

**MINUTES**  
**SELECT BOARD**  
**TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH**  
Tuesday, March 1st, 2022 – 5:00 PM  
1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

**Present:** Tyler Ward, Bill Taylor, Bill Kennedy

**Also Present:** Nicole MacStay, Ali Kreutz, Chief Walker, Lilli Gilligan

Budget Committee Members: Carl Mabbs-Zeno, Al Lenos, James Long, Ron McIntire, Richard Lesser, Rich Clark, Don Parkhurst, Mandy Sliver, Bob Lambert

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*This meeting was broadcast live on Ustream, YouTube, and Comcast Channel 22 and was recorded for posterity.*

Chair Ward opened the meeting at 5:00 PM.

*Non-Public Session Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3(b) (personnel)*

Chair Ward made a motion to enter non-public-session RSA 91-A:3(b) (personnel)

Roll Call Vote

Tyler Ward: Aye

Bill Taylor: Aye

Bill Kennedy: Aye

Chair Ward Made a motion to exit the non-public session at 5:17 PM.

Roll Call Vote

Tyler Ward: Aye

Bill Taylor: Aye

Bill Kennedy: Aye

Chair Ward made a motion to seal the minutes of the non-public session.

Mr. Kennedy seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

*Reconsideration of Town Building Masking Notice*

Chief Walker said that the Select Board had previously made a resolution and posted a notice requiring masks in all Town buildings following the increase of cases and hospitalizations after the emergence of the Omicron COVID variant. Since that time, hospitalization numbers have decreased, and the CDC has adjusted guidance. Governor Sununu recently announced that he was removing the masking mandate at all State facilities and public schools. Chief Walker's recommendation was to "get away" from the mandate, and encourage optional mask use and recommend vaccination. He emphasized that "people should not be attacked" for their decisions regarding masking.

Mr. Kennedy said Monadnock Community Hospital had come to the same conclusion, that masks should be optional.

Chair Ward asked for public comment. There was none.

*Motion:* Mr. Taylor made a motion to allow the Masking Notice to expire at midnight on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

*Vote:* Mr. Kennedy seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

*Vote of Authorization to Enter into a Drinking Water and Ground Water Trust Fund Grant Agreement with NH Department of Environmental Services – Cold Stone Springs Project*

Ms. MacStay explained the request was essentially a 're-authorization' to enter into a grant contract with the Drinking Water Groundwater Trust Fund. Construction costs have gone up for the project. Jaffrey is working

on additional grant from USEDA to support their share, and Peterborough was successful in getting an increased grant from Drinking Water Groundwater Trust Fund with many thanks owed to Rodney Bartlett.

*Motion:* Chair Ward made a motion to enter into a Drinking Water and Groundwater Trust Fund Grant Agreement with NH Department of Environmental Services to fund the water system improvement project and further to authorize Nicole MacStay to execute any documents that may be necessary to effectuate the grant agreement.

*Vote:* Mr. Taylor seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

### *SolSmart Designation*

Ms. MacStay said SolSmart is an “interesting program” that was previously looked at years ago, but did not make sense at the time, but would make good sense now.

Mr. Kennedy said it was on recommendation of the PREP Team that the program be reconsidered. PREP has offered their services to assist in moving the program forward.

Brian Field of PREP said SolSmart is free, and includes benefits such as making it more affordable for homes and businesses to install solar, improving financial returns, reducing local energy bills, and promoting local, well-paying jobs.

He said it’s a “simple, three-step process,” and the whole thing is funded by the Department of Energy, and would require somewhere between 2-10 hours of municipal staff time over 2-6 months. Free training is offered to planning, building, and zoning staff.

Mr. Kennedy said that on the SolSmart website there’s a map featuring Keene and Lebanon, and “it would be great to be on that map.”

From the audience, Loretta Laurenitis asked what it would mean to the homeowner. Mr. Field said the “soft costs” – costs of doing permitting - would decrease.

Mr. Taylor asked, “Who is SolSmart?”

Mr. Field said it was a government program, and funded by the Department of Energy.

*Motion:* Chair Ward made a motion to appoint to Mr. Kennedy to sign the SolSmart Program enrollment letter on behalf of the Select Board.

*Vote:* Mr. Taylor seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Chair Ward announced there would be two public hearings, the first of which would be on the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget, followed by the hearing for the Proposed Municipal Campus and Fire & Ambulance Facility.

Ms. Drachman asked what the Municipal Campus Public Hearing would entail.

