

# Town of Pepperell Building Committee Report

November 16, 2020

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Building Committee Charge & Membership

The nine member Town of Pepperell (Town) Building Committee was appointed by the Board of Selectmen to review conditions of all its buildings and in particular the police station, both fire stations, the DPW Highway facility, the Peter Fitzpatrick School, and the Town Hall. There are extensive deferred maintenance in each location and determining whether to repair, renovate, or replace these properties requires effort and advice from across the community. The Committee is made up of citizens and staff members who have one year appointments.

The current Building Committee includes the following:

- Citizen Representatives: Joseph LoBuono, Seth Bourgeois, Catherine Lundeen (chair), and David Querze
- Capital Program Committee: Taya Dixon Mullane (clerk)
- Town of Pepperell Staff: Fire Chief Brian Borneman. Police Chief David Scott, Communications Department Rep. David Stairs, and Facilities Department Representative & Town Administrator Andrew MacLean.

### 1.2 Town Building Facilities

The Town owns 44 structure or buildings with an insurance value of approximately \$54 million.

- Twenty-five (25) of these structures are associated with the water, waste water and transfer station facilities
- Seven (7) facilities are associated with the Senior Center, Parks, Recreation and the Cemetery Departments
- Five (5) facilities support the Department of Public Works
- Four (4) are facilities of the public safety departments including the Police Station, Jersey Street and Park Street Fire Stations and the Repeater Site Communications Towers
- Three (3) buildings make up the remaining facilities including the Town Hall, Library and Peter Fitzpatrick School Building (currently leased to a third-party)

### 1.3 Building Committee Recommendation

Based upon the Ranking Criteria for Evaluation of Capital Needs developed by the Capital Program Committee for renewal/replacement needs of Town building facilities in February 2020, the Police Station and Fire Stations were identified as having the most immediate need for renewal. This determination is largely due to the facilities exceeding their lifespan, poor or inoperable condition, limited possibility for repair to extend life, higher risk of a safety issue, and higher potential for functional deficit of the program should failure occur.

## 2.0 Public Safety Facilities

### 2.1 Police Department

#### 2.1.1 Existing Facility

The Pepperell Police Department (PPD) is located in the former Clara M. Shattuck Elementary School. Constructed in 1893, the building was converted into the Pepperell Police Department headquarters in 1988. Designed by the architectural firm of Gay and Proctor, the approximately 16,000 GSF building (not including the attic) is situated on a 43,560 GSF lot with 292 feet of frontage at 57-59 Main Street. The assessed value of the building is \$1,240,800.

The building is located in the Commercial zoning district and the Sewer Overlay district. The site is defined by the Assessor as a Government parcel (23-157-0), and an Institutional land use. The southwest corner of the building is located within a special flood hazard area. The southern edge of the site is also within a regulatory floodway, and a portion is within an area of 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard. Varnum Brook is situated along the southern edge of the property within a below-grade culvert. The Shattuck School is located within the Mill Village – Babbitasset Village Area, an area included in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. The building appears eligible to meet criteria A and C for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places for its association with the development of the educational system in Pepperell and as a good example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture in the Town.

The site accommodates 22 surface parking spaces for department vehicles, personnel vehicles, and public parking. Accessible from Main Street via a U-shaped driveway, the site is largely paved with a greenspace along the roadway. A large metal storage container is located at the rear of the building which abuts a large grass field.

The basement, first and second floors are occupied by the PPD, including the Communications Department. The building is a rectangular shaped, brick building with a hip roof and mostly original wood windows. The basement and second floors are not handicapped accessible. The first floor is elevated several feet above grade. There is no current structural assessment of the building. However, structural reinforcement was added to the southeast corner of the building in the mechanical room to support the first floor which was found to be deficient during the mold remediation project in 20XX.

The basement has concrete floors, exposed, painted masonry walls and painted ceilings. The first floor, accessible from a ramp on the west side of the building and an internal wheelchair lift, contains an accessible public restroom. The first and second floors are accessed via two sets of wood stairs enclosed within stairhalls with fire doors. Floor finishes are wood, tile and carpet throughout, and walls are largely painted pressed tin or drywall above beadboard, some of which has been removed and replaced several years ago as a result of mold. Original chalkboards remain in many of the former classrooms, and most windows and doors have original decorative wood casings. Painted, pressed tin ceilings remain throughout the majority of the building. Two enclosed staircases provide access to the attic level.

