

Fire station need called 'urgent'

By Meghan Kelly/Staff Writer

Thu Feb 21, 2008, 06:42 AM EST

MAYNARD Plugging in more than one appliance knocks out the electricity. The best way to regulate the temperature is to open or close the windows. Not all of the radiators work. Sound like your first college apartment? Think again: It's the Maynard fire station.

Mike Smith, chairman of the Public Safety Committee, told the Board of Selectmen on Tuesday night the need for a new fire station is urgent.

Besides the building's electrical and heating problems, the pipes in the building are so old they cannot be repaired, because they crumble, said Smith, reading from a prepared statement.

There is no system to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning from the department's cars and trucks and if the department needs a new ladder truck in the future, it will need to be custom-made to fit within the existing equipment bay.

The committee has used the services of Greg Carrell, whose firm The Carrell Group designed the new police station, to draw up a design and cost estimate of a new fire station. Option 1, as Smith called it, would be to renovate the existing facility; Option 2 would be to build a new facility at a new location.

Smith said the committee determined Option 1 would not be feasible, as it would mean relocating the fire department while the renovations were done, which would ultimately end up being more expensive.

A final recommendation with budget estimates will be ready by mid-summer, said Smith. The process for bidding out design services alone will take a couple months, said Smith, before the committee can even begin to touch the estimated cost of the project.

Town Administrator John Curran said the town had submitted a request to Rep. Niki Tsongas for funds to build a new fire station. As part of the request, the town estimated the cost of a new fire station would be around \$7.3 million, which Smith said was high.

One aspect of the planning that could work in Maynard's favor has been the overwhelming response to the town's request for bids for constructing the new police station, said Smith. If a similar thing were to occur with the fire station, it could drive down the cost of the project, he said.

The committee's next step will be to meet with town agencies like the Department of Public Works to help vet possible sites for the fire station around town, said Smith. The committee has looked at a few sites, including near Rockland Avenue, at Clock Tower Place and between Taylor Road and Crowe Park, but have not looked at the sites in-depth.

"In a town like Maynard, there are only so many options," he said.

Selectmen Chairman Bill Cranshaw asked the committee to have budget numbers earlier in the summer for the Capital Planning Committee to put into its overall plan.

After the meeting, Smith said he remains hopeful Maynard taxpayers will realize the seriousness of the situation at the fire station.

As for the police station, construction will probably begin next month, said Smith. The original start date for the project was March 1, but the committee has pushed it back due to the large response for bids it has received so far.

This will not change the estimated completion date, which is Nov. 1, said Smith.

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