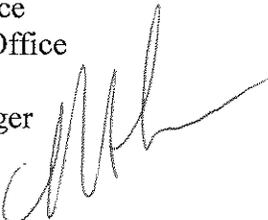


TOWN OF PLYMOUTH
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OFFICE OF TOWN MANAGER
MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Selectmen
Advisory and Finance Committee
Lynne Barrett, Director of Finance
Annikka Bernabe, Selectmen's Office

From: Melissa G. Arrighi, Town Manager 

Date: August 29, 2015

Re: Fall Town Meeting, Article 4A

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds or borrow a sum of money for the construction and/or repair and/or purchase and/or lease and/or replacement of buildings and/or land and/or equipment and/or capital facilities and/or for feasibility studies and other types of studies for the various departments of the Town substantially as follows:

A. North Plymouth land/building for Fire Station

For some years now, the Town of Plymouth has understood that the North Plymouth Fire Station is woefully inadequate. Some of the problems there include:

1. Age of Structure –The building was constructed in 1906 to house horse drawn steam engines. The building had a major rehab around 1974, that included removing the wooden apparatus floor (which had failed) and installing a concrete floor system as well as updates to the living quarters and heating plant. Currently the heating system is in need of replacement, there is no cooling system, and the electrical system is in poor condition and does not support the emergency generator in automatic mode. Crews must manually switch between street power and generator power during outages. The concrete apparatus floor has buckled in many areas creating a trip hazard and much of the reinforcement bar in the concrete is badly corroded thus weakening the floor structure. The slate roof system is original and loses heavy slate pieces due to rotting fasteners and roof sheathing.
2. Size – Not only is the lot size not very large, the station itself is small. The station has two bays that are inadequate to accommodate modern apparatus. The apparatus floor measures 31' wide (2 bays, each 15 foot wide) x 50' deep. As compared to other Plymouth Stations with apparatus bays between 18 and 19 feet wide by 50 foot deep. In addition, the apparatus bay door is 9'11" wide whereby other stations have doors that are between 12'-14' wide. A pumper truck (engine) is 102 inches wide plus the mirrors – about 10' wide in total. They have had to plane back the door casings to gain an extra 1"

width to accommodate the mirrors. Our firefighters have barely any clearance on each side of the \$570,000 truck as they maneuver out in an emergency.

3. Special Equipment to accommodate size – A few years ago, the Town funded the replacement of Engine 7, located at North Plymouth. This apparatus required special manufacturing instructions to ensure the truck would fit in the station. The necessary width and height restrictions added to the cost of building the apparatus. In addition we removed trim boards and modified the entrance at the apparatus doors to widen the opening for the new apparatus. Even with the modifications and size restrictions of the apparatus, there are only 2 inches of clearance for the apparatus to exit and enter the building. When Engine 7 is out for service or maintenance, we are limited on replacement apparatus. Finally, most mutual aid crews cannot back apparatus into the building when they are called to cover the area.

In our opinion, the real difficulty will not be selling that location, it is finding another area in North Plymouth that can house a Fire Station. This area of Town is densely populated with closely constructed buildings. In 2015, North Plymouth accounts for approximate 1080 annual calls for service out of 7136 calls Town wide. These are counts of emergency responses only. The crews also respond to hundreds of other non-emergent calls for service annually. Station 7 has the largest number of mercantile inspections to perform on a twice yearly schedule as compared to the other station areas (412). The crews at Station 7 also perform over 150 yearly new and resale inspections of residential properties.

This article is certainly not ordinary for Plymouth. We are seeking Town Meeting approval to set aside \$25,000 so that if and when we can find a suitable location, the Town has the immediate ability (through Selectmen vote) to place a down payment and sign a P&S contingent upon further Town Meeting vote to fund the full purchase. This down payment will be refundable to protect for any loss of taxpayer dollars in the event that Town Meeting does not authorize the purchase. As the governance of Plymouth grows in complexity and needs, it is much more efficient to be able to react, rather than postpone decisions for six months while we wait for the next Town Meeting. However, we understand that Town Meeting action is and should be required to approve the final purchase. This article will give us the flexibility to react immediately when we believe we have found something suitable, and still provide for Town Meeting member input if that decision is not the location that our legislative branch supports.

Thank you for your consideration.