Ms. MacStay answered that an overview of what would be covered by the bond article, and would speak “generally” about the facility and campus.

Ms. Laurenitis asked if there were any handouts, and said she was interested in design pictures – she asked if the options the Municipal Campus Task Force reviewed would be made public.

Ms. MacStay said there weren’t any handouts, and said what would be presented was the conceptual design, and no actual design was yet available.

Ms. Drachman asked if renewable components of the new municipal campus will be discussed.

Ms. MacStay said it would be touched on very briefly this evening.

Chair Ward called a recess at 5:45 PM.

## **Joint Select Board & Budget Committee Meeting**

Select Board Chair Tyler Ward opened the Joint Select Board and Budget Committee Meeting at 6:00 PM, and introduced the present members of the Budget Committee: Budget Committee Chair Carl Mabbs-Zeno, Don Parkhurst, Al Lenos, Jim Long Richard Lesser, Ron McIntire, Mandy Sliver, Rich Clark, and Bob Lambert.

*Vote to Approve Joint Select Board/Budget Committee Meeting Minutes of February 1st, 2022*

*Motion:* Chair Ward made a motion to approve the Select Board Minutes of February 1st, 2022.

*Vote:* Mr. Kennedy seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Ms. MacStay reviewed the agenda and explained the process for the public hearing.

*Public Hearing on Proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Budget*

Ms. MacStay reviewed the changes to how the Budget is being presented, including:

- Budgets are organized under the Department Director who is presenting them
- Salaries, COLA and Merit are being moved to each employee's primary department, unless they are split across funds
- Revolving & Special Revenue Funds which are supported by user fees (Recreation, Ambulance, etc.) were presented with the entire budget but will not be included in Article 3
- Enterprise Funds (Water & Sewer) will still be part of Article 3
- Capital reserve and expendable trust funds will no longer be included as offsetting revenue or budgeted expenditures

She continued that Budget-wide impacts include:

- Health Insurance 2.8%
- NH Retirement System –no increase for FY '23
- Northeast Consumer Price Index (Oct. 21)–5.4%
- Merit and COLA –combined 4.6% included in the budgets
- No longer budgeting for veteran's credits, blind & elderly exemptions
- Electricity costs are expected to go up dramatically –budgeted increase of 30%
- Northeast Consumer Price Index is now more than 7%

Ms. MacStay said she really appreciated the work of the Department Heads in putting budgets together.

She touched on the details that impacted the departmental budgets including:

- Administration – Includes \$50,000 in funding for new assessing database as current software, which we've had for more than 10 years is "on its last legs."
- Planning and Building - MAST grant for \$30,000 for visioning and engineering in the Downtown.
- Town Clerk – Increases are almost exclusively due to three elections to be held this year.
- IT/GIS - Particularly effected by change in the way salaries are distributed, and also high cost for software and security licensing to the tune of \$75,000.
- Finance – Removed credits and exemptions and refinanced bonds.
- Recreation - Salaries are now being properly distributed between General Fund and Revolving Fund.
- Library - Many unknowns regarding operation costs for the building, so FY2023 will be a benchmark year
- Police – Eliminated licensing cost for cellphone data capturing software, and were able to complete in-house video system.
- PFR - \$50,000 transfer was removed.
- DPW - Tree maintenance program being supported by Downtown TIF. Contracted services for mowing of downtown parks.
- Recycling – Includes purchase of \$28,000 glass crusher, which will be offset by Reclamation Trust Fund.
- Post closure landfill monitoring costs (for EMS and Scott Mitchel Landfill) and \$100,000 request for South Peterborough TIF engineering that will be fully offset by TIF funds.

Ms. MacStay said total gross expenditure for proposed FY2023 Budget is \$13,666,781 or a difference of -\$44,504 from FY2022

For Revolving and Special Revenue Funds, the difference from FY2022 and proposed FY2023 is 1.74% increase, or \$275,008.

Mr. Taylor said the Select Board and Budget Committee had been reviewing the numbers since last November/December.

Chair Ward said he agreed with Ms. MacStay's assessment of the good work done by Department Heads.

Mr. Kennedy said surrounding towns are looking at increases significantly higher than Peterborough. Ms. MacStay said Department Directors have been "very careful and very conservative."

Budget Committee Chair Carl Mabbs-Zeno said, "things have worked very well this year."

Mr. Lambert noted there were about 20 people congregated outside the Select Board Room, in which almost every seat was full.

