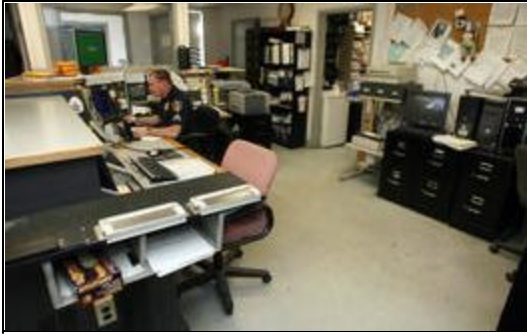


Maynard police outline cramped conditions



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Maynard -

The locker room on the second floor of the Maynard police station is a shabby place. The hardwood floor is worn a dense gray; the lockers look second-hand and the lights barely expel the shadows from the corners.

“This is our biggest problem,” said Chief James Corcoran, pushing open the door. “We have 20 or 25 people living out of this room.”

There are no showers, no place to sit down and the room is stuffy. It’s hardly an inviting place.

Imagine, Corcoran said, you plan on spending the next 25 to 30 years starting your workday in this room. The fear: Maynard will become a feeder for other departments, footing the bill to train and season th officer only to watch that person move on to a department with a nicer working environment.

“They would use us to go through the academy, then move on to a department with a state-of-the-art facility. This [police work] is a business now,” he said.

The police station on Summer Street has been home to Maynard’s officers since 1955. Its age shows at every turn.

Nothing is up to code. The building isn’t handicapped accessible, there’s insufficient electrical power to run the modern high tech equipment, pipes in that haunted house basement are wrapped in asbestos. Results of an air quality test are due back soon.

The basement feels like a movie set: Dim corridors, steel doors with “Pistol Range” stenciled on them; chicken-wire-framed storage lockers, low-hanging pipes, racks of uniform jackets, firefighters’ air tanks; gleaming, high-tech computer servers aligned near a hulking boiler which throws out a sick, heavy heat. Walking through a darkened room to the evidence locker, a visitor watches every step, half expecting Vincent Price to loom from behind the steel shelves shoved against the wall.

Across from that upstairs locker room is a storage area. It was a bathroom, but the urinal hasn’t worked in five years because the plumbing is bad, the toilet is the only functioning one on the second floor and the shower hasn’t worked in decades. All the space is taken up with gun cabinets, office supplies and records.

“In the past, when I was doing sexual assault investigations, I interviewed people, victims, in here,” Corcoran said.

The only other interview space is a tiny office off the dispatch area. Inside that same space are two computer terminals, three desks, the Breathalyzer machine, several printers, the department’s camera and other miscellaneous stuff. With three people standing, it’s hard to find space to turn around.

On May 21, voters will be asked to authorize a \$4.82 million override. Of that, the bulk will be used to renovate the former library near Town Hall, converting it too a new police station.

There are hazards everywhere at Maynard’s current building. When arrested, the suspects are

walked up the front steps, through the front door, into the dispatch area and manacled to the counter. In full view of the public and within reach of the 911 system, they are fingerprinted and photographed.

According to Sgt. Doug MacGlashing, if the prisoner starts getting loud, it can get hard to hear people calling 911.

"This is where they come to wash their hands after we fingerprint them," said officer Greg Balzotti, opening a small utility closet at the back of the room.

Crammed full of janitorial supplies and cabinets, it's far from ideal, he said. The cells, off to the right of dispatch, are tiny, airless rooms. There is no place to hold juveniles and when arrested, they will often end up waiting hours while the Maynard police look for a place that can hold them.

"It's like a dungeon in here," said Corcoran, looking down the small corridor in front of the cellblock.

With a dozen or more computers crammed into a small space, plus people, the two window air conditioners struggle to keep up. A door is propped open to the outside, allowing a bit of a breeze. In the winter, warming the cell area means baking the people upstairs.

"I wish we could have the whole town come through on a tour," Balzotti said. "This can't be put off any more, it's waited too long."