

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Regarding
TOWN OF FREEDOM FIRE DEPARTMENT/ EMS DEPARTMENT
BUILDING PROJECT

Q. What will this building be used for, and who will be using it?

A. The building usage would strictly for the Freedom Fire Department and Freedom EMS Department. The building will house each piece of equipment at a single location. Currently, rescue vehicles, engines, files, and other equipment is stored at multiple locations, or even at member's homes, due to lack of storage. This facility could allow both departments to have formal training / educational lessons in the 'Training Room'; the facility would allow the departments to practice 'real life training,' by having space to set up different scenarios. Continuous training and education is extremely important to any community ensuring their own Fire & EMS are prepared for any scenario.

Q. Where will the new Fire / EMS Station be located?

A. The new Fire / EMS Station would be located on the Northeast corner of County Rd E and Schmidt Rd. Other locations were considered by the Fire & EMS building committee and Town Board. The determination of this location was driven by a decision made in 2008 when TID 2 was created (The parcel for the future station is included in TID 2). When TID 2 was developed, the Town Board at the time designated this parcel to be used for future municipal buildings. Building on this site would avoid the additional costs of purchasing land making it a cost effective solution.

Q. When will this building be constructed?

A. The general timeline of this project is to go out for bid in March, break ground in May, and move in November of 2020.

Q. Who can bid on the project?

A. The project would be broken down into multiple divisions of work. This process is different than the last, and would allow local subcontractors to bid directly to the Town, rather than just General Contractors bidding the project. This creates an opportunity for any local subcontractor to have a fair and equal opportunity for bidding on the project. Each subcontractor would be required to submit a 'pre-qualification' form ensuring that subcontractor is indeed responsible (insurance, safety record, references, etc.). The bids would be opened by the Town Board at a public meeting to allow full transparency throughout the process.

Q. How large is this building, and how does it compare to the previous plan?

- A. Listed below are the square foot values of the new plan compared to the previous. The following numbers are only regarding the Fire / EMS and do not take into consideration any other sizes that were once included. The current plan was a **total decrease of 20%** building space (4,584 sq. ft.).
- SEH Plan: 22,547 Total sq. ft. (*19,561 sq. ft. with 3,006 sq. ft. Mezzanine*)
 - Keller Plan: 17,983 Total sq. ft. (*17,012 sq. ft. with a 971 sq. ft. Mezzanine*)
 - Current Building Usage Space: 8,205 sq. ft.

Q. How were these plans developed?

- A. A committee was appointed by the Town of Freedom in May of 2019 to review the overall scope, size, cost, and timing of the municipal project including the fire station. The goal of this committee would be to look into and develop a long term plan for the future sustainment of the Freedom Fire Department and First Responders. The committee consisted of (2) Town Board Representatives, (1) Fire Chief, (2) Firefighters, (2) EMS members, and (2) Citizens (not fire related). All meetings open to the public.

After reviewing the current and future needs of the fire department operations, analyzing the current fire station, visiting other area fire departments, gaining their input and recommendations on their building projects, and examining future trends for volunteer fire & EMS departments. Freedom Fire & EMS department worked with Keller Builders to “Design for the times” the future space needs for your firefighters and EMS Departments.

Q. What is Keller’s role moving forward?

- A. Keller would provide Architectural/Design, General Condition items (including items such as site supervision, project management, clean up, building permits, builders risk insurance, etc.) and Construction Management Services. This includes all the Mechanical Design (Plumbing, Electrical, HVAC and Structural Engineering). Keller will prepare all the bid documents for bidding and assist the Fire department & Township in the bidding process and provide all contract administration and construction oversight and general condition items in the construction phase. There will be no General Contractor on the project. Instead, the project will be broken down into multiple divisions of work to encourage qualified local contractor participation in the bidding process.

All the Sealed Competitive Bids will be sent directly to Town of Freedom and will allow the town’s officials to open publicly. The Town of Freedom reserves the final decision of whether Keller will be allowed to bid on any of the construction work or not. All local qualified contractors will have an opportunity to bid on the actual construction of the project.

Q. How do I stay informed on the progress of the project?

- A. Community Engagement meetings will be held to inform the community on the progress of the project and answer any questions. The best way to stay up to date is to check the Town of Freedom website under meeting minutes to have the most recent information.

Q. When will the vote for this project take place?

A. The vote will be on January 8th at 7:00 PM at the Freedom School Gym.

Q. How does the cost of the proposed project compare to similar fire stations?

- A. Costs of construction in general, as well as construction of Fire Stations, have increased consistently over the years. The total proposed costs of the project include all construction, architectural, design, and construction management services. In addition, the cost is inclusive of all site work, excavation, and inside furnishings.
- RSMMeans (Dated 2018) is a resource (Industry Standard) that has been actively engaged in construction cost publishing and consulting throughout North America. When evaluating this resource in comparison to the proposed estimates provided by Keller, here are the findings:
 - Architectural/Design Fees: RSMMeans shows 8% whereas Keller is at 4.5% to 6.5%
 - Contractor Fees
 - General Requirements: RSMMeans shows 10% whereas Keller is 7.5% to 9.5%
 - Profit and Overhead: RSMMeans shows 15% whereas Keller is 4% to 7%
 - RSMMeans (Dated 2018) reflects an average building cost of \$187.90 per square foot. (This does not include the site work cost [Excavation, blacktop, sewer, storm sewer, power, utilities install, landscaping], which would increase the per square foot number).
 - When comparing to the current proposed estimated cost, the entire building project to include all items above (Building cost and Site work for both facilities), reflects approximately \$195 per square foot.
 - Based on the comparables and the industry standard RSMMeans resource, all fees and construction cost estimates of the Town of Freedom proposed project is much lower.

Q. What is the cost of this project?

A. The ORIGINAL projected cost of the project was just under \$5.37 million dollars for the section of building from the SEH plan for only Fire and EMS

The committee has worked with Keller to reduce the cost of the project by changing out different building materials used in the first design layout, as well as cutting space that was originally included for future planning. The total cost for Town of Freedom Tax Payers has been reduced to \$3.5 million dollars. This includes a turn-key facility, meaning the construction of the building and all necessary items such as site preparation, septic, parking lot, vehicle exhaust equipment, tables, chairs, etc. The township owns the land for this project.

(Total levy of \$3.9 million to include paying SEH for the previous plans)

Q. What is the current 2018 equalized valuation for our community?

A. **Total equalized value** Town of Freedom \$533,827,200 \$5,154,100 (including interest) *loan over 20 years*

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Q. What does that mean for the average taxpayer?

A. The average home owner for example will pay; on a \$5,154,100 loan based on equalized value over:

- 20 years, \$100,000 value home average annual impact would be **\$48 or .13 cents daily**
- 20 years, \$200,000 value home average annual impact would be **\$96 or .23 cents daily**

- Mill rate and cost projections are provided by *Robert W. Baird & Co.*

Other projections may apply based on the final cost figures through competitive bidding. The above information is used only as an example.

Q. Can any cuts be made to the project?

A. Cuts and changes have been made throughout the design process at the suggestion of Town Officials to help reduce the cost of the overall project. There have been substantial design changes since this project started. Although this is not an all inclusive list of changes made over the course of the past year, the following are the most recent cuts made to bring us to the current projected cost:

- The cuts came out of the apparatus/fire truck bay side as well as the administration side.
- Bays that were designed in the plans for future space growth were eliminated.
 - This will not compromise the functionality of the new station as land space will still be available for any future expansions.
- Administration space was also cut from the design for the fire station.
- 3,668 square feet was removed as a result of the cuts for an estimated savings of \$715,260.
 - Firm cost savings will not be recognized until the project is actually let out for bids after passing of the special meeting vote.

Q. Why aren't local builders involved with the project?

A. This is a common misunderstanding that people have. The project as it stands, is based on conceptual ideas and drawings, and projected costs. This allows the citizens to have an idea for what is being proposed in the project and what the projected costs will be for the project. Actual bidding for the process comes after town electors approve the project at the voting polls. If approved by the electors, bids will be let out for local and area contractors to bid on the project. As is customary, the lowest bidder has the best chance to be awarded a part of or the entire contract based on their expertise in the building industry. The project may require different contractors to complete the project, again based on their building expertise. Keller strongly recommended using as many local contractors as possible in the building of this project. Once a competitive bidding process is completed (likely in March 2020), the town will collaboratively review the bids and ultimately make the final decision of who will be awarded the actual building project contract.