

Town of Pepperell Building Committee Report

Public Safety Facilities

January 21, 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report was developed by the Building Committee to examine the existing conditions of the Town of Pepperell public safety facilities. It provides an evaluation of existing conditions of the former Shattuck School currently utilized by the Police and Communications departments, and the Park Street and Jersey Street Fire Stations. The Building Committee reviewed available public records, conducted public committee meetings, and participated in site visits to the facilities. Upon examination, the former Shattuck School suffers from significant deferred maintenance in its building systems, is not compliant with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), and is operationally deficient for the current and future police and communications department needs. Similarly, the Park Street Station exhibits significant deferred maintenance, lacks a fire protection system, and is operationally too small to serve the many functions of the fire department headquarters. The Jersey Street Fire Station is in good condition, but lacks a fire protection system, and lacks nearly all building systems to serve personnel.

Due to the extensive deferred maintenance and operational deficiencies of the existing public safety facilities, the Building Committee the Town construct a new public safety complex to meet the current and future needs of the PPD and PFD including dispatch/communications. The Building Committee recommends the evaluation of the existing departments and facilities by a qualified architectural/engineering firm and the development of a building program, which may include repair and/or renovation of or additions to existing facilities, to satisfy the programmatic needs of the departments. Where possible, the facilities should provide shared facilities to support all programs to maximize usable square footage and minimize overall project costs and long-term operating costs.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Building Committee Charge & Membership

The nine member Town of Pepperell (Town) Building Committee was appointed by the Board of Selectmen to review conditions of all its buildings and in particular the police station, both fire stations, the DPW Highway facility, the Peter Fitzpatrick School, and the Town Hall. There are extensive deferred maintenance in each location and determining whether to repair, renovate, or replace these properties requires effort and advice from across the community. The Committee is made up of citizens and staff members who have one year appointments.

The current Building Committee includes the following:

- Citizen Representatives: Joseph LoBuono, Seth Bourgeois, Catherine Lundeen (chair), and David Querze
- Capital Program Committee: Taya Dixon Mullane (clerk)
- Town of Pepperell Staff: Fire Chief Brian Borneman. Police Chief David Scott, Communications Department Rep. David Stairs, and Town Administrator Andrew MacLean.

1.2 Town Building Facilities

The Town owns 45 structure or buildings with an insurance value of approximately \$54 million.

- Twenty-five (25) of these structures are associated with the water, waste water and transfer station facilities
- Seven (7) facilities are associated with the Senior Center, Parks, Recreation and the Cemetery Departments
- Five (5) facilities support the Department of Public Works
- Five (5) are facilities of the public safety departments including the Police Station, Jersey Street and Park Street Fire Stations, the Repeater Site Communications Towers and the Emergency Management Agency Garage
- Three (3) buildings make up the remaining facilities including the Town Hall, Library and Peter Fitzpatrick School Building (currently leased to a third-party)

1.3 Building Committee Recommendation

Based upon the Ranking Criteria for Evaluation of Capital Needs developed by the Capital Program Committee for renewal/replacement needs of Town building facilities in February 2020, the Police Station and Fire Stations were identified as having the most immediate need for renewal. This determination is largely due to the facilities exceeding their lifespan, poor or inoperable condition, limited possibility for repair to extend life, higher risk of a safety issue, and higher potential for functional deficit of the program should failure occur. The Building Committee recommends requesting the use of Free Cash at the Spring 2021 Town Meeting to fund a conceptual design effort for a new public safety complex.

The conceptual design should include, at a minimum and not limited to, the following:

- Study of existing conditions and programmatic needs of fire and police departments including dispatch/communications
- Conduct site evaluation of town-owned and private properties
- Develop concept design for site and building layout
- Develop recommendations for existing building renewal scope and/or disposal
- Provide order of magnitude cost estimates for concept design, renewal of existing buildings, and mothballing and/or disposal of properties.

