

# Scarborough Public Safety Facility Committee

## Questions, Answers & Comments

From the 6/14/17 Presentation & Community Dialogue

### 1. Did you consider expanding the current facility?

Yes, during the 2007 work with Gawron/Turgeon Architects, and again at the beginning of this process we evaluated that option and determined there was insufficient room to meet the needs of both departments at this location.

### 2. Did you consider separating police and fire, leaving one or the other at the current site and building a smaller less expensive new building?

Yes, this option was thoroughly evaluated by the committee but was discounted due to the access and egress concerns that remain for this site, the loss in design efficiencies and the sharing of common and public spaces, as well as the future costs for utilities, operations, and maintenance. Furthermore immediate access to dispatch and the one public safety family culture we have worked so hard to develop would be negatively impacted by separating the departments.

### 3. What about the increase in the Town's debt? Can the Town of Scarborough handle more debt?

The Town of Scarborough, as of June 30, 2017, will hold \$91,630,000 in direct debt. By June 30, 2018 we expect that amount to have decreased to approx. \$88,500,000. While that is a large number, Scarborough's high total assessed value means that we can absorb additional debt and debt service payments with minimal impact on the tax rate. We would also likely be borrowing the amount of money for the new Public Safety Building in stages giving the Town another year to retire debt before the full amount for the building is bonded.

Bond industry warning signs to consider:

- **Overall net debt exceeding 10% of valuation.**  
Our current net debt as a percentage of valuation is 2.53%.
- **An increase of 20% over the previous year in net debt as a percentage of valuation.**  
Our largest increase in the past 10 years is 0.7%.
- **Overall net debt as a percentage of valuation increasing 50% over the amount from 4 years earlier.**  
Our largest 4 year increase is 0.72%.
- **Overall net debt per capita exceeding 15% of per capita personal income.**  
For 2010, the last year we have valid demographic data, this value was 8.74%.

### 4. What is going to happen to the existing facility?

One of the building committee charges was to analyze the Municipal Facility Study to see if there are any short-term uses that might be applicable. Additionally the Town Manager asked a commercial broker to conduct an appraisal to ascertain the current value of this site so the committee and ultimately the Town Council has the information needed to make an informed decision on sale or reuse. After thorough review of potential future uses and the information from the broker and potential developers, the committee felt the highest and best use was to sell the existing facility and use those proceeds to reduce the amount of money that needed to be raised by bonding. This direction also turns what is currently a tax exempt property into a taxable property when it is redeveloped. The committee's recommendation was forwarded to the Town Council as part of their final report, and the Town Council has incorporated that recommendation into the final bond question thus reducing the amount that needs to be borrowed for this project by the anticipated sale value.

**5. Why construct an access road on the municipal campus versus direct access onto Route 1?**

The steep grade of the road, backups trying to access Memorial Drive, and the distance between the traffic control signals at Memorial Drive and Sawyer Road make direct access onto Route unsafe. As designed, responding apparatus will be able to use the pre-empted Sawyer Road traffic signal for access to Route 1 while also providing an added value interconnected roadway to the entire municipal campus.

**6. Why Now?**

Plans for this project started in May 2006 when the Town Council funded phase 1 of a feasibility study. In November of 2007 the Town acquired property at the corner of Commerce Drive and Route 1 to build the facility next to the Maine Veteran's Home. In May of 2008 the Maine Veteran's Home changed their mind and decided they may need to expand in the future and bought that land from the Town at a significant profit. Those funds were placed in a reserve fund for a future public safety building and some of them were used to fund this design work and feasibility study. Conceptual plans and cost estimates were generated in 2008 just as the national recession hit. The project was postponed for several years due to the economic downturn, then delayed further so the Town could concentrate on the Wentworth School project which took priority. Over these past 10 years the needs have continued to build. The Town and School Department have several projects in the long-range plan, but this facility is now the most urgent need and we hope to move forward while bond rates are still historically low.