The building is heated by a natural gas fired boiler, located in the southeast basement mechanical room, and fan coils throughout the building. A new chilled water system and water heater are also

situated in this mechanical room. The 120/208V main electrical service is located in the north mechanical room in the basement which also houses the main fire alarm panel. The building is fully sprinkled and served by the fire protection main entering at the north mechanical room. The building is served by town water and sewer.

### 2.1.2 Existing Program

The basement, first and second floors are occupied by the PPD, including the Communications Department. The basement level contains a two-bay heated garage, mechanical room, IT room, holding cells, intake area, lab and evidence room, and storage. The basement is not handicapped accessible. The first floor, accessible from a ramp on the west side of the building and an internal wheelchair lift, contains offices, an accessible public restroom, personnel locker rooms, and the communications headquarters. The second floor includes meeting rooms, offices and a personnel workout room. There are no restrooms on the second floor.

The PPD consists of approximately twenty-five (25) full-time equivalent employees. The building contains three conference/meeting rooms, two interior parking spaces, three evidence-related spaces, two locker rooms (including shower, restroom facilities and a changing area), nine offices or workstations, seven program-dedicated spaces (ie. detention cells, booking room), and four support spaces (ie. storage, supply closet). PPD does not require sleeping quarters or full cooking facilities.

### 2.1.3 Existing Facility Deficiencies

Designed as a multi-story educational building, the facility is not well suited as a modern police department. Deficiencies described below are intended to identify significant items identified by the Building Committee, and are not an exhaustive evaluation of the building deficiencies. The 1988 adaptive reuse project was envisioned as a multi-phase undertaking to convert the school building to serve as the police department. As a result of only the first phase of the project being completed, the building struggles to support the police department operations. No documented hazardous materials are known within the building, however, given the age of the building construction materials such as tile mastic, window caulking and pipe insulation may contain asbestos, and painted surfaces are likely to contain lead.

The building has limited accessibility to the disabled. The building has no elevator which significantly limits access to the building. Due to the elevated first floor, wheelchair access is provided via an exterior ramp on the west side of the building to an interior mechanical lift to traverse the interior first floor steps. The lift has experienced multiple failures, and while it provides access, a variance is required as it remains a barrier to access. Access to the basement, while possible, requires assistance to step up to the main floor level from the garage. There is no barrier free access to the second floor or the attic. It is not clear if all first floor facilities, doors, etc. meet accessibility codes as defined by the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB).

While the site does not present significant issues for PPD operations other than lack of adequate parking, the building presents the greatest impediments to operations. Situated on the unpopulated basement floor, the three detention cells must be monitored by PPD officers when occupied requiring expenditures for overtime. The building has no shower facilities for detainees, and lacks a matron/juvenile soft cell. Furthermore, the location of the basement booking area is

undesirable as it contains the fingerprint machine, equipment also utilized by the public for certain firearm permits. The building also has limited space and environmental controls for lab and evidence processing and storage. While the building contains two basement garage spaces, it lacks sufficient space for vehicle and maintenance storage and has no impound bay. Furthermore, secure storage for materials such as road signs and sawhorses is relegated to the untampered, outside storage container.

The roll call room also serves as the break room for officers, and the locker rooms are undersized to meet the personnel needs. The male locker room totals 300SF and the female locker room totals 138SF, where 500SF and 250SF are required respectively. Administrative support staff have significantly limited space and are not always in the optimal location for adjacencies to critical staff. Office spaces for personnel are undersized and located in sub-optimal locations, some without outside ventilation, and others in shared spaces. The Communications Department including dispatch, 911 equipment and office space is all shared in a limited space of 723SF. The building lacks accessible space for community meeting areas and personnel training. In addition, although the building has a gym/weight room, the facilities are limited and are situated on the inaccessible second floor.