Mr. Lenos asked what part is covered by taxes.

Ms. MacStay said it's "very difficult" to estimate revenues right now.

Mrs. Gilligan said estimates for General Fund revenue is \$3,813,116 and Water and Sewer are fully covered by fees. She said revenues are recalculated and submitted to the DRA on September 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

From the audience, Shane Sigmund asked, projection-wise, how does that compare to previous years? Ms. MacStay said she didn't have the number in front of her, "but it's not far off" from last year.

Chair Ward closed the public hearing at 6:19 PM.

#### *Ambulance Service Revolving Fund*

Ms. MacStay said she wanted to address the Ambulance Service Revolving Fund article. She said the Ambulance Service Revolving Fund supports two services: the 911 Emergency Service and the Interfacility Patient Transfers (started in 2014, and has been very successful).

911 Emergency Service makes up 55% of expenditures and 45% of revenues, and Interfacility Patient Transfers makes up 45% of expenditures and 55% of revenues. The 911 Emergency Service also includes regional towns who we bill for their share of the shortfall between the cost of 911 service and the fees it takes in. Peterborough's share of the costs to run the 911 service has been primarily supported by the profits from the Transfer service. She said that this year we will be asking voters to fully support the cost of Peterborough's share of the 911 service with tax dollars.

A breakdown of the related calculations were displayed on the projector and Ms. MacStay said, for the 911 side, FY 2022 budgeted expenditures are \$994,640, and anticipated fees are \$513,541.86, resulting in a shortfall of \$481,098.14.

She explained how the 911 service charges are calculated using a blended formula, with half based on town population and other half is total of 911 calls from each town. Other communities are also charged an administrative fee and assumption of risk fee.

She then reviewed 911 Shared Services going back to FY2016, which indicated expenditures have been increasing while revenue has remained relatively flat. Cost of service has steadily increased.

She then reviewed the Ambulance Fund year over year, FY 2016-2021, which indicated revenues are "slowly but steadily declining." During COVID, there was massive increase in expenditures and severe decrease in revenue, which depleted the Fund Balance. From 2016-2021 the ending fund balance plummeted. She said the taxpayers saved the Ambulance Service: "We would have had to close the doors otherwise."

She continued that it was known even before COVID that funding was something that needed to be addressed, and then COVID resulted in crisis for the Ambulance Service. In order to avoid this happening again, “it’s time for Peterborough to start paying their share.”

Ms. MacStay displayed per capita costs of surrounding towns and towns with similar population, which were provided by Deputy Chief Matt Roblee. In FY 2023, should it pass, the cost would be \$48.33 per person for Peterborough (population: 6,716).

Mr. Lesser asked if we would be looking at a similar number a year from now.  
Ms. MacStay said yes, most likely.

Mr. Lenos asked if we should be building up the Fund with additional monies.  
Ms. MacStay said she felt doing this would be “doing enough to protect ourselves” and would build up the fund in a responsible way.

Mr. Lenos asked if there was a sense for how much the pandemic impacted the service and if any government money was or is available.  
Ms. MacStay said the Town took advantage of some funds (like the CARES Act), and there is also money that the Select Board accepted back in August. It cannot go towards fund balance, but could be earmarked towards the Municipal Campus.

From the audience, Leslie Lewis said there was a business plan put together for the Transfer Service when it was started, and she asked if a new plan had been put together.  
Ms. MacStay said “the challenge is, there really isn’t competition.” She said private businesses are dropping out because there’s no more money to made in the service. The 911 side is struggling, but the transfer program is doing pretty well.

Mr. Lesser asked if there were concerns of surrounding towns dropping out.  
Ms. MacStay said she felt they were overall satisfied with the service we provide, which is “top-notch” and greatly improves quality of life in this region. She said Greenfield did move out and went to Wilton-Lyndeborough, but Temple went from Wilton-Lyndeborough to Peterborough, so it was kind of a wash.

Mr. Taylor thanked Ms. MacStay for her presentation.