**7. How did you arrive at the 2041 projections?**

Staffing projections were based on the current draft of the Fire Department's Staffing Plan and the estimated number of police officers needed to maintain services over the next 25 years. Population and business demographics were generated by the Planning Department and SEDCO based on a variety of State agency and other data sources along with local knowledge and experience. The population projection for 2041 reflects an average of the high and low projections generated by the Planning/SEDCO team. Other population figures were based on the decennial census closest to the year recorded. This is why the population figures for 1968 and 1972 are the same. The police and fire calls for service projections were created by looking back 15 years to determine the average annual increase in calls percentage, then that average annual percentage increase was used to forecast anticipated growth forward for the next 25 years.

**8. Who are the Friends of Scarborough Public Safety?**

The Friends of Scarborough Public Safety is a subgroup of the Scarborough Firefighter's Association, a Non-Profit Maine Corporation that is completely separate from the Town of Scarborough. This group of citizens has and will continue to raise private donations to advocate and educate the public on this important project. No Town funding will be used for advocacy of this project. If the project is approved by the voters in November the Friends of Scarborough Public Safety intend on continuing to raise private funding for the future construction of a Public Safety Memorial at the new facility.

**9. How big was the original design by Context Architecture?**

There have been six revisions of the space needs starting with the ten year old plans from Gawron Turgeon at approximately 47,000 sq. ft. to approximately 56,751 sq. ft. The current draft is approximately 53,028 sq. ft.

**10. What future expansion possibilities are designed into the proposed building?**

To assure the proposed facility will meet the needs of the departments for many years to come, it has been designed for possible expansion on each level in the future. The site plan includes sufficient space to add an additional full-length apparatus bay on the north end of the basement level. On the 1st floor the roof structure of the apparatus bays will be designed to accommodate future expansion of the dorm and firefighter quarters. On the 2nd floor there is additional expansion capability designed into the corridor area between the two wings of administrative space. We have also planned for additional parking space that can be constructed in the future as needed.

**11. What size is the existing facility?**

The existing facility is approximately 17,100 sq. ft. according to the 2008 Gawron/Turgeon study.

**12. How does the cost of this building compare to the cost of similar buildings in other communities?**

The following table provides some comparisons for some local facilities that have been built over the past decade or so as well as some more recent and likely more applicable joint public safety facilities that have been constructed recently in Massachusetts.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>Facility Size</b>	<b>Construction Cost</b>	<b>Year Built</b>
Topsham, ME	Combined PS	35,000 sq. ft.	15.0 M	2007
Westbrook, ME	Combined PS	42,000 sq. ft.	6.0 M	2005
Brunswick, ME	Police Only	20,318 sq. ft.	4.6 M	2013
Saco, ME	Fire Only	23,000 sq. ft.	6.0 M	2011
Mansfield, MA	Combined PS	40,000 sq. ft.	18.0 M	2016
Malden, MA	Combined PS	24,000 sq. ft.	12.3 M	2016
Sharon, MA	Combined PS	40,800 sq. ft.	17.7 M	2016
<b>Scarborough, ME</b>	<b>Combined PS</b>	<b>53,000 sq. ft.</b>	<b>17.0 M</b>	<b>2018</b>

**13. What are the revenue possibilities now and in the future for Public Safety?**

**Dispatch** In the FY 17/18 budget, we are projecting revenues of \$356,509.

These revenues offset expenses incurred by providing full PSAP and dispatching services to the Town of Old Orchard Beach as well as PSAP services to the Town of Buxton. While there is a small profit margin, the real benefit to the Town of Scarborough lies in a larger workforce that allows for:

- reduced overtime
- absorption of staff increases driven by additional Scarborough call volume
- schedule flexibility to provide necessary training
- additional staff in the room at all times to deal with emergencies and situations of a larger nature

As we move forward, we feel that we do have some capacity to potentially provide additional services to another community. While we recognize this capacity, we also feel that is very important to stay within a manageable size. There are certainly economies of scale to be had by providing some services to a limited number of other communities. It is important, however, that we recognize that bigger is not always better. The real payback comes from maintaining a “right sized” center that allows for the benefits noted above, in conjunction with a high quality of service.

