



TOWN OF READFIELD – Town Manager

8 OLD KENTS HILL ROAD, READFIELD, MAINE 04355

Office (207) 685-4939 • Cell (207) 242-5437

Email: manager@readfieldmaine.org

To: Readfield Select Board and Budget Committee
Cc: Deb Peale, Lee Mank
From: Eric Dyer, Town Manager
Date: March 8, 2019
Subject: Municipal Building Capital Projects

Background:

In the summer of 2018 the Select Board set building maintenance as one of their top goals. Subsequently building inspections were performed at the Readfield Public Library and Readfield Fire Station. These reviews yielded a wealth of information and highlighted the need for building repairs and supplemental investigation of key issues. At the same time the Library Board of Directors was working diligently on operational and maintenance needs having applied for and received a \$25,000 grant. The energy at the Library and results of the building inspection spurred further consideration of operational needs at the Fire Station. All of this has happened in conjunction with the FY20 budget process and resulted in the proposal of major capital improvements to both buildings.

Support Services:

Given the scope of the projects under consideration the assistance of external support services is necessary. We are currently preparing to work with Main-Land Development Consultants (<https://main-landdci.com/>) and Dirigo Architectural (<http://www.dirigoae.com>) to provide project estimating, design, public process, and bidding and construction oversight support services. The relationship has been established with the understanding that the Town of Readfield is willing and able to perform certain project functions and that there must be flexibility with respect to project functions and associated costs. We expect to be an active partner and work to keep costs low whenever possible without compromising the integrity of the project. Initial proposals are expected from both firms next week and will be reviewed with the Select Board.

Library Capital improvements:

The Library roof is in immediate need of repair and is the top priority. There are however a number of capital improvements that may benefit the building structurally and also allow for more operational capacity. These include reinforcement of the second floor to reduce flex and improve load bearing capacity, the installation of heat pumps to provide more efficient heating and dehumidification, the addition of a second floor egress to allow for safe use of the front portion of the building, and general interior second floor building repairs to maintain the structure and allow for future use of currently unused space. Due to the complexity of the roof issue we are starting with a design review and then likely moving to a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Refined project cost estimates will be difficult until design review is complete but are currently \$100,000, which is more than sufficient for the roof repair and likely enough to complete the other elements.

Fire Station Expansion and Capital Improvements:

Direct observation and discussion with various municipal officials indicated that the facility was overcrowded and in need of additional space, both to expand existing uses and support new functions. Past efforts and plans for expansion were discussed and considered in deciding to move ahead with a new expansion proposal. Cost estimates and plans from 2011 - 2012 were used as an initial baseline for the project with the understandings that costs have gone up and that the scope of the 2011-2012 proposal needs to be scaled back. The need for due diligence and updated information is clear. These needs are being addressed in a few different ways including:

- Securing support services as discussed earlier.
- Performing a general analysis of recently completed or planned fire station construction projects in Winthrop, Hallowell, Oakland, Farmingdale, Fayette, and Berwick. While there are no additions to review, the cost of new construction can be a reasonable indicator. This analysis has given an initial target of \$200 per square foot including hard and soft costs. This was achieved in Winthrop last year with new construction.
- Soliciting feedback from the Fire Chief and Fire Department on operational needs and building design at their meeting on Tuesday. The FD Auxiliary was also contacted indirectly for input as they are an important stakeholder and supporter of our municipal fire services. The solicitation of feedback is ongoing but has already provided good design information. A reasonable expansion would add about 3,000 square feet to the station.
- Performing site visits with Chief Mank to three of the fire stations in our Lakes Region Mutual Aid network on Thursday. These included Mt. Vernon, Fayette, and Wayne. It is evident that every community is different in how they approach fire and rescue services but there were common threads and some notable highlights. Site visits tell us not only what others have done right and what their space needs are, but also where Readfield fits into the bigger picture of emergency services regionally. A site visit to Winthrop and discussion with their Chief Dovinsky will be important in the next week or two.
- Considering and pursuing sources of non-governmental funding. These include private donors, the FD Auxiliary, and possible grants. Private donations and support from the Auxiliary seem the most likely as grants are much more common for gear and equipment than buildings. This work is ongoing but cursory review indicates \$30,000 - \$40,000 could be readily available.
- Budget review (in conjunction with the smaller but no less important Library project). Initial work indicates that a budget number of \$600,000 is far more reasonable for the Fire Station and \$100,000 remains in place for the Library. The \$700,000 total current capital project cost, and perhaps more, can be accommodated with little or no impact on the mil rate through bonding, use of fund balances, and other revenue sources.

Next Steps:

Most lines of action have been initiated as outlined above but need to continue vigorously in order to provide deliverables in time for the March 28th Budget Meeting and Hearing. I am confident at this point that we will have sufficient information to bring forward then and will have more available before we finalize the budget in late April. Our engineering and architectural partners, municipal staff, and municipal officials are working diligently to ensure we have reliable cost estimates and plans. The current convergence of project need and opportunity is unique.