



**Listening Session Input  
June 15 & June 17, 2023  
Northwood Town Hall**

***How should the Town address the Challenge? What are your ideas, recommendations, and concerns? What additional information would you like to have about the facilities and facility needs?***

**June 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8pm Listening Session Notes**

*Comments recorded by Consultant Tom Morgan*

- Route 4 is a raceway.
- Consider converting the Narrows Station to DPW garage.
- Are we pursuing grants?
- Make sure that new fire stations have access to water.
- Utilize a Capital Reserve Fund.
- Develop some criteria before sending proposal to Town Meeting.
- Use the recreation field.
- Use the Johnson field that is situated off of Bow Lake Road.
- For security reasons, the fire and police stations ought to be separate.
- We should check out Farmington's new station.
- The fire stations should have showers and bunks.
- Personnel turnover rate is an issue, particularly for police.
- The Town needs to improve its communications, e.g. social media and mailers. Attend the annual meetings of the lake associations. Pleasant in late July. Bow in August. Jenness in early July.
- Table at the July 29 250 anniversary.
- Check out Safer grants for fire equipment.
- Need flashing signals on Route 4 where fire vehicles enter and exit.
- Something needs to be done about the dump.

- Recall that the police station used to be a post office. Building not well suited for police.
- No room to expand at Ridge and PD. 20-foot setback not observed.
- Hal answered inquiry about the Town's emergency shelter.
- Contract out fire and ambulance services.
- Review the CIP.
- Response time is very important. Compare response time under two scenarios: one fire station vs. two.
- What would be the useful life of new fire and police facilities?
- For fire stations, use a front door back door layout.
- Compare NW with Barrington and Epping.

*Comments recorded by Committee Member Dave Copeland*

- Make room for public works
- Adequate with one central station? No, need two. Do not put police with fire.
- Will Ridge be adequate if not staffed?
- Benchmark other towns: 1 vs 2; response times
- Expectation of useful life?
- What caused multiple locations?
- 2 better, but if 1, more central
- Drive-thru design
- Barrington and Epping similar population and near major highways
- Police separate entrance
- If split, area needed? Any savings?
- Away from neighbors so trucks can idle
- Narrows for Public Works or police station?
- Locate available funds
- Well and water system
- Cap reserve takes too long
- Have the departments define required specs
- Consider rec field? Easier to replace, and less strict regs
- Security
- Police station is a must
- Combine police/fire is a security problem
- Clean up facilities essential for fire station
- Publicize
- Staff turnover is a problem
- Needs should be publicized
- Look at similar towns and response times
- Regs for combined vs separate
- More communication – social media, mailings, Lions Club, Beanhold Bash
- Present at Lake Association meetings
- Fire staff can't clean clothes properly
- Entrance lights along Route 4

- Dump is a disaster – no bush burning, no glass ID, Bow & Bennett
- Don't forget the police
- At least this time, we are looking ahead
- Look at private land
- Planning Board regs
- Plan for 30 years; make it future proof
- Keep emergency management separate
- PR person needed
- Most people attended because of postcard
- Seek contributions from businesses
- Consider Impact Fee
- Placement – vs response time. If X, the Gulf

*Comments recorded by Committee Member Michael Moore*

- Public works in single facility?
- Coverage won't be adequate with single facility
- Other towns have 2 or more stations
- Life of facility
- A single fire station should be equidistant to everywhere
- How often are both stations used?
- Drive-thru design
- Access to 400 homes via other towns
- Barrington and Epping comparisons
- What is area requirement for police station?
- Proximity to neighbors
- Route 4 raceway – need 2 stations
- Use Narrows for public works and police
- Grant money available?
- Water source to refill trucks
- Capital reserve fund needed
- Possible locations
- Criteria for fire, police, and public works
- Use rec fields, then relocate rec
- Large field of Bow Lake Road – Johnson
- Regs for combined vs separate facilities
- Need new police station
- Showers & beds fire Fire to cleanup from toxic exposure
- Poor conditions lead to high turnover rate
- 4,600 people in Northwood
- Better communication
- Retain staff
- Light on route 4
- Separate facilities on smaller parcels of land

- Emergency shelter – currently school
- PR consultant
- CIP purchases

*Comments recorded by Consultant Liz Durfee (easel paper)*

One facility?