#### 2.1.4 Current and Future Programmatic Needs

In compliance with MAAB, it is recommended that public buildings be accessible to the disabled. As such, PPD desires to have a facility that is fully accessible to the public. Staffing levels are expected to increase slightly over the next several decades, and office, conference/meeting rooms and support spaces should be right-sized and to support the current programmatic needs of the department. Locker room facilities should be right sized, and publically accessible restroom facilities provided.

Appropriate detention cells, booking areas, juvenile areas, surveillance, and shower facilities should be provided to meet current needs. In addition, mechanical systems with environmental controls to support lab facilities and evidence storage are needed. Separation of dispatch and 911 and associated IT equipment should be provided. Training space/community room spaces are also needed to support public safety needs.

### 2.2 Pepperell Fire Department

#### 2.2.1 Existing Facility

The Pepperell Fire Department is served by two stations – Park Street and Jersey Street Stations.

##### 2.2.1.1 Park Street Fire Station

The one-story Park Street Fire Station (aka Station Two) is located at 38 Park Street. Constructed in 1979, the purpose-built building was designed by architect Douglas G. Prescott. The approximately 4,700 GSF building is situated on a 63,441 GSF lot with XXX feet of frontage. The assessed value of the building is \$569,400.

The building is located in the Town Residence zoning district and the Sewer Overlay district. The site is defined by the Assessor as a Government parcel (14-159-0), and an Institutional land use. The building is located in an area of minimal flood hazard. The Park Street Fire Station is a non-

contributing building in the Pepperell Center Historic District, a district listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The site is predominately paved and has ten defined parking spaces. Access is from Park Street with vehicular access to both sides of the building. The building consists of a two-bay garage section and a fire department headquarters facility. Two overhead garage doors are situated on each side of the garage section of the building. The building is handicapped accessible. There are no known structural deficiencies associated with the building, and there is no current structural assessment of the building. The floor is a poured, reinforced concrete pad that is exposed in the garage and tile-covered in the headquarters. The peaked roof building is constructed of concrete block. The walls are predominately painted concrete block, and the ceiling is a suspended tile. Windows are vinyl replacement sash.

The building is heated by a natural gas fired furnace, located in the east mechanical room, supplying forced hot air through ducts in the attic. The 120/208V main electrical service is located in the chief's office which also houses the main fire alarm panel. The building has no fire protection system. The building is served by town water and sewer.

#### 2.2.1.2 Jersey Street Station - Existing Facility

The Jersey Street Fire Station (aka Station Three) is located at 47 Lowell Road. Constructed in 19XX, the 48'x50' steel frame north section was designed by \_\_\_\_\_ as a Mass Electric Garage. The 48'x50' south section, constructed in 1997, was designed by \_\_\_\_\_ to serve as additional garage space for the Pepperell Fire Department. The approximately 4,285 GSF building is situated on a 78,408 GSF lot with XXX feet of frontage. The assessed value of the building is \$404,200.

The building is located in the Suburban Residence zoning district, the Sewer Overlay district and the Aquifer-Watershed Protection Zone. The site is defined by the Assessor as a Government parcel (14-159-0), and an Institutional land use. The building is located in an area of minimal flood hazard.

The site accommodates 15 surface parking spaces for department vehicles, personnel vehicles, and public parking. Accessible from Lowell Road via the shared driveway with the Department of Public Works (DPW), situated south of the fire station, the site is largely paved with a greenspace along the roadway with a fire department memorial. A large metal storage container is located at the south side of the building.

The building is a single-story, high-bay garage space. Each section of the building has three bays served by overhead garage doors facing west. The building is handicapped accessible. There are no known structural deficiencies associated with the building, and there is no current structural assessment of the building. The floor is a poured, reinforced concrete pad. The walls and ceiling are metal with exposed steel structure. A small lounge space is located on the second level of the small enclosed space at the northeast corner of the south section above a storage room and restroom. A single level equipment storage room is located at the southeast corner of the north section.

The building is heated by ceiling hung, natural gas forced hot air heaters in each garage section. The 120/208V main electrical service is located in the south section adjacent to the main fire alarm

panel. The building is has no fire protection system. The building is served by town water and sewer.

