NEW CASTLE FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1 MODERNIZATION PLAN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Q: What is being proposed?

A: The Fire District has proposed building a 13,000-square-foot addition to the current fire station at 495 King Street in Chappaqua. This expansion would provide the Chappaqua Fire Department with the space to accommodate modern emergency apparatus and equipment as well as decontamination facilities. It will also ensure the safety and health of the volunteer firefighters.

Q: How long has the Fire District been studying the space needs of the fire station?

A: The Fire District has been studying the fire station space needs for nearly 20 years. Prior studies dating back to 2003 recommend additional bay space to accommodate future needs; drive through bays to accommodate 7 or 8 vehicles; adequate storage space; decontamination capability and bunking for up to 10 firefighters.

Q: What's wrong with the current fire station?

A: The current fire station, which was built in 1954 and expanded in 1979, is grossly inadequate to meet the legal requirements under the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Fire District's proposal is not what the Fire Commissioners WANT but rather what they are REQUIRED to provide under the law.

Q: What are those requirements?

A: OSHA requires that each employer shall furnish a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm. ADA requires that all fire stations comply with accessibility regulations or possibly face punitive damages associated with not following the letter of the law. The current firehouse does not meet these OSHA and ADA requirements and, as a result, exposes Chappaqua and its taxpaying residents to costly litigation in the event of a serious accident or death of a firefighter.

Q: What other issues need to be addressed in the new fire station design?

A: When materials burn, they release a number of carcinogens (cancer-causing agents) including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Firefighters may also encounter other known carcinogens such as asbestos and diesel exhaust. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), "the fire department shall provide for the cleaning of protective clothing and station/work uniforms by a fire department facility that is equipped to handle contaminated clothing. Fire departments shall provide facilities for disinfecting, cleaning, and storage in accordance with NFPA 1581, Standard on Fire Department Infection Control Program." The current fire station does not have NFPA compliant equipment for disinfecting, cleaning and storage.

Q: What other measures must be provided for decontamination?

A: There should be set aside an area in a fire station for the storage, cleaning and disinfecting of emergency medical equipment. This area must be physically separated by four walls from other fire station areas. To

comply with NFPA 1581 regulations, it is required to have a bathroom that can be accessed without passing from the chemically and biologically "hot" area of the apparatus bay to the "cold" area of the offices. The proposed new addition addresses these important health and safety issues.

Q: What other benefits are provided in the proposed addition.

A: There will be new equipment, turnout gear and hose storage areas; new maintenance rooms, as well as area for vehicle repair. There will be a new bunking area that meets FEMA safety and health guidelines of a minimum of 60 square feet of space per bed. There will be an elevator in the new addition to address ADA issues. A new mission control center and new offices will be included in the addition. The current office in the fire station isn't even wired for the internet!

Q: What about the size of the apparatus bay?

A: The current fire station bays are too small for today's larger and wider apparatus. A fire engine in the 1950s when the fire station was first built occupied 279 square feet of space. Today's fire engines occupy 712 square feet, more than 2 ½ times larger. A modern ladder apparatus occupies 912 square feet. The space between the modern apparatus and the current fire station is too narrow. A firefighter in gear can barely pass through the bay, creating a dangerous and potentially deadly situation. Studies recommend 8 feet between each piece of apparatus.

Q: How much will the expansion cost?

A: Currently, the total cost is approximately $15.2 million with construction to start November 2023. To reduce costs, the Board of Commissioners recently voted to not go forward with finishing the second floor of the addition interior which is saving $1,207,578. The savings of not going forward with renovation of existing space in the existing firehouse is $3,355,791. A referendum vote will be held April 25 to authorize the Fire District to borrow funds for the project.

Q: What if the project is delayed?

A: From 2016 to 2022, new construction costs increased by 34%. Even by eliminating the renovation of the existing fire station, the construction cost increase is 20%. Since the project was first studied in 2003, construction costs have more than doubled. The sooner this project begins, the better.

Q: Who is the architect of the project?

A: Mitchell Associates Architects has more than 40 years designing buildings and 30 years designing fire stations. They have designed 193 public safety projects, 331 facilities and 77 fire station renovation projects. Led by Bob Mitchell, the firm has a full-time staff dedicated solely to fire station and emergency facilities design.

Q: What are the health risks faced by today's firefighters?

A: Fires can release a wide range of dangerous toxins including benzene, asbestos, chloroform, soot, cadmium, trichlorethylene, arsenic and styrene to name a few. As a result of exposure to these and other chemicals, firefighters had a rate of mesothelioma two times greater than the U.S. population as a whole, according to a study by the U.S. Fire Administration and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Q: What other risks to health do firefighters face?

A: Firefighting is one of the most physically demanding occupations, requiring highly physical work in high temperatures in heavy protective gear. Nationally recognized firefighter fitness standards advise fire departments to establish and maintain a training and education program with a goal of preventing occupational deaths, injuries and illnesses. With the new addition, the fire department will have the space for these vitally important programs.

Q. What other benefits will the new addition provide?

A: Having a modern and fully compliant fire station will help attract more volunteers. According to the National Volunteer Fire Council, the number of firefighter volunteers has declined by about 12 percent since 1984, while call volume has tripled.

Q: What is the value to residents having a volunteer fire department?

A: New York State's nearly 100,000 volunteer firefighters save taxpayers $3.87 billion annually in salary and benefits and potential debt service, according to a financial impact study by the Firemen's Association of the State of New York. The New Castle Fire District No. 1 is having difficulty getting a sufficient number of volunteer firefighters. We would welcome anyone interested in being a volunteer firefighter.