**EMS billing** In FY17 the EMS revenue budget calls for a transfer of \$ 800,000 to the general fund to partially offset the cost of providing EMS services. In the FY18 budget that projection increased to \$900,000. Additionally we maintain a balance in the rescue revenue reserve fund that is used to purchase new ambulances and major EMS equipment instead of borrowing money for those significant expenses as they occur.

**14. What are the implications of the expansion at Maine Med?**

Expansions at the Maine Medical campus as well as other medical and assisted living facilities has and will continue to impact calls for service volumes, but some of those expenses are offset by EMS billing revenues.

**15. Can we see an historical timeline of other town and school projects?**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Year Completed</b>
Fire Department Substations	1986-1988
Public Safety Building Expansion	1989
Public Library	1990
Town Hall	1992
Blue Point Elementary	1993
Eight Corners Elementary	1993
Pleasant Hill Elementary	1993
Middle School	1996
Dunstan Fire Station Renovation	1998
Black Point Fire Station Renovation	1999
High School Renovations	2005
Wentworth School	2014

**16. Was the existing building built for public safety?**

The original building was built in the early 1960's for the fire department replacing an older wood framed fire station. In 1968 the police department moved in from their previous location within the old Town Hall. In 1972 the first consolidated fire, police, EMS dispatch center was added and the facility has been a true public safety building since then. The most recent addition of a shared classroom and the police and dispatch areas on the south side of the facility, as well as the additional apparatus bay, day room, and bunk rooms on the fire side was completed in 1989, 28 years ago.

**17. What was involved with the site selection process?**

The process was driven by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) response area for the fire truck housed at the Oak Hill station. The ISO standards for response times and distances to addresses within this fire district were used to identify potential private and public sites that were large enough to accommodate the proposed facility. 12 sites were identified and were scored based on a matrix that contained 16 weighted scoring criteria ranging from lot size & program fit, to access, buildability, acquisition cost, communications, neighborhood impact, wetland mitigation, and several other criteria. The site of municipally owned land just west of Town Hall was by far the highest scoring site analyzed through this process.

**18. Does this proposal open up the discussion of in-town dispatch services?**

As the building committee worked through the space needs assessment portion of this project whether to include space for dispatch was a key decision that needed to be made early on. The Town Manager and Chiefs met with the Town Council in workshop session on 4/5/17 to discuss whether to explore outsourcing dispatch services or building space into the design process to maintain local dispatch services. The Town Council unanimously supported maintaining local dispatch and that space is included in the design of the new facility.

**19. What will happen with any bonded money that is left over from the project?**

Any monies borrowed in excess of need could either be used on a similar project - the similarity would need to be clear and strong - or be used to pay interest on the debt. Using money borrowed in excess of need to pay off principal is considered a "refunding" regulated by the IRS and SEC. It is not considered a realistic option.

**20. Are there plans to use current furniture and equipment in the new building?**

Generally the answer is no. Since this project has been in the planning stages for over ten years we have held off on all but essential maintenance, furniture, and fixture expenses so the vast majority of the current furniture is at or nearly at end of life. The exception to this is some of the specialized ergonomic dispatch consoles that we upgraded within the past few years as we took on contractual services for Old Orchard and Buxton. We are planning to reuse some of that equipment in the new facility and have budgeted accordingly. We will also likely be able to repurpose some of the current exercise equipment in the fitness center.

**21. Will communications be networked with town and school?**

Absolutely, the facility includes a central Network Operations Center (NOC) where all phone, radio, and computer network communications terminate. This center will be connected to the schools, town hall, and other municipal facilities and will also serve as a backup or redundant place for key IT infrastructure in case of a problem at one of the other facilities.