#### *Public Hearing on the Proposed Municipal Campus and Fire & Ambulance Facility*

Ms. MacStay provided background on the project and said all studies are available for the public to review at [Peterboroughprojects.info](http://Peterboroughprojects.info). She said that many committees have worked on the municipal facilities question, and have reported out on the needs and best location. Past work has included:

- 2004 –Master Plan Steering Committee “Evans Flats Land Use Analysis”
- 2005 –Weller & Michal “Peterborough Municipal Facilities Needs and Feasibility Study”
- 2008 –Master Plan Steering Committee Municipal Facility needs Report
- 2013 –Master Plan Municipal Facilities chapter

Over and over, the studies concluded that the Fire and Ambulance Facility should be relocated to Evans Flats. In 2018, Town Meeting voted in favor of a municipal facilities review for the design, cost estimate and construction drawings of a new Highway Garage adjacent to the wastewater treatment facility on Water Street for the 2019 Town Meeting. For the Public Works Facility, three options were reviewed:  
New facility on Water Street – est. \$3.6 million  
Retrofit SDE Building – purchase \$2.995 million, renovation cost unknown, loss of tax revenue  
Renovate facility on Elm Street – est. \$2.5 million

Two public information sessions were held, and the Select Board voted unanimously to support renovating the Highway Garage at its current location on Elm Street. \$2.5 million bond passed at Town Meeting.

She continued that, between 2019 and 2020 Town meetings, the Town contacted the Harris Center for Conservation Education about availability of land between Community Center and Route 101. The Harris Center reported that it understands the Town's right to take this land and that it is willing to work with the Town to provide for public safety and to enhance conservation values. With Harris Center permission, dug test pits and concluded that the site will provide enough buildable area to locate Fire & Ambulance Facility. As a result, work was paused on the Highway Garage renovation to allow for shared efficiencies in the new campus design – cold storage location, site design, utilities layout, etc.

At 2020 Town Meeting, the \$200,000 article passed to fund the conceptual design and cost estimates for the new Fire & Ambulance Facility on the Municipal Campus off of Elm Street. The goal was to have a design and cost estimates ready for the 2021 Town Meeting, but, due to the circumstances of 2020, we are still in process of moving this from concept to final design. The Municipal Task Force established that the designs for the new PFR facility and Municipal Campus needed to improve safety for both staff and the public; be sustainable in order to keep the Town on track to meet the 2021 Town Meeting goal of 100% renewable energy by 2030; and be laid out in such a way that would potentially allow for the Police Department to move off of Grove Street in the future. HKT Architects was ultimately chosen to provide the design. Ms. MacStay then introduced Janet Slemenda from HKT Architects.

Ms. Slemenda provided insight into the process involved. She said the biggest challenge is to create operational sound apparatus floor and support spaces to support Fire Department mission; employee work and living areas; administration; public meeting/training/emergency operations center; and communications and building support.

She said 'user groups' were considered due to the mixed use of the area with the identified need for separation and protection of people. Related to that is the need for site circulation, to allow for separation of emergency service, public works, and pedestrian vehicles. They also looked into site improvements (stormwater management, wetlands buffer, invasive species) and public use of outdoor spaces.

Ms. Slemenda then described the factors that make up total project costs.

She explained the difference between 'hard' construction costs, which are the "brick and mortar" elements, including the two-story building and utilities as well as physical site work like earthwork, pavement and walkways, landscaping, etc. and 'soft' construction costs, which include architectural, engineering, legal, testing and inspections, communications, and moving costs.

They also had to consider owner's contingency and escalation & market conditions – Prices have gone up dramatically and have affected construction, and due to the needed process, construction wouldn't start for more than a year.

For the building itself, there would be a single-story apparatus area, and two-story building would house the rest. HKT had to consider the building would be subjected to 24-hour use; plan for future expansion; include room for emergency generator; and meet all relevant codes and requirements.

She continued that they are "not building a house," and the building would require 18-inch-thick masonry, steel frame roofing, and continuous air vapor barrier and insulation (now required by code).

The apparatus area is designed to minimize and contain harmful contaminants, and the layout must allow for easy movement and access to equipment. Due to the weight of the vehicles, the floors have to be 8-inches thick to handle weight of the trucks, and the ceiling height would need to be 20 feet to accommodate the large trucks. The office and staff living areas are more standard, but designed to allow for access to apparatus floor as quickly as possible. The rooftops would be designed to allow for solar array or green roof.

Slemenda said the total cost, as provided by a professional cost estimator, based on the concept plan is \$22,344,649. Renewable energy options could increase the cost by another \$500,000 - \$800,000.

Mr. Taylor asked if any of the two-story area would be used for the Police Department.

Ms. Slemenda answered that it was only for the Fire & Rescue Service. A new building, if added, would be constructed behind the PFR building.