- Will public works be there too? Better coordination. Coverage not adequate with one station, two needed.
- What is the status at Ridge Station?
- Are there similar Town sites with one station?
- Will we benchmark towns that went from 2 to 1 station – change in response time?
- Longevity of building
- Some started with one, then added another
- One station needs to be equidistant. Two would be a better idea.
- How often are each station used?
- Buildings have front and back drive-in
- Issue of 400 homes accessed through Epsom and Deerfield
- Barrington & Epping comparable demographics
- Multiple buildings – area requirements?
- Disturbance from idling trucks
- 2 stations – Route 4 raceway
- Fire station on main (Narrows) would be good for DPW
- Couldn't put police in fire station without remodeling
- Grant \$ constraints
- Water source for fire
- Capital Reserve Fund takes time

Info to Gather?

- Are there any locations identified?
- Police & Fire need to identify criteria they need
- Large parcels that are Town-owned – rec ballfields
- What if the rec field were used and the rec field moved?
- Taken a while to get the facility running
- Bow Lake Road, close to Route 4. Sports field? Not Coe Brown's, but they use it. Believe owned by the Johnson family.
- Look at equivalent towns, Strafford, Epping, and compare response time
- Look into regs, i.e. distance from school.
- Farmington has combined
- Have regs changed? Security
- Not building police is no longer an option
- Separate facilities for security
- Amenities for department staff/volunteers
- What is the turnover rate of fire? Are facilities contributing to this?
- Each employee stays 2 years - \$ investment. How do we get that message to the Town.

- Can we do a mailing in September?
- More communication, e.g. social media, go to Lake association meetings, 250<sup>th</sup> celebration on July 29, Lyons Club
- Retaining staff- can we lose people without proper safety?
- Siting requirements – Traffic signals, DOT access. Should be able to have a light.
- What about the Dump, roads, there are so many issues to address.
- Police department needs attention. Had to renovate the P.O. Looking ahead now.
- Are there any large vacant buildings?
- Separate fire and police – More options for smaller lots vs. one large
- Who dispatches?
- Can't enlarge police station. Public info needs to say this. It doesn't meet setbacks.
- What do we have for emergency shelters? School, will have generator
- Invest in PR?
- Do you approach businesses for donations?
- Does the building department require anyone to contribute money when big projects (Impact Fees)?
- Would this facility be paid for by taxpayers?
- Response time – 1 vs 2 stations. If Northwood doesn't need to respond to Gulf Road development (400 buildings). Do taxes go down if we live on Gulf Road? Change boundary?
- Rather see connectivity to Blakes Road.
- Why don't we contract out Fire Department?
- Look at CIP – purchases of equipment.

## June 17<sup>th</sup>, 9-10:30am Listening Session Notes Error! Bookmark not defined.

### *Comments recorded by Consultant Tom Morgan*

- Insurance Class 10 to 9 - Need 5 road miles to a fire station
- More support for separate facilities than combined
- Include Public Works in the mix
- Put more emphasis on ambulance response
- Get facilities off of Route 4
- Is there enough space on the Town Hall parcel for a police station
- Communicate better
- Bardominium
- Farmington's station is foam & concrete, i.e. insulated concrete forms
- Aesthetics are important because it can instill pride
- Post these comments to website and posterboard
- Present: Mike, Kevin, Justin, Kirk and Dave
- Drive-thru buildings
- Turnover is a problem
- Pros & cons of various configurations
- Donations of land; grants

*Comments recorded by Committee Member Dave Copeland*

- Discussion on failed proposal; cost; didn't like combined facility
- Support for 2 stations, each end of town
- Accident on Route 4 blocks access
- 1 fire station a recipe for disaster
- Renovate vs new
- Guy from Hopkinton – enough space to expand
- Building on top of existing
- Ridge not a good option
- Need space for all equipment
- Police need a full basement, chair to retain suspects, privacy, sallyport and document storage
- Consensus on the need
- Other towns – one built on wetlands. Not good.
- Use police station land
- Proximity to route 4 a challenge
- Cost is a big factor
- Hopkinton just met codes and minimum standards; that helped sell it
- Take growth into account; Don't build too small; be able to add on
- 25 to 50 years – outlive the bond
- In 1980, Bedford was Northwood – ability to expand is important
- Transfer station?
- Think out of the Box
- Big \$ donor, name facility after them.
- Build on rec field; combine with public works; challenges of Gulf Road
- Build to allow upward expansion
- Everyone attended because of postcard
- What have surrounding towns done? Who likes what, and why?
- Get staff input.
- Cost of staff turnover

