Update on Fire Station Project

Progress:

The Town Board has agreed to peruse the Fire / EMS building project differently than what was previously done in the past. The goals set forward by the Town Board are as follows

1) Approach the Fire / EMS building project with budget as a top priority.
2) Focus on keeping the community informed about the project and updates.
3) Allow the electors to vote on the building project at a specific budget, prior to investing substantial funds into final construction and specification bid documents.
4) Focus on local subcontractor participation in bidding process by bidding each division of work. (Excavation, Electrical, Plumbing, etc.)

The goals discussed for the new facility are:

1) Create adequate administration space.
2) Increase size of Apparatus Bay to store all equipment safely in a single location.
3) Create sufficient storage space to meet current needs.
4) Allow facility to act as EOC. (Town Emergency Operations Center)
5) Increase security at building access points.

Existing Conditions:

The Freedom Fire Department are currently housed in the Fire Station connected to the Town hall and the original Town Fire Station next door. Due to inadequate space, the Fire Department is required to utilize the original Town Fire Station which was built in 1956. The existing building was constructed in 1980.

The existing facilities were designed to house a smaller staff and less equipment. Although this did provide necessary space at the time, the current staff and equipment requirements have rendered this space inadequate. The lack of space has created inefficiencies for staff and congestion in the apparatus bay.

Safety Issues

- Equipment must be pulled onto Hwy S blocking traffic and potentially putting staff, passer bys, or equipment at risk when responding to or returning from a call.
- First Responders may have to park down the street due to low allocated parking stalls.
- Maintenance work cannot safely take place in existing facility due to cramped conditions
- No allocated decontamination area for staff, equipment, or infected clothing can be cleaned properly.

Inefficiencies

- Equipment must be moved and rearranged for specific calls due to cramped conditions therefore increasing response time.
- Future fire / EMS required equipment purchases are put on hold indefinitely until more space is available.
- Town does not have a designated Emergency Operations Center for disasters. (Municipalities designate Fire Stations as the ideal location)
- Standard procedures must be modified or not done due to inadequate space.
- Continuing Education for Fire & EMS can only be done when Equipment is removed from Apparatus Bay and chairs & tables are set up in the garage.
- Inadequate space to provide in-house training for CPR, First Aid, and other EMS requirements.

Public Meetings and Timeline

May 5, 2019– Building Committee Meeting

- Committee to do research on what types of cost savings options SEH Architect could provide
- Reach out to Fox Structures for assistance with design and budgeting.

May 8, 2019– Building Committee Meeting

- Review what SEH Architect had provided regarding plans and cost saving measures.
- Look at next steps with Fox Structures and if it would need board approval.
- Review bid documents from SEH Architect.

June 5, 2019– Building Committee Meeting

- Discussion of Fire / EMS building
- Open public comments

June 24, 2019 – Building Committee Meeting

- Discussion of comparable costs to Greenville.
- Discussed SEH Architect proposal to provide different concept plans for the Township.
- Action to approve max cost of $5,400 to contract with SEH Architect to revise existing Fire / EMS plans to cut costs out of project. Vote 6 yes – 3 no, approved.

June 24, 2019 – Town Board Meeting

- Vote to approve Building Committee Recommendation of a max cost of $5,400 to contract with SEH Architect to revise existing Fire / EMS plans to cut costs out of project. Vote 0 yes – 5 no unanimous Not Approved.

August 20, 2019 – Building Committee Meeting

- The Fire / EMS Building Committee invited Keller Inc. to give a presentation regarding their process for a municipal building solution.
- The Building Committee moved to approve a recommendation for the Town Board to move forward with Keller regarding their process for a new Fire / EMS Building. Vote 8 yes – 1 no, approved.

August 28, 2019 – Town Board Meeting

- The Town Board to approve moving forward with Keller Inc. on design of the future Fire / EMS Station Project. Vote 5 yes – 0 no, unanimously approved.
    - Next Steps
        - Keller Inc. to interview Fire & EMS and develop a Needs Assessment.
        - Town Board to develop a budget for the building project.
        - Town Board to gather information on future building site selection.

September 25, 2019 – Town Board Meeting

- Town Board discussed the following items listed below. After reviewing the Needs Assessment, the Town Board instructed Keller to move to the next step of designing preliminary plans. Keller was instructed by the Town Board to design the building on the sites next to the existing Town Hall.
    - Needs Assessment Results
        - Budget estimate regarding the Needs Assessment
    - Town Board Budget for Building Project – "Town Board still working on it"
    - Town Board discussion on site selection for Building Project.

October 15, 2019 – Building Committee Meeting to include Town Board

- The Town Board joined the building committee to discuss the site plan and floor plan Keller would present. The goal of the meeting was to determine if the site next to the Town Hall was feasible for a Fire Station. Overall discussion indicated without adequate additional parking, future expansion, outdoor training area, and no future room for a training tower this site appears to be a bad fit.

- Fire Station project budget was discussed and the following items were determined.
  - The $400,000 cost of SEH plans would be rolled into this project cost
  - Impact per tax payer were determined by the board.
    - $4,000,000 project cost would increase taxes on a $200,000 home an approximate amount of $98 per year.
- Next Steps
  - Town Board to select a site by November 1st.
  - Town Board to set Building Committee next Meeting.
  - Town Board to set two Community Engagement Meetings.
  - Keller to work with Fire & EMS on Community Engagement Meetings.

FUTURE

October 25, 2019 – Town Board Meeting

- *The Town Board to discuss the following items at this meeting*
  - *Town Board to select a site by November 1st.*
  - *Town Board to better understand the TID and what other Town Costs will come up.*
    - *Checking to make sure there are no surprise costs in the coming years for tax payers.*
  - *Town Board to set Building Committee next Meeting.*
  - *Town Board to set two Community Engagement Meetings.*
  - *Keller to work with Fire & EMS on Community Engagement Meetings.*