

Westmoreland Fire Station; 10 FAQ's

1. Why a new fire station? Critical infrastructure defines a fire station as a building which is necessary to maintain normalcy in daily life, during emergency conditions. These buildings are now considered 'critical infrastructure' according to FEMA and as such, are addressed accordingly by NFPA. Our current station no longer meets the needs and/or demands. The current station, due to its close proximity to Rt. 63 and its structural limitations, cannot be rehabilitated to meet the current needs of the Department.

2. How was the decision made to build the facility at the current location? Several locations in town were considered, but the present one was determined to work best. The central location enhances the feeling of a town center, along with providing for optimum response time for firefighters. In addition, with the entrance and exit being moved further north along route 63, this should help to improve the traffic flow and safety for residents.

3. How large is the proposed building? The current plans include a footprint of 7,100 square feet. This building should comfortably last functionally and materially, through the end of the century. As critical infrastructure, the structural requirements for this category of building will help ensure the building performs well for many years. Due to the wetlands on the property, the building does not allow much room for expansion. Over the lifetime of the building, it may require some updating based upon emergency service standards, and how they are delivered, or by the equipment used to provide these services.

4. What features are being considered? Due to the building's classification as critical infrastructure: an automatic sprinkler system is required throughout the building to protect the occupants and contents; the building, as designed, intended to be low maintenance and efficient for low cost of ownership; solar power is being researched, as it is desirable for the building to maximize efficiency of operation; the septic system is designed to be incorporated with the new system to be installed for the Town Hall.

5. What purpose does the meeting room serve? Beyond our regular department meetings, the room also serves as a training room for required department training sessions. The room will also serve as the Emergency Operations Center when an emergency occurs in town; such as an ice storm, a flood, etc.

6. What about the taxes? The current estimates are based on a 20-year bond, given by the New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank on October 13, 2020. The lending rate is 2.50%. The first year the tax rate would be \$1.22/\$1000 valuation. This would mean a tax of \$244 for a house valued at \$200,000, or \$366 for a house valued at \$300,000, for example.

*That rate decreases over the life of the bond.

*We have considered 30-year bond with be a lower rate, but this would incur interest for a longer period of time, costing more for the term of the loan.

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7. Can it be 'just a garage'? Fire stations are no longer simply about housing apparatus and a monthly fire department meeting. These buildings play a key role in a community's overall emergency response – beyond fires and emergency medical services. Fire stations house more sophisticated (and expensive) equipment and gear. While Westmoreland is a small rural community, it is not exempt from providing state of the industry protection for its residents, and firefighters, aligning with all current standards. The standards alone for an EOC (Emergency Operations Center) require a minimum level of building classification with minimum amenities. The proposed station, as designed, focuses on providing an updated facility to serve the community and our department, while demonstrating restraint in its embellishments and emphasis on functionality.

8. Is the building cost higher than the norm, for the region? Since its inception the Fire Dept Advisory Committee, in coordination with the Board of Selectmen, the engineers, and the architect, continues to focus on maintaining cost efficiency for the proposed building. The cost of the proposed building is within the range for this building type in our region.

9. Are Federal or State monies available? The committee is looking into this, but answers are not available until the project is closer to approval.

10. Are donations accepted? Will there be fundraising done by the department? And, is grant money available? Fundraising efforts by the department are inevitable, as well as a constant review/application for any available grant monies. There will be a fund established, for any donation/fundraising, with the Board of Selectmen being asked to approve the creation of the fund. This fund will then be maintained by the Westmoreland Trustees of the Trust Funds.