



Memo

Date: April 29, 2020

To: Debra Schnabel, Borough Manager

From: Edward Coffland, PE, Public Facilities Director

Subject: Public Safety Building Condition

Current Use and Status: As you know, our Public Facilities Building is beyond its useful life. The building, constructed in 1980, is a temporary wood-framed modular structure. This facility is one of the community's most essential structures, and it needs to be one of the last buildings standing in Haines in case of a major disaster.

The 12,656 square-foot facility houses all the Borough's fire department and first response emergency vehicles, along with the police, dispatch center, jail, morgue, assembly chambers, public facilities office, rented office space, and file storage. Construction incorporates modularly designed building units on wooden pile foundations.

It does not comply with ADA requirements for public facilities, and renovation would require significant code upgrades, including egress, occupancy separation, and structural upgrades.

Primary Concerns with the Building: There are many concerns with the building. Some of the more significant issues are:

- The electrical system is at its maximum capacity. It is not possible to add any electrical equipment without installing a new service. Much of the interior wiring is dilapidated or does not comply with the current electrical code. Many of the panels are undersized and located such that required clearances are not possible. The entire electrical system should be removed and replaced. Recently the EOC wanted to install a high heat dryer capable of killing the COVID 19 virus in the building. But without a significant investment in a new electrical system, this is not possible.
- Water supply piping is copper, and pinhole leaks sometimes occur, requiring removing sheetrock to access for repair. As copper pipe continues to degrade, leaks are likely to increase. At some point, it will be necessary to remove and replace all copper pipe in the building requiring extensive sheetrock removal.
- Drainage plumbing is in poor condition and will need attention soon.

- In January 2013, PND Engineers submitted a report entitled “Structural Inspection and Condition Assessment.” The report identified numerous structural and building envelope deficiencies, including seasonal water in the crawl space accelerating decay and potentially promoting unhealthy air quality issues.
- Replace all exterior doors and windows, including apparatus bay doors.
- The building is energy inefficient. Insulation is inadequate, and much of the insulation is wet.
- The morgue is not functional.
- There are many ADA, NFPA, and IBC violations, too numerous to list here.
- Cosmetically, the building is in poor condition. New siding and exterior painting are needed.

We estimate repairs will cost \$2 million to \$2.5 million. Still, though the building was in good condition, many operational needs of a modern public safety facility are not possible to attain within the existing building configuration. So spending lots of money on the building itself will not solve operational problems.

Functional Issues: The building is not conducive to many modern operational needs. Even spending a large sum of money will not correct these needs. Some such deficiencies are:

- The Haines Borough Volunteer Fire Department, HBVFD has 42 volunteer firefighters, and two full-time firefighter/EMT’s and one seasonal firefighter/EMT. Meeting room, training space, office, kitchen, storage, and recreational area are all crammed into one area on the second floor. The apparatus bay is too small. The department has two ambulances, one pickup, two water tankers, one brush rig, and three fire trucks. There is not enough room to store all of these vehicles, associated tools, and equipment inside. The department has plans to replace two fire trucks with newer, larger fire trucks shortly, and these will not fit in the available space. There is no room for any more equipment at all.
- Haines Borough Police Department, HBPD, has five fulltime officers and one Alaska State Wildlife trooper. There are three jail cells with no interview or interrogation rooms, and the jail visiting room is a closet shared with cleaning tools and supplies. Munition and firearm storage do not comply with federal regulations, and evidence processing and storage are not secured. Office space is small and congested with no storage for supplies or consumable items. All police cars are parked outside. There is no fitness or training room or equipment.
- Dispatch has two E911 dispatch stations. The room is small and connected to the police station. Visitors cause interference with calls. It is difficult to even move around within the room. The area needs to be expanded and separated from the police station.
- A single-bay garage doubles as the Haines morgue and a small police station shop. When a body is present, the garage door is left open to allow ventilation. The morgue needs its own space, adequately outfitted, and the police need a shop.
- Borough assembly chambers are small. Often public meetings are overcrowded, and no ADA accessible restrooms are available.

Conclusion: The Borough can repair the existing building, but there is physically not enough room to accommodate all public safety needs. It seems unwise to invest lots of money in the existing building.

We ought to develop a plan to fund and build a new public safety building. If the community can agree on what is needed and develop conceptual drawings, then the Borough can determine construction costs and set a time frame to acquire the money to construct the project.

With a project identified and a funding plan in place, we will know how long we will continue to use the existing building and will be in a much better position to make informed repair and enhancement judgments. Also, if building grants or attractive loan opportunities arise, our project will be much more appealing to potential financiers. To move from a solid conceptual plan to a complete set of construction documents would require only a few months, and we could call the project “shovel ready” in application documents.

As you know, I have contacted an architectural firm, highly experienced in such projects that can help us start a dialog with the Assembly and our community. The firm has made some very preliminary documents, and I hope to continue working with them to refine the concept to reflect our needs as much as I know without spending a lot of money.

The Assembly asked some time ago for a presentation, and I think we should present the concept to the Assembly, soon, as a starting point for community dialog.