She explained that the hard costs of the Fire/Ambulance building were estimated at \$13,500,000, and related site work estimated at \$1,446,300. Work pertaining to Community Center and DPW site would be \$1,117,400 and design, engineering and other soft costs (at 25%) were estimated at \$4,015,933. Escalation (\$1,461,799) was factored in at 7% - She said normally it runs about 3.8-4%, but has gone as high as 10% in the last 2 years.

Ms. MacStay said the current language for related bond calls for \$23,344,649, but work will be ongoing to refine that number, so it's fully expected that there will be a motion to amend that warrant article in May. She said it was a "careful" estimate, but has already started to come down - the estimate was \$26.4 million when discussed a few weeks ago.

Mr. Lesser asked if the number included the renewable energy options, and MacStay confirmed, and said it included \$800,000.

Ms. MacStay added that one of the criteria was to improve the wetlands that will be taken from the Harris Center. There is currently zero storm water mitigation, so storm water run-off runs through the site, untreated, into the wetlands. There would be significant improvements in wetlands buffer, and also in the overall look and character of the site. She said the concept was "very thoughtful" about how public would access both the Community Center and Fire Station, and she felt the Municipal Task Force and Ms. Slemenda and her team did "an incredible job".

Mr. Kennedy asked about the cost per square foot. Ms. Slemenda answered that it was \$450 for just the building.

Mr. Kennedy asked if it was premature to consider improvements around the Community Center, when there were separate improvements that were being considered (referring to the Community Center building evaluation).

Ms. MacStay said that the Community Center improvements (resulting from the evaluation) would be within the building, and not around it, and with the conceptual design, they are seeking to improve access to, and use of, that building, which is heavily-used at present.

Mr. Clark asked how many square feet the current station is, and asked how the 30,000 square feet for the new place was figured. Chief Walker said they currently have about 6,800 square feet. He said 30,000 is the "gross figure," and it was established through the programmatic study. Ms. Slemenda added that Programming suggested the building about be 34,000 square feet, but it had been "whittled down" for efficiency.

Chief Walker said the final design "may very well shrink" and Ms. Slemenda confirmed.

Mr. Clark said his "only concern was the price tag."

Mr. McIntire recommended the language of the article be changed to "sum up to" rather than "sum of." He continued that he understands the need, but has "concerns about how we're going about it," and asked what the increase in the debt load will be annually.

Ms. MacStay said it would depend on the interest rate.

Mr. McIntire said he had already looked into it, and on \$25 million, there would be a 2.4% interest rate for NH Bond Bank. For 25 years at that rate, the annual repayment would be \$1.3 million annually. Current repayment is \$1.8 million, so it would go up to \$3.1 million. He said, "All of this is happening without the involvement of the CIP, and I don't think we're given them an opportunity to weigh in on this and make recommendations." He asked if we have actual construction documents that we could put out to bid.

Ms. MacStay said it actually has been through CIP - They toured the facility and agreed there is a definitely need. "It's expensive - there's no question" but everyone who has been involved would say it's not going to get any cheaper. She added that it was not a matter of putting the cart before the horse, as municipal governments don't have the opportunity to do the study, to go out to bid, and then wait a year to go to town

meeting. She noted that there's no way to get a special town meeting, because a judge would not consider it an emergency.

Regarding the wording of the article, Ms. MacStay said the Bond Council determines language, which has to be very specific, but she would look into it. She continued that, should Peterborough get some funding, it can be applied to offset costs, and we're "going to apply for everything we possibly can to offset these costs."

Mr. McIntire asked how the Municipal Task Force members were appointed, and how many times they met. Chief Walker said members were Select Board-appointed, meetings were publicly noticed, and they met seven times since their first meeting.

Ms. MacStay said the Select Board appointed "stake-holders" and listed the members:

Valerie Jenkins, CIP Committee	Alan Zeller, Citizen-at-large
Peter LaRoche, Zoning Board of Adjustment	Lundsted, Conservation Commission
Colin Murdough, Heritage Commission	Beth Alpaugh-Côté, Master Plan Steering Committee
Rob Fox & Kate Coon, Recreation Committee	Ed Walker, Chief of Fire Department
Jon Hampson, Fire Department	Nicole MacStay, Town Administrator
Sarah Steinberg Heller, Planning Board	Seth MacLean, DPW Director
Bill Kennedy, Select Board	Danica Melone, Town Planner
Rich Clark, Budget Committee	
Roland Patten, Citizen-at-large	

Budget Committee Chair Carl Mabbs-Zeno said there's been "some excellent presentations over the years," and they've looked different almost every time. He said this was the first time he had seen the presentation and felt it was premature to expect the Budget Committee to be able to make a recommendation. He asked if the programmatic study Chief Walker mentioned was available for the Budget Committee to review. Chief Walker said all those documents were available. He added that is not reasonable to compare the programmatic study to the current building PFR is in now, which was never meant to be a fire station.