*Comments recorded by Committee Member Michael Moore*

- Reservations about combined facility
- Build one building at a time
- Don't buy land on Route 4
- Pros & cons of one building vs multiple
- Flashing light on Route 4
- Combined facility may be reason last proposal failed at Town Meeting
- Two fire stations, one at each end of town, and in case of mishap on Route 4
- 1 fire station would have a response time that is too great
- Hopkinton expanded existing station. It was cheaper than new one.
- Police need more room, basement, weapon storage, and prisoner separation
- Possible land behind current police station

- Need new police station
- Turn current police station into fire garage
- Police? doesn't have to be on Route 4 – need proper signage
- Right size, plan for future growth
- 25-50 years; outlive bond
- Look at population growth in master plan
- Ridge fire station replacement – nearby or east end of town
- Sell naming rights
- Check out grants
- Police station on Town Hall property? Or near schools for safety? Or inside Town Hall.
- Proactive land strategy
- What are the minimum requirements for PS & FS – future growth
- Among surrounding towns, who has renovated or replaced?

*Comments recorded by Consultant Liz Durfee (easel paper)*

- Combine police and fire?
- Reservations on police and fire in one building. Finish one at a time. Land not directly on Route 4. Cost of one site (drainage, utilities \$) DOT light, widening \$ to Town. Safer and fewer vehicles at one site.
- Have committee and chiefs look at pros & cons. FD needs to be strategically located. Not a huge savings in one building. Disadvantages related to safety.
- No flashing light at Ridge Station.
- In 2019, central facility on purchased land voted down. Space for one fire station. Square feet. Would have needed to keep another facility. Feedback – extravagant \$
- 2019 vote (cont) – safety complex & land purchase voted down. Combining police & fire may have been a factor in 2019 (safety, etc)
- 2 fire stations or one?
- Is there space to expand at either existing site?
- 2 stations seem necessary due to shape, size of town, volunteers getting there
- 2 stations easier for FD to get somewhere if mishap on route 4, back roads hard to navigate
- Too big of town for one station
- When do other towns help? Mark: mutual aid when there is a fire, all too small
- Cost? Renovate vs new building
- Hopkinton expanded footprint. Expand footprint at Narrows. Site big enough for equipment, etc. Wider cover – find lot that is big enough for storage.
- Police Station? Lack of full basement in existing. Need privacy, safe storage, records storage, vehicles need easy in and out.
- Committee: Police on 100 x 100 ft lot, 2.3 acre Town-owned lot adjacent to station, mostly high ground. 40 acre lot behind station. Need new station.
- Not in wet area.
- Combine fire & police, retrofit existing police for substation. Proximity to route 4 challenge – space, \$, access.

- How important is it for people to see the facility? (after it is built). Cost issue, could have signage -savings off route 4.
- Hopkinton put in what was minimally required by code – national requirements make it clear.
- What are the criteria, what's required? Townspeople need to know what is required. Visuals help people to understand.
- Wetland survey at site.
- Don't build too small.
- Lifespan? 25-50 years. Outlive the bond.
- What are current bond rates?
- Hal: Master Plan – population, linear growth
- Have ability to expand, find land that accommodates.
- What do we do with the Ridge? Donate to the school.
- Where to relocate? Around same area for access to east side. Police station south of Ridge.
- Make police a fire substation if feasible. Geographic center at Bow Lake Road & Route 4.
- New station location. Areas near transfer station that are developable. Hal: space limited, DPW constraints.
- Thinking outside the box. Get someone with \$ to donate and name building after them.
- Mark & Hal: Grants. Emergency management funds, past grant success.
- Land here (Town offices). Police facility could fit, could be safety issue.
- Benefit of having police near schools. Potentially near Town Hall too. Can design up here. Dry ground.
- Town offices also close to Bow Lake Road where lots of accidents
- Police used to be in basement.
- Concern at police station could be mitigated with proper infrastructure
- Put police station and town offices elsewhere
- Has Select Board been looking at finding land? Not yet. Need more consensus.
- Land near Hannaford.
- Need to be proactive in this market. Land west of police station, land to north owned by others.
- History of pond by police station? Access at 2.3 acre lot next to police? Triangle near storage facility could provide access. DOT restrictions.
- What are the minimum requirements?
- What does future growth need?
- In surrounding towns, who has recently renovated? Somersworth, Barrington, Farmington. Portsmouth combined model.
- Impact on staff retention.