

A special meeting of Newbury Township Trustees called to order at 7:00 p.m., June 30, 2021, with Bill Skomrock and Greg Tropf in attendance at the town hall, and Glen Quigley attending via Zoom.

Also in attendance were members of Newbury Volunteer Fire Department, Chief Ken Fagan, fire fighter Bill Meyers and fire fighter/paramedic Jeremy Sustar.

Mr. Skomrock opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Before getting to the main purpose of the meeting, the fiscal officer asked for the approval of the minutes from the regular trustees meeting on June 16, 2021. Mr. Quigley moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Tropf seconded the motion. Voice vote: Three ayes.

Purpose of the meeting was the exploration and discussion of paid staffing for the Fire Department and proposed addition to existing fire station. Invited to assist with the details of the discussion were Eric Pros from DS Architecture, and Eric Melkerson and Jon Ferrell with Infinity Construction.

Mr. Fagan gave background of the proposed addition. Both fire Department members and trustees have been discussing the future expansion of the station since 2019. Due to COVID, and the need to have a more concrete plan, the discussion was put on hold until earlier this spring.

Chief Fagan explained that the call volume is increasing. Volunteers are hard to find, and Newbury as a township has an increasing aging population. Under the current organization, first responders must leave their homes to travel to the station before they can respond to a call. Two out of three calls are rescue calls, where timely response can be critical.

By adding full time staffing, response times could be reduced. And in order to have full time staff, space needs to be added to accommodate them. Additional space will also benefit the safety of the firefighters.

The current station was built in 1989 with a look ahead of 25 years. It is now more than 32 years old and some of the facility needs to be brought up to current standards and codes. The proposed addition would have a look ahead of 30 years or more. The Fire Department is requesting a levy for both staffing and an addition. The levy could be reduced by resolution of the trustees once the station debt is paid off.

Mr. Fagan said that the Fire Department Building committee, asked for community engagement. Plans and drawings were submitted and revised based on several factors. Eric Pros from DS Architecture said that the building committee had given a draft of their needs and he had drawn up a revised plan based on costs and the public engagement. Mr. Pros presented his proposal. The plans include six sleeping rooms. Although that may be more than is immediately needed, in order to make this plan work for the next 30 years, they need to project for future needs. Mr. Melkerson from Infinity Construction concurred that the \$7,125 square foot addition, and interior alteration of the current station, would contribute to a 30 year lifecycle.

Costs presented in the plans are at an all time high, and although they can guarantee, they believe those costs will come down.

Mr. Quigley asked if the staffing and addition would improve the ISO rating for insurance purposes. Mr. Fagan explained that there are many factors that determine the ISO rating, but having enough staff would allow for staff time to complete reporting required to improve the rating. No new equipment is included in the proposal.

Range of probable cost for the \$7,125 square foot addition and the remodel/update of the current station was estimated to be between \$3,993,000 and \$4,200,000.

Discussion of ways to finance the project were discussed. Possible means are sale of bonds, which would require going through a Bond Agent. Also discussed is the potential of applying for a USDA loan. Integrity Construction is currently working with two rural entities. One has already received USDA financing and the other is in the process of applying. USDA loans typically have very low interest rates. They will give contact information to the trustees and fiscal officer to assist in their due diligence.

Mr. Trof asked if the Fire Department could provide their current budget and two years revenue and expenses. Specifically, Mr. Trof was interested in the revenue received from ambulance billing and their current cash balance.

Figures for staffing were discussed. Compensation and benefits were estimated. Proposed were three staff on site 24 hours, seven days a week. In order to retain staff after training, Insurance benefits would likely need to be offered.

The Fire Department members asked officially, if the trustees would place a levy on the ballot for November's general election. Trustees were not prepared to commit to placing a ballot issue on the ballot at the meeting that night. Mr. Trof said that he was open to the idea, but would like to see the Fire Department's revenue and expenses first.

Mr. Skomrock was not ready to vote for a resolution. Mr. Quigley generally agreed. Mr. Quigley moved to table the discussion until the next meeting. Mr. Skomrock seconded the motion.  
Voice vote: Three ayes.

Motion to adjourn was made at 9:15 PM by Mr. Skomrock and seconded by Mr. Trof. Meeting was adjourned by a unanimous affirmative vote.

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William Skomrock, Jr. - Chairman

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Glen Quigley - Vice Chairman

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Greg Trof - Trustee

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Beverly Sustar – Fiscal Officer