

IPSWICH PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY COMMITTEE
MARCH 21, 2017
FIRE STATION/TOWN HALL, ROOM C

At 6:14 p.m., Chief Nikas, H. Schwartz, R. Weatherall, C. Surpitski, and Jean Emerson toured the Fire Station for an hour with Lt. French as guide and narrator, visiting the cramped Fire Prevention office, the dispatch room, the apparatus floor with 3 engines in three bays and a rescue boat, a Gator, a Cascade system for filling air bottles, and an automatic washer for equipment (which shakes the whole building when running) behind the engines. The attached building in the rear, built as a temporary fix but over 20 years old, houses the ladder truck, another boat, and storage. Personnel lockers are located around the ladder truck area.

Downstairs over 90 lally columns are reinforcing the cement floor which bears the weight of the fire apparatus above, filled with water. Tanks still remain which allowed the air horns to blow for testing and sounding fire alarms.

Upstairs, the group was shown the Chief's office, sleeping quarters for the men, exercise/meeting/report-making room, and kitchen (newly redone at a considerable Town investment following the discovery of mold in the walls). A pull-down ladder gave access to the attic. Two hundred fifty bricks fell out of the wall near the rooftop a few years ago.

CALL TO ORDER

The group adjourned to Room C at the Town Hall where Mr. Surpitski called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. P. Dziadosz and P. Polonsky were present as well. Fire Chief Gagnon was connected by phone from his training location in Maryland.

Once again an attempt was made to elect a Chair. Mr. Surpitski has not decided whether he will remain on the Committee, and once again, the group deferred until the absentees (R. McSherer, R. Donahue, K. Buhl and Chief Gagnon) were able to attend.

Mr. Surpitski went down a list of questions as follows:

1. Asking the Fire and Police Chiefs to weigh in, where would a facility serve most of the community? Chief Gagnon, referring to previous reports on response times and the concentric circles from the hub (current Fire Station), felt that staying within $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile from the center, response times could be kept fairly close to the report. The breakdown of calls comes to 35% in the downtown area, and, outside of that, are Essex and Argilla Roads at 24%, so that at 59% that general location would be the best outcome for the Town. Geographically, he spoke of the limits to the highway garage off County Road, as far as the Masonic Temple on Topsfield Road, Lord Square to Bialek Park. Close to the high school creates a flow problem.
2. What denotes "downtown district"? Town Hall, before High Street, Market Street, Hayward Street/Caroline Avenue, not including Topsfield Road, and not Jeffreys Neck Road to the Neck.

3. Areas relative to fire exposures? Most vulnerable are some of the oldest balloon construction buildings, not as many sprinklered because of age. Nikas asked if a poll of “medical aids” was done—not done. Dziadosz asked if the 24% is because of the elderly. River Bend, County Road averages one call a day. Private ambulance responds, fire and police respond – ½ to ¾ go to the hospital after a fall.

4. What is arrival time on scene? Gagnon said that it is 4 minutes from the time the truck is rolling to arrival on scene, NFPA rules, about 60% of the time. Ninety percent of the time is beyond the 8-minute mark. Little Neck and Rte. 1 are beyond that.

The group studied a color-coded response time sheet from Elm Street (proposed site in 2014). A graph was done in 2002 at the Fire Station site and recommended at that time that there be 3 stations: one at Linebrook, one at the Neck, and one downtown. Mr. Schwartz felt that the change in the statistics expands the areas for potential location. Discussion ensued re ambulance service stationed at Linebrook, possible changes with Rowley’s fire/ambulance building project, and private ambulance service.

5. Do you think it would behoove us to consider ambulance service separately from fire or are they so closely intertwined that they should stay together? With advanced life support, paramedic service, and a manpower curve, Gagnon felt it would probably be a good idea. Nikas said that the ambulance contract is current until 12/31/18. Ipswich controls volume—would we want to keep the Rowley contract with Ipswich re ambulance service? Members asked for more information on this matter.**

Mr. Weatherall and Mr. Schwartz asked for an overview of how ambulance delivery has been running since the 70’s.** National health care (medicare) would reimburse municipal ambulance if a new Memo of Understanding (MOU) were to be adopted (Gagnon). Mr. Surpitski asked Chief Gagnon to make copies of manning the Fire Station after a fatal fire in 2002 to save time studying it again.**

6. Property needs for a new facility? Chief Nikas reported space needs for a new police station were 21,000 sq. ft. and fire at 17,000 sq. ft. or combined at 36,-40,000 sq. ft. (Police currently is 7,400 sq. ft. and fire is less than that). A combined facility benefits economics with construction, maintenance, utilities, etc., and public space for the community. Downtown would be the optimum. Dispatcher needs a central location; police cruisers are rolling around the town.

Surpitski defined “political will” as the Town’s failure in the past to opt for possible sites for a new fire station at the current Rite Aid on Central Street or the former St. Stanislaus church on Washington Street as ideal sites, but they didn’t appeal to the Town at the time. Chief Nikas refreshed the Committee that in 2014, the Elm Street site came close, but it still wasn’t “the will” of certain people. Surpitski said that all of the Selectmen are in favor this time: (\$90,000 has been spent to fix the Fire Station over the years.) This administration is planning ahead—a request to see this plan was made.** The M/HS bond, ending in 2020, will be

reconstituted to continue with bonding for the elementary school project; when Open Space comes off the debt rolls, a new Public Safety facility can be built.

7. How large a lot is needed for a new PS facility? Chief Gagnon suggests 4-5 bays (the 5th if an ambulance and/or boat with trailers behind are housed there). It was estimated at 4 acres to accommodate 2½ acres for fire apparatus to pull out with an option to drive around the building OR drive-through access to the building and 1 acre for police to allow for employee and visitor parking.

8. Should we seek some professional help? Chief Gagnon suggested an OPM as early as possible—a professional in this endeavor—to avoid oversights and miscalculations.

Mr. Weatherall moved, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, to have Chief Gagnon and Chief Nikas meet and make some proposals and a cost estimate. UNANIMOUS.

There are specific firms who do nothing but public safety projects. Once selected, an RFP (request for proposal) comes next. Both Chiefs will talk to counterparts in neighboring towns who have done this. Mr. Schwartz asked whether the financial request could be done at Spring Town Meeting. Mr. Surpitski replied that he would report to the BOS of the PSFC's thinking to find their feelings. Chief Gagnon gave a "guesstimate" of \$30,000.

9. Of the 14 communities nearby who have built facilities, are they combined facilities? Chief Nikas said that under 25,000 population have been combined. Chief Gagnon said Andover (pop: 35,000) built a combined facility; it is mixed, and really community preference and space availability. Two small parcels might be decided upon by necessity.

10. With two cultures, could it be a place of conflict between two organizations (fire and police)? Chief Gagnon said, set up right, there need be no interference with each other. Paul Polonsky, dispatcher, has seen the communication segment with a lobby, public meeting space, restrooms, emergency media, etc. in the middle of the complex and fire on one side, police on the other. Chief Nikas saw no problems.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Weatherall moved, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, to approve PSFC Minutes of 2/28/17. UNANIMOUS.

NEXT MEETING

Meeting is set for April 4, 2017. Agenda to come.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Polonsky moved, seconded by Chief Nikas, to adjourn at 8:52 p.m. UNANIMOUS.

NOTE: ** refer to requests for additional data for future discussion.