Chair Mabbs-Zeno said he felt review of the programmatic study would be the best way for the Budget Committee to establish an informed opinion.

Chief Walker said he would defer to the Select Board, but he thought the intention in designating the stakeholder members of the Municipal Task Force was to ensure the relevant committees would be aware of the process. The programmatic studies were discussed in those meetings, and minutes are available on the website. He emphasized that the process "was done in full transparency."

Chair Mabbs-Zeno said there are a number of questions that may or may not be answered by the study, and several issues have been raised. He said, "it may be that everything is fine" and he trusts the people involved and thinks they've been "very responsible" but his role as a member of the Budget Committee is that he recommends it "based on what I know, not on who I trust." He said he needs documents in front of him.

Mr. Long asked how the size and scope of the design compared to other Towns.

Ms. MacStay said "they tried to stay focused on what the Service needs," so the projects of other towns were not considered.

Mr. Long said he agreed with Chair Mabbs-Zeno in that they could not come to a decision on the same night of seeing the presentation for the first time.

Mr. Lenos said he would question the 8-inch floors to a degree.

Ms. Slemenda said she's involved in the construction of two fire stations presently, and they both have 8-inch floor.

Mr. Lenos said he was interested in comparing recently built stations in other Towns to the design. He said he wanted to know more about the drainage for the flat roof, and wanted to know what future costs might be



potentially for expansion on the site - Would be another bond involved if the Police Department is constructed there?

Ms. MacStay confirmed.

Mr. Lenos said there are many other details he would be interested in.

Ms. MacStay said it's "still very much a conceptual plan," and there was the need to figure out what could fit onto the site, which is "incredibly tight and difficult...we can't copy and paste a building from another community onto that location." The benefits of moving it out of the downtown were considered as well. The Town could sell the old building, which could potentially become mixed use residential/commercial space. She continued that the Task Force settled on conceptual design very recently, and Ms. Slemenda applied basic costs. All requested documents could be provided for review by the Budget Committee, but everything is compressed by Town Meeting schedule, and if we want to get something ready to go and have something go out to bid in fall/early winter, "we need to get to work."

She suggested the Budget Committee could make a vote to recommend moving the bond to warrant, and then make a vote on the floor at Town Meeting whether or not to recommend the project – it would be another opportunity for the Budget Committee to consider the project.

Budget Committee Chair Carl Mabbs-Zeno said he would like to see more detail and the programmatic study, and suggested that the Committee meet again and vote before Town Meeting whether they should recommend.

Ms. MacStay said March 15<sup>th</sup> would work.

Ms. Sliver said she had a question on "the campus as a whole" and said that last year a study was authorized for coming up with a total for Community Center renovations, and a bond was voted for several years ago for renovations for DPW building, and neither of those things have happened. She asked when estimates for that work would be known, because the Fire Station was only one-third of the campus.

Ms. MacStay said architects are looking at Community Center presently, and a \$2.5 million bond for DPW was passed but has not been drawn yet, as they were waiting to see what the layout of the campus would look like.

Ms. Sliver asked if \$2.5 million would be enough.

Ms. MacStay said it was unlikely to be enough for a "complete reconstruction" but the work that needs to get done there could get done for that amount.

Mr. MacLean agreed.

Mr. Lambert asked if it would be on the Ballot or at Town Meeting, and said he wanted it to be on the ballot.

Ms. MacStay said it couldn't be on the ballot, as Town Charter requires bond articles be addressed at Open Session.

Mr. McIntire said he wanted to know the impact on the tax service.

Ms. MacStay said she would look into it.

Ms. MacStay asked for consensus from the Budget Committee regarding moving the Vote to Recommend to a future meeting, to be held on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 6:00 PM.

Show of hands indicated unanimous in support for meeting again on March 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Lenos asked for clarification about what circumstances would allow for Special Town Meeting.

Ms. MacStay explained that Special Town Meetings that involve raising money have to go through a judge for approval, who will only grant if they feel it is an emergency.

Mr. Taylor said he thought the layout of the conceptual would make it difficult to see from the street if there was available parking in the Community Center parking lot (to be located between the Community Center

and the Fire Station). He said he thought it made more sense that people be able to drive in a horseshoe shape. He was concerned about the amount of work that might be needed at the Community Center, and said, "the worst part is that the fire department is getting thrown under the bus, but it's the biggest need in the entire town." He continued it was "hard to swallow" there might be a \$1.3 million addition to the budget, and recommending it to people to support it is difficult when "we don't even know if that's the price." He said, "right now I recommend it, but this conversation makes me want to pass out."

From the audience, Joseph Cox said his taxes went up 20% last year and \$23 million "would drive him out of town."

From the audience, Leslie Lewis said the transparent cost would include the Community Center, DPW Facility, and Police Department. She asked if there were plans to bring dispatch into the building. Chief Walker said, "that's not the intention at this time."

She then urged the Budget Committee and Select Board to "read the room" and consider if now was the right time to double the debt load.

From the audience, Shane Sigmund said he agreed a new fire department was needed, but it would be worth it to investigate what other towns have done for less money. He said it needs to be reasonable for the population to be served, and "not a wish list of the best of everything." He said, "it doesn't seem like something that we can sustained."

Ms. MacStay said it had previously been brought to the Select Board's attention that Northampton was building a station, so she had inquired further. She found that Northampton only had 4 full-time staff at any given time and they rely on mutual aid responses from neighboring towns, so they have far fewer fire trucks and don't have a paramedic-level ambulance. Our closest neighbors with comparable fire service are Keene and Milford so we don't have immediately adjacent communities who could provide mutual aid.

Peterborough provides ambulance services to five communities in total. A lot of those other communities that are able to build smaller stations train their staff at other facilities, and we train our staff at our own facilities. When you look at the services that Peterborough is providing, you start to see "it's not apples to apples."

Mr. Sigmund said he knew the current station was "defunct" and "deficient" and a new facility was needed, but "are there houses burning down that we're not responding to in time?...Do we need to go this next level?"

Ms. MacStay said, "we're trying to meet the needs of our current operation" and explained that there are millions of dollars' worth of equipment and vehicles can't be properly maintained due lack of space, and the Fire Station is currently in the flood plain. Overnight paramedics sleep in what was once a conference space immediately off of the apparatus floor. She said the only reason the needs of the services communities are being met is due to the dedication of the staff, and "they're in a really tough facility" and implored Mr. Sigmund to reach out to the Fire Department and take a tour.

Mr. Taylor said, "you should go see it, it is horrifying." He said the recommendation is taking NFPA standards into account: "It's not just picking out the best of everything."

Mr. Parkhurst said the amount of equipment should be considered, and you have to consider what will be needed as the town grows over the next fifty years.

From the audience, Ms. Laurenitis said she felt like there hasn't been any public input until this meeting and "if you want to sell this to the community, you have to allow for more public input."

Mr. Taylor said, "everybody was invited to those meetings."

Chief Walker said there were several public information sessions, including one at the Community Center back in July, and throughout the process there have been multiple opportunities for public input.

Ms. Laurenitis asked, "isn't this the first time the public is seeing what the design is?"

Chief Walker answered that said the design is based on input received from the public via the public hearings, Task Force meetings, and the Programmatic study.

Ms. Laurenitis said she thought the cost of the Cold Springs Project had gone up by \$2.7 million. Ms. MacStay said that it was fully grant-funded up the level approved at Town Meeting, and there was no need to increase the amount of that bond. She said the focus of this part of the meeting was the bond for the Municipal Campus.

Sarah Steinberg-Heller, who is on the Municipal Campus Task Force as well as the Planning Board, said it was abundantly clear that it was going to be expensive, and everyone agrees there needs to be a new fire department. She said people “need to care *before* the price tag” and was disappointed that people only start to care when there is a price tag involved. She implored the group: “Please think before you pull back the foot and kick this can down the road again. This is really important.”

From the audience, Paul Tebow said he had been part of the Fire Department for 29 years, and “at some point we need to look at health and safety of people living at the Fire Station”. He said the current living conditions mean men and women are sleeping in the same areas with only semi-privacy. He said he owns three properties in town and pays taxes on them, but the responders “put their lives on the line, all the time.” He continued that it’s a “healthy conversation to have right now...but the can needs to stop being kicked.”

Mr. Clark said \$16 million was the acceptable number. “When we got into this, it wasn’t supposed to be a burden to the Town...it’s too much.”

From the audience, Ivy Vann said we need to house what we currently have for equipment, vehicles, and staff adequately – “We’re standing with one foot on the boat and one foot on the dock and we have got to move.” She added that she would love that part of town to look better and, referring to an earlier comment by Mr. Clark about the cost of landscaping, said she would commit to buying a tree to be planted at the new Fire Station.

Ms. Nelson asked if the presentation would be available for residents to view. MacStay said it will be on the [peterboroughprojects.info](http://peterboroughprojects.info) page, and the presentation will be included on the Town website on the page with minutes and recorded videos.

From the audience, West Peterborough resident Tom Dardas, a former member of the department, said he had been in EMS for 34 years and Peterborough is a “very unique spot” in EMS. The fire response population is Peterborough and Sharon, and the ambulance population is 13,500. He said Peterborough is capable of providing necessities to the served communities that other EMS services can’t provide. He explained why the number of current emergency vehicles are needed, and noted that currently there’s always an ambulance parked outside the Fire Station because there’s no room to park them all inside. He shared that there’s only two bathrooms, one for men and one for women, and there’s only one shower in each bathroom, so after returning from a fire, responders are going home to shower, still covered in contaminants. He said, “it’s a scary number” but if you cut back, you are going to spend more money later. He also added that the further the traffic entrances to the Community Center and the Fire Department were separated, “the safer it’s going to be for everybody,” and said he thought the conceptual plan “was one of the best he had seen.”

Mr. Taylor said, “everybody is in agreement” that a new fire station is necessary, and “nobody wants to say no to it...there’s no doubt about the need.”

Jon Sawyer, a firefighter since 1978, shared that there are 25-30 staff members are gathered or watching and he wanted to recognize them “because they’ve had a horrendous last couple years.” There was applause from the audience, Select Board, and Budget Committee.

Mr. Sawyer acknowledged that “they’ve never gotten this far before” in getting a new fire station, and thanked everyone in the room. He continued that, according to Town Reports, when the fire department moved into the current facility they had 43 calls a year, and now they have 2,900 calls a year. “The taxpayers have asked us to do this mission.”

From the audience, Laura Gingras, who works at Monadnock Community Hospital, said, "we are so lucky we have such an incredible service in this town" and explained how EMS works with emergency hospital staff to determine the best care for the patient. She said "residents are lucky we have that caliber of folks" responding to emergencies, and it's something that should be valued.

Ms. Nelson asked if there would be detailed breakdown of the cost before Town Meeting.  
Ms. MacStay confirmed.

Ms. Steinberg Heller said (the vote) is up to the residents, but the Select Board and Budget Committee can make the choice to recommend the article to the voters, "which does have power."

Mr. Lesser said, "if we do approve this, we have to sell it to the Town, and I would feel much more comfortable... asking if it was a 20,000 square foot plan. What would we lose by doing that?"  
Ms. MacStay said she "wished we had the time to consider three different scenarios" but that wasn't an option due to limited time before Town Meeting.  
Chief Walker added that the programmatic study goes back to square footage, and what it comes down to is what space is eliminated and how does that impact the ability of PFR to provide their services: "What programmatic part of our job do you no longer wish us to do?"

Chair Ward said he'd seen a trend where apparatus are getting smaller and asked if that was considered.  
Chief Walker said the short answer is there is the ability to economize, "but it comes down to what level of service needs to be provided and how do we provide it."

Chair Ward closed the public hearing.

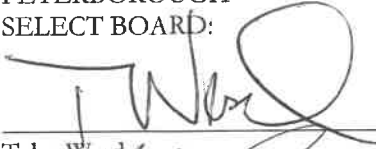

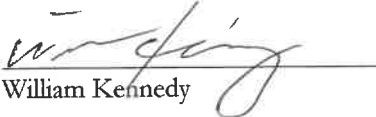
Ms. MacStay asked about the possibility of moving Votes to Recommend to next meeting on March 15th.  
Chair Ward asked for a show of hands from those who wished to continue the meeting and finish tonight.  
There were no hands.  
Votes to Recommend will take place on Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.

*Motion:* Mr. Lesser made a motion to adjourn at 8:46 PM.

*Vote:* Ms. Sliver seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Alison Kreutz, Assistant to the Town Administrator

PETERBOROUGH  
SELECT BOARD:

  
Tyler Ward  
Bill Taylor  
William Kennedy