## 2.2.2 Existing Program

The PFD has daily representation of a full-time fire chief, one full-time firefighter/paramedic, one per diem EM, and one part-time administrative assistant. The PFD maintains four full-time and three per diem paramedics. PFD has two deputy-fire chiefs, three captains, and five lieutenant EMT/firefighters. The PFD is arranged in two stations. Station 2 includes one captain, two lieutenants, seven firefighters, and three EMT/firefighters. Station 3 includes one captain, two lieutenants, two firefighters, and five EMT/firefighters. (Note: Station 1, aka Foster Street Fire Station, no longer exists.)

### 2.2.2.1 Park Street Fire Station

The Park Street Fire Station serves as the headquarters for the PFD. The garage section houses one engine, a tanker truck, and the PFDs two ambulances. In the headquarters section, an office for the fire chief, the PFD communications center and administrative assistant workstations are present. The space also provides a single-bed sleeping quarters, a small kitchen, two locker rooms (one is out of service), and the mechanical room. A large open, multi-purpose space serves as the dining area, community space, meeting room and fire chief's plan review area.

### 2.2.2.2 Jersey Street Fire Station

The Jersey Street Fire Station has no full-time, on-site personnel. The facility is utilized by on call fire fighters. The building houses four engines, the ladder truck, a boat and trailer, an off-road vehicle (trailer housed outside), a flood light and support equipment including hoses, etc. The small lounge space on the second floor of the south section houses several sofas and a computer station. An industrial grade washing machine to launder protective equipment is located in an abandoned restroom in the north section.

## 2.2.3 Existing Facility Deficiencies

### 2.2.3.1 Park Street

The Park Street Fire Station lacks a fire protection system to support a garage space and headquarters. The size of the garage is limiting options for acquiring equipment. Presently, apparatus must be parked in such close proximity that there is only inches between the rear of the vehicles in each bay and close to the building walls. The building lacks adequate sleeping quarters for personnel, and the chief's office is too small to support maintaining the department and building records, daily activities, and plan review for building projects. The kitchen is extremely aged and inadequate, and the day room lacks space and has no meeting room. One locker room is off-line and the remaining space is aged.

### 2.2.3.2 Jersey Street

The Jersey Street Fire Station lacks a fire protection system to support a garage space. The building has no cooling (with the exception of a window unit in the second floor lounge space). It lacks all

personnel facilities beyond the use as a fire station garage. The building has no washing system or mechanical garage area to service the apparatus.

#### 2.2.4 Current and Future Programmatic Needs

In compliance with the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB), it is recommended that public buildings be accessible to the disabled. As such, PFD desires to have facilities that are fully accessible to the public. Staffing levels are not expected to increase over the next several decades, however, spaces should be right-sized to support the current programmatic needs of the department. Locker room facilities should be right sized, and publically accessible restroom facilities provided.

The current facilities do not meet the current needs for garage space, work space, offices, training spaces and storage. It is anticipated that a new ambulance should be purchased within the next several years, and current space limitations at Park Street will limit the options for replacement. In addition, dormitory space for three staff in four shifts is anticipated. Surge space for up to 16 personnel is also recommended in the event of an emergency situation (ie. blizzard, flood, etc). To support the department, adequate locker room facilities are needed for up to 30 personnel as well as decontamination/shower equipment, and training space for up to 50 people is desired. Adequate office space for the chief, fire prevention, administrative assistant, officers and EMS to write reports is needed. Adequate storage for plans/records, equipment and supplies is also needed. Support spaces including adequate kitchen facilities and a day room are needed.

### 2.4 Repeater Site Communications Towers

#### 2.4.1 Existing Facility

#### 2.4.2 Existing Program

#### 2.4.3 Existing Facility Deficiencies

#### 2.4.4 Current and Future Programmatic Needs

### 2.5 Conclusion

Upon review of the existing conditions of police and fire facilities and their current and future programmatic needs, the Building Committee has determined the facilities lack adequate space and have inadequate MEP FA/FP services to meet the current and future needs of the public safety departments for the Town.

### 3.0 Options for Public Safety Facilities

Although the PPD and PFD have operated within separate facilities historically, co-locating these two public safety departments is recommended by the Building Committee. The co-location of these departments will provide shared use of spaces where appropriate, reduce facility operating costs, and strengthen communications on a daily basis and during emergencies.

#### 3.1 Potential Site Locations

##### 3.1.1 Site Selection Parameters

**Zoning:** Fire and Police Stations are allowed in all zoning districts with various minimum lot sizes, and all districts, with the exception of the Mixed Use Overlay District (60 feet), have a maximum building height of 35 feet (however exceptions allowed by Planning Board approval in the Urban Residence and Commercial districts). It is preferable to locate a new public safety complex outside of areas prone to flooding.

**Proximity to Town Center:** In an effort to maintain reasonable private property owner insurance rates, locating public safety facilities in proximity to occupied structures is preferred. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) Rating is an independent, for-profit organization that scores fire departments against its standards to determine property insurance cost, and assigns Public Protection Classification (PPC) on a scale of 1-10 (Class 1 being the best). Pepperell has a PPC of XXXX.

**Proximity to Major Roadways:** To maintain and improve response times in emergencies, it is preferable to locate public safety departments in proximity to major roadways in town. By locating on major roadways, apparatus and personnel can easily access the public safety apparatus, and apparatus can quickly deploy to all parts of the community. Furthermore, major roadways are the first streets cleared during weather-related emergencies making access easier for public safety apparatus.

**Maintain Coverage:** The Town is traversed by the Nashua River, creating a natural barrier in the event of an emergency. Should the river reach such a stage as to overtake the vehicular bridges that cross the body of water, a public safety presence is recommended on both sides of the town. As such, the PFD recommends maintaining one fire department headquarters with the primary apparatus garage and one fire department substation within the town to ensure 24/7 coverage. In the event of a weather-related emergency, apparatus and personnel would be pre-deployed to provide coverage to both sides of the Town.

#### 3.2 Property Type

##### 3.2.2.1 Town-owned Property

Utilizing property already under the ownership of the Town will avoid the cost to acquire a site, and will not result in lowering the tax levy by removing a parcel from the tax rolls. Due to the limited additional site area at the PPD, the Main Street site is unsuitable for a public safety complex. The Park Street Fire Station site is also too small to accommodate the apparatus garage required to support the PFD and PPD. The Jersey Street Fire Station site is adjacent to the DPW facility and may have sufficient space to support additional garage bays and a public safety headquarters for



both departments. Other town-owned property may also be eligible for site selection upon further review of their site constraints.

#### 3.2.2.2 Privately-owned Property

Privately owned property could be an option for a new public safety complex. A careful analysis of sites meeting the criteria for site selection described in this report is recommended. The cost of acquiring a new site should also be factored into the analysis.

## **4.0 Recommendations to Town Meeting**

### **4.1 Construct New Public Safety Complex**

The Building Committee recommends the Town construct a new public safety complex to meet the current and future needs of the PPD and PFD. Following evaluation of the existing departments and facilities by a qualified architectural/engineering firm, a building program should be executed to satisfy the programmatic needs of both departments, and where possible provide shared facilities to support both programs to maximize usable square footage and minimize overall project costs and long-term operating costs.

As part of any approach to a public safety complex, the reuse and/or disposal by the Town of all existing buildings must be part of the project. Notably, if any existing buildings are retained for use by either department, the project must include the renewal scope to continue to serve their intended purpose. Furthermore, should the buildings be retired from their current use and the Town seek to dispose of them, the buildings must be maintained while unused (at a minimum mothballing) until such a time as they are disposed of by the Town. Disposal of the property must be part of any new public safety project to ensure the structures do not deteriorate and will be reused.

### **4.2 Request Funding from Town Meeting to Solicit Proposals to Conduct Feasibility Study for New Public Safety Complex**

The Building Committee recommends the Town engage in a feasibility and concept design effort to include, at a minimum, the following scope:

- Study of existing conditions and programmatic needs of fire and police departments
- Conduct site evaluation of town-owned and private properties
- Develop concept design for site and building layout
- Develop recommendations for existing building renewal scope and/or disposal
- Provide order of magnitude cost estimates for concept design, renewal of existing buildings, and mothballing and/or disposal of properties