**22. Can we have clarification on the access roads?**

The evaluation matrix used during the site selection process considered a variety of factors as noted in a previous question. When this site was selected we knew access and egress were going to be issues due to the steep grade of Route 1 in this area and the busy intersections on either side of the facility. During the site plan work the civil engineer for the public safety building collaborated with another firm that is working on an analysis of the entire municipal campus to assure this project fits in with the rest of the campus and worked well from a pedestrian and traffic flow perspective. In the current design there is a new access road that runs between Durant Drive and Sawyer Road on the south side of the park that serves the access and emergency response needs of public safety, but also provides added value to memorial park and the municipal campus including additional parking and a new entrance into the lower parking lot at Town Hall. This added value, including some parking spaces near memorial park, is estimated to be in the range of \$ 230,000 above and beyond what would have been needed if we could access Route 1 directly from the public safety facility. That additional cost is included in the total budget for the public safety building.

**23. Why are Police and Fire spaces mixed together?**

One of the primary goals of the design of this building was to make it as efficient as possible. The Scarborough Public Safety departments have created a culture of mutual respect and routinely work hand in hand daily to serve the citizens of Scarborough. We took every opportunity possible to design common lobby areas and shared spaces so that we could operate as efficiently as possible while also recognizing our needs are different and we each need our own space. Examples include a shared classroom and conference room that can each be split in half as needed by each department separately, or opened to accommodate larger

groups or joint meetings and training sessions with both departments. We are also sharing fitness, administrative office, break, and rest room spaces whenever possible.

**24. Will the new location be safer with traffic?**

Yes, being further away from the Oak Hill intersection will eliminate the current gridlock that we fight on a daily basis when apparatus needs to respond, but traffic can't yield because the lanes are completely full beyond the ramp. The design of the new facility has apparatus responding via Sawyer Road with the assistance of a traffic preemption system to control the intersection lights rather than direct access onto Route 1.

**25. Will there be a fire pole?**

The current design does not include a fire pole. That was considered a want, not a need, and was eliminated early in the process. Fire poles also can also be a fall and injury hazard so standard, well-lit, stairways have been planned in lieu of fire poles.

**26. Will there be room for student live-in interns?**

Yes, one significant deficiency in the current public safety building is the lack of sufficient dorm space. Scarborough Fire was one of the founding departments of the Student Live-in Program nearly 30 years ago. We currently have 14 slots for student interns who provide critical staffing when not in school at the local community college earning their fire science or paramedic degrees. Because we have no available dorm space for students at the current Oak Hill fire station, those 14 students are split up between our other neighborhood stations. If we are successful with a new facility we have included dorm rooms specifically for student live-in firefighter interns so that our busiest station can benefit from that additional manpower like the other stations around town.

**27. How does this project compare in cost to the Wentworth School build and to the High School renovation?**

The Wentworth School total cost was \$35,570,203 in 2014. The High School renovation in 2005 cost \$28 million including \$1.5 million for the roadway to Memorial Park..

**28. How accurate is the cost estimate?**

The cost estimates presented at the time of the community dialogue were the most accurate estimates available based on average construction and other costs on that date. The consultant continues to work with their structural and civil engineers and a professional cost estimating firm to better refine those estimates based on our specific design and the real site conditions for this project. The town has also invested in some geotechnical borings to better define the extent of ledge and soil conditions so as to fine tune the site cost estimates as close as possible. We anticipate some minor revisions in the cost estimates will be available by the time the final report is presented to the Town Council in late July. That budget will also include an escalation factor to account for increases in materials and labor between now and the proposed time construction will actually take place in 2018-19 as well as a contingency amount to cover unanticipated expenses that may occur during the final design and construction phase.

**Comments:**

- Impressive design - fits in well with the design of the Town Hall
- Anecdotal community support for project
- The current building appears, from the outside, to meet our community's needs. People need to come inside to see the challenges
- The need for a new Public Safety building has been evident for a long time
- You need to get information out to the public
  - Put an ad in the 55+ newsletter
- It seems clear we need the space

- There is a large public meeting space
- \$20 million is a lot of money
- Building this will get more expensive if we put it off
- Retired citizens are concerned about the cost
- It is good to have more community space
- Skate park could stay where it is and put senior facilities in different locations more spread out
- This creates a Town campus
- Need to explain how the road was designed
- Leave the park alone and the memorial trees