2.0 Public Safety Facilities

2.1 Pepperell Police Department

2.1.1 Existing Facility

The Pepperell Police Department (PPD) is located in the former Clara M. Shattuck Elementary School. Constructed in 1898, the building was converted into the Pepperell Police and Fire Department headquarters in 1988 after sitting unoccupied since 1980 when the school closed. Designed by the architectural firm of Gay and Proctor, the 19,988 GSF building (including the attic) has 14,291 SF of finished area, and is situated on a 43,560 GSF lot with 292 feet of frontage at 57-59 Main Street. The assessed value of the building is \$1,240,800.

Regulatory Context

The building is located in the Commercial zoning district and the Sewer Overlay district. The site is defined by the Assessor as a Government parcel (23-157-0) classified as an improved public safety building, and an Institutional land use. The southwest corner of the building is located within a special flood hazard area with a 1% annual change of a flood (100 year flood). The southern edge of the site is also within a regulatory floodway, and a portion is within an area of 0.2% (500 year flood) Annual Chance Flood Hazard. The regulatory floodway is Greens Brook, a jurisdictional (310 CMR 10.02 (1)(f) Riverfront Area) perennial stream, under the MA Wetlands Protection Act (WPA). For all work, including but not limited to tree removal, excavating, grading, etc. within 200' of Greens Brook and all work within 100' of bordering vegetated wetlands on and abutting the property, the filing of a Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission would be required. If proposed work includes filling portions of flood hazard areas, compensatory flood storage areas must be considered.

The Shattuck School is located within the Mill Village – Babbittasset Village Area, an area included in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth. The building appears eligible to meet criteria A and C for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places for its association with the development of the educational system in Pepperell and as a good example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture in the Town.

Description of Site and Building

The site accommodates 22 surface parking spaces for department vehicles, personnel vehicles, and public parking. Accessible from Main Street via a U-shaped driveway, the site is largely paved with a greenspace along the roadway. A large metal storage container is located at the rear of the building which abuts a large grass field.

The basement, first and second floors are occupied by the PPD, including the Communications Department. The building is a rectangular shaped, multi-wythe brick building with cast stone elements at the ground floor and entrances, and mostly original wood windows. The building's asphalt and slate-clad, hipped roof was evaluated in 2019 following the observation of interior leaks on the underside of the wood plank deck in the attic. Modest repairs were undertaken to extend the life of the 25-30 year old asphalt shingles and copper flashing at the roof valleys where they were failing. In addition, step cracks were observed at the brick chimney.

The basement and second floors are not handicapped accessible. The first floor is elevated several feet above grade. There is no current structural assessment of the building. However, structural reinforcement was added to the southeast corner of the building in the mechanical room to support the first floor which was found to be deficient during the mold remediation project in 2014.

The basement has concrete floors, exposed, painted masonry walls and painted ceilings. The first floor, accessible from a ramp on the west side of the building and an internal wheelchair lift, contains an accessible public restroom. The first and second floors are accessed via two sets of wood stairs enclosed within stairhalls with fire doors. Floor finishes are wood, tile and carpet throughout, and walls are largely painted pressed tin or drywall above beadboard, some of which has been removed and replaced several years ago as a result of mold. Original chalkboards remain in many of the former classrooms, and most windows and doors have original decorative wood casings. Painted, pressed tin ceilings remain throughout the majority of the building. Two enclosed staircases provide access to the attic level.

The building is heated by a natural gas fired boiler (to be replaced in 2021 through a Green Communities Grant), located in the southeast basement mechanical room, and fan coils throughout the building. The original two-pipe system failed resulting in a major mold problem in 2013 which required the PPD to temporarily relocate to trailers and the PFD to relocate its headquarters to the Park Street Fire Station for building remediation. During that process, the original wall mounted fan coil units were removed and replaced. A new chilled water system and water heater are also situated in this mechanical room. The 120/208V main electrical service is located in the north mechanical room in the basement. The north mechanical room also houses the main fire alarm panel. The Information Technology (IT) equipment serving the dispatch center is co-located in a basement mechanical space shared with overhead plumbing and HVAC ