared that there are many ongoing issues of items being stored improperly, which could be a potential insurance and/or safety issue.

Mr. Harris asked about any additional security concerns; Mr. Kingsbury underscored the need for electronic gates and/or a buffer zone. Mr. Reardon mentioned the need for an upgrade of the entrance’s security.

Mr. Boynton expressed concerns regarding the need to renovate the Burke School, which he estimated would be approximately eighty million dollars. He identified three primary town needs for building replacement: town hall (15,000 square feet), police (22,000 square feet), and fire (25,000 square feet). He felt that the biggest challenge is that these buildings do not have the same constituency as other municipal buildings, such as schools. He underscored the need to convey to the community that there are many mission-driven departments in the town that are suffering and not performing to their full potential as a result.

Mr. Harris underscored the need to continue revisiting these issues and maintaining open communication with the towns’ needs as the committee continues their work.

Mr. Boynton offered to return to discuss finances.

Ms. Sullivan reiterated the need for each major town department to come to a committee meeting and share their concerns, needs, and goals.

Mr. Harris shared that he will be sharing materials with the committee to aid in the process of identifying their goals, as well as prioritizing them.

Ms. Sullivan clarified that the next meeting is December 20, 2021. She suggested wrapping up the town-based discussions before moving on to the schools. The committee agreed that Michael Boynton will return to continue the conversation.

Mr. Robinson stated the need to review town-owned property in order to make informed decisions about any potential relocations and/or repurposing. Ms. Sullivan expressed potential concerns about wetlands in these properties, but felt this was a worthwhile idea nonetheless.

**VOTE - Motion to Adjourn:** At 9:00PM, Mr. Mitchell motioned to adjourn. Mr. Robinson seconded this motion, which passed unanimously. VOTE: 6-0.