MOUNT HOREB
AREA PUBLIC SAFETY
November 8, 2016 Referendum • Please Vote!
FIRE | EMS | POLICE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why do we need a new public safety building?

Addressing the deficiencies at the current Fire Station and Police Station is long overdue. Both the Police and Fire Stations are no longer adequate to accommodate both the operational and space needs of the public safety personnel. Both buildings have exceeded the life expectancy, are deteriorating, and do not meet State and Federal Codes. The Fire Department is currently operating out of four additional buildings in the downtown area.

What are the advantages of a joint public safety building?

Creation of a joint Public Safety Building has many advantages. There is savings in the initial construction and land costs of over $1.2 million for each department. Shared spaces, which each department would need in individual buildings, include public entryways, lobby, restrooms, training room, conference room and exercise room. Mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection systems can also be combined, significantly reducing the long-term maintenance costs.

Where will the new Public Safety Building be located?

No land has been purchased for the proposed project. The Fire Department has an option to purchase a 4.3 acre site on Blue Mounds Street.

Why was the site on Blue Mounds Street selected?

An extensive evaluation of sites located in the Village of Mount Horeb was completed over the past three years. There were a minimal number of parcels that were suitable in size, location, and topography. The minimum site size for a combined building is 3 acres. The proposed joint building was laid over the site to ensure the buildable space was adequate. The location took into account response of volunteers to the station as well as response times to the entire 132 square mile fire department territory covering two villages and six townships.

Who will be building the Joint Public Safety Building?

A general contractor will be chosen through a pre-qualification and competitive bidding process in 2017 after Bray Architects completes a schematic design and final construction documents.

What is the cost of the new Public Safety Building?

The total cost proposed for the new Fire and EMS portion of the building is $8.4 million. The Mount Horeb Police Department portion is estimated at $6.1 million. The Village of Mount Horeb is assuming full cost for the Police Department portion of the building and the Police portion of the spaces shared by both departments. The Fire Department cost will be split based on equalized value in the same way MHAJFD requests the annual operating expenses now.

How was the size of the proposed building determined?

Since 2007 the Fire Station Building Committee has been working on planning the space needed. The 2013 Feasibility Study determined a needed area of 36,393 square feet. The Committee has worked hard to cut that number to 24,813 square feet with 7,541 square feet shared with the Police Department. The Fire Department has outgrown the existing station and four additional filled spaces in the downtown area totaling 15,200 square feet. The Police Department completed a feasibility study in 2014 and has finalized space needs based on current and future needs.

Is the proposed building expandable in the future?

Yes, the design layout will accommodate expansion but the Fire Department and Police Department do not foresee a need to expand the new building based on space programming that included forecasting future growth.

Why are there 96 parking stalls on the conceptual site plan?

The number of stalls on the conceptual plan is based on both an overlay of a potential building footprint on the lot and needs of the departments. Final plans still need to account for land elevation issues and drainage on the site. The Fire Department & EMS has 65 total members. Group training sessions are held in the evenings that bring a majority of members to the station. 6 interns will live full time at the new station and at different times of the day there are crew members, either full time staff in the office or volunteer members awaiting calls. Fire calls are "all call", bringing all available of the 65 members to the station. The police department has staff and visitors needing parking during all hours. The Fire Department also needs paved flat areas to use for training evolutions.

Has rehabilitation of the current buildings been considered?

Yes. The Fire Department feasibility study completed in 2013 included a facility assessment. "…an expansion or renovation to correct concerns outlined in the Space Needs Analysis section of this report will require upgrading the facility to meet current code requirements: including ADA considerations. Given the multiple grade levels within the building (which occurred due to site topography), the required modifications are not financially feasible. It is our recommendation that MHAJFD not consider allocating any funding for facility improvements other than those items in critical repair, or required to maintain current operations." Prices obtained by contractors to repair the current station and add sleeping rooms above the current meeting room are estimated at $2.8 million. This does not solve current space needs; the Intern Program would need to remain in the Main Street house; and rental of additional storage would need to continue in the downtown area. The Fire Department & EMS would also have to move out of the station while the repairs and code improvements are being completed. The projected repairs and addition would meet needs for less than 10 years. There are more costs to the Village of Mount Horeb to repair conditions at the Police Station.

What if this approval process for a new building does not pass?

Because of the approximate 5% annual increase in construction costs, if the referendum does not pass at the current amount the Committee does not see much success in asking at a higher amount. The space needs for the Fire Department has been fine-tuned over of the last several years and the whole of the space in the proposed structure will be used upon completion. There is no more cutting to be done on a building that would suit the departments for 40-50 years. Efforts will need to refocus on remodel and repair of the current structures, continue to house the internship program in the Main Street house, and look to build an addition with sleeping rooms above the current Fire Station meeting room. This addition would help with only one of the Fire Department's space needs, and would make the current meeting room smaller with required elevator and bathroom expansion.