

WEST STREET BUILDING

PLAN
•
BUDGET

History Since 2017, the approximate 44,000 sq. ft West Street Building has remained vacant but has been maintained continually by the Town and insured yearly at approximately \$23,000 per year. In 2018, a study was completed on the building. The recommendation to the Select Board was to raze the existing structure and build two new Town buildings in phases. No further action on this recommendation or the building was taken by the Select Board until 6 years later when a group of citizens approached the Select Board to move forward with potential uses of the West Street Building. In response, the Select Board created a “new” West Street Building (WSB) Committee in January 2023 and charged them with developing new options for the building and preliminary cost estimates for each option. The Committee was *not* given an appropriation for any formal studies.

After 7 months of due diligence by the WSB Committee and thorough review of cost estimates, the Committee recommended, and the Select Board agreed, that the Town move forward with renovating the West Street Building into a one-stop, central location for our municipal offices and Council on Aging, with a projected cost of **\$5,686,639.32**. In December 2023, the proposed project was presented at a Special Town Meeting and overwhelmingly **approved by Town Meeting Members**.

West Street Building Committee informational Meeting

March 25, 2025

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WSB Committee progress since Special Town Meeting

The WSB Committee, upon hiring an Owner's Project Manager and Architect, has completed the building conditions report and schematic design phases of this project and is ready to go out to bid. To renovate 22,000 ft.² of the building and abate the remainder of the building (for future renovation), it will cost approximately **\$15,676,000**.

This cost includes, among other changes, abatement of the entire building with replacement windows, required fire suppression with capacity for expansion, required accessibility, ventilation and electrical services upgrades, space for a community warming and cooling center, and Town elections. It is intended to eventually have space for Town Meetings, a commercial community kitchen for food security, and a recreation center for the Town. ***Upon completion, our Town will have an updated, renovated one-stop municipal building for the entire Community to use.***

The Select Board is calling another Special Town Meeting to see if the town will approve an additional **\$9,989,360** to be allocated to this project, through a combination of borrowing and using moneys from free cash reserves and our Municipal Building Stabilization Fund. If approved at Town Meeting, there will be a second, Town-wide ballot vote, called a debt exclusion vote, to secure additional Town approval.

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Dimension and Valuing

- Town municipal office space needs and COA space needs *increased* to greater than ≈16,000 sq ft. In the renovated West Street building, town offices will have ≈12,900 sq ft and COA will have ≈9400 sq ft.
- West Street Building has ≈44,000 sq ft of potential usable space: ≈22,000 sq ft for Municipal offices & a Senior Center, with ≈22,000 sq ft left to abate and to prepare for future town growth.
- The current Annex building houses our Town Clerk, Tax Collector, Board of Health, and Board of Assessors and is limited in space (2,324 sq ft) with a small parking area. The Carnegie Library building is 2,182 sq ft with even less parking. The current COA/Town Hall is ≈6,200 sq ft. **These spaces are insufficient to meet our Town's needs, as indicated by our completed needs assessment, which accounts for proper sizing and future growth.**

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Current and Future use

Council of Aging

- Safety
- More space
- Combined activity

Municipal offices

- One location with easy access
- More space to conduct business with private communications
- More storage

Town Meetings

Town Elections

Veteran's offices

Community Kitchen

Warming and Cooling Center

Community Use Conference Rooms

After school programs

Performing arts

Youth groups

Recreation activities

- Ball fields
- Ball courts

Will my taxes go up? How much?

If the funding is approved at the Special Town Meeting and again in the Town-wide ballot vote, then the amount bonded will result in an increase to your taxes for a set period, depending on the bonding rate and duration of the bond.

Attached to this documentation is an informational chart showing potential tax implications for a variety of assessed home values and bond rates.

Missed Opportunities

Why were things not completed in 2018? That was past board members and past government. ***We cannot change the past but can decide to focus on the future.*** We need to move forward and develop our Town for the whole community and for future generations.

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Why has the project cost increased?

1. **The amount of square footage for the design has increased:** The initial renovation plan aimed to reuse 17,000 sq ft. However, after our architect assessed the building conditions and developed the schematic design, the estimate increased to approximately 22,000 sq ft—a roughly 30% increase from the original plan. This adjustment was driven by updated programming, industry standards, and aligning the design with the building's capabilities.
2. **Building upgrades required to meet current building code requirements for accessibility:** Massachusetts regulations require that when renovation costs exceed 30% of the appraised value of the building, the entire facility must be upgraded to meet current codes for accessibility. This includes all elements of the building, including door sizes and hardware, accessible sidewalks, all building entries and building egresses.
3. **Upgrades required to meet current energy codes:** Massachusetts regulations require updates which affected our current heating and cooling systems. These upgrades necessitated new heating and cooling systems, mechanical ventilation for fresh air, and electrical service upgrades to support these new systems.
4. **Standby generator/fire pump:** We are installing a new standby generator, a new diesel fire pump which requires external housing, and cisterns for water storage.
5. **Market Conditions:** The market is constantly changing: construction prices (materials and labor) have escalated between 4-6% annually since the pandemic. Labor shortages have further limited the pool of potential bidders, reducing competition and driving up costs.

What has been done with West Street Building since Dec. 2023?

- Successful removal of underground oil tank
- Maintenance of grounds to reduce water damage
- Storage for town
- Venting and cleaning for air quality

Potential Tax Implications

Issue	10,000,000	10,000,000
PV	10,000,000	10,000,000
Years	25	25
Coupon	5%	6%

Approximate Annual Debt Service	\$709,525	\$782,267
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Total Valuation
\$1,050,321,304

Tax per \$1,000	\$0.68	\$0.74
Home Value	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000
Additional Tax per Year	\$ 168.88	\$ 186.20
	\$ 350,000	\$ 350,000
	\$ 236.44	\$ 260.68
	\$ 450,000	\$ 450,000
	\$ 303.99	\$ 335.15
	\$ 650,000	\$ 650,000
	\$ 439.10	\$ 484.11
	\$ 850,000	\$ 850,000
	\$ 574.20	\$ 633.07

The median house assessed value is \$357,700



