

I would like to take this opportunity to update the community on the ongoing efforts to address potential facility needs in Milford. Back in the summer of 2008, the Board of Selectmen asked the Community Facilities Committee (CFC) to evaluate the space needs of our Fire, Ambulance, and Town Hall facilities. Over the past 18 months or so, the CFC has worked tirelessly to evaluate these needs and to return to the selectmen recommendations that would address these needs. The committee has produced a very thorough and informative report which can be found on the town's website. We encourage all residents to read this report and familiarize themselves with the issues.

The Board of Selectmen has now begun the process of evaluating the recommendations of the CFC to determine their feasibility, and to potentially bring a recommendation to the voters for their approval. Based on the committee's research and the alternatives presented, the board feels that the most efficient and cost effective approach to addressing these needs would be to build a shared Fire/Ambulance facility on property that is adjacent to the current Fire Station. This solution will address the Fire and Ambulance services' long term needs, while the newly freed up space that will result from vacating the current Ambulance facility in the basement of Town Hall will alleviate space/crowding issues in that building.

While this is the current plan, it is only the first step. Should this solution prove to be cost prohibitive, we may choose to go back and look at other alternatives. We have begun initial discussions with the affected property owners to gauge their level of interest and willingness to sell their property to the town. It is very important to understand that any potential agreements to purchase these properties **MUST** be brought before the voters for their approval. This board feels that it has an obligation to the taxpayers to do the necessary legwork and get agreements in writing (contingent on voter approval), stating actual land acquisition costs, prior to going to the voters for approval. Should the Board be able to obtain agreements at a fair price prior to the March 2010 voting, we may ask the voters for approval to purchase the land at that time. If the timing does not work out for us, then the decision will not be rushed. The important thing is to get a solid plan that is responsible, cost effective, and solves the needs of the affected departments.

Another important issue that is of concern to some people is the idea of a shared Fire/Ambulance Facility. I want to be very clear that the shared facility being proposed is just that, a shared **facility**. There are significant cost savings that can be achieved by building one building instead of two. Common areas, training rooms, decontamination equipment, etc., will not need to be duplicated. There would also be significant savings in maintenance costs (heating/cooling, utilities, janitorial, etc.) with a shared facility. I want to emphasize that there has not been, nor do we expect there to be, any discussions concerning merging the two departments organizationally. The intention here is to be fiscally responsible in the building of a facility. The Board, as well as the Town Administrator, recognizes the benefits that having separate organizations bring to the community and fully appreciates and values our volunteer personnel and the unique circumstances within which they work. We support the organizational structure as it exists today and expect that structure to continue going forward.

As we move forward, I would encourage anyone with any questions or comments to contact any one of the selectmen with their concerns.

For the Selectmen,

Tim Finan
Chairman, Milford Board of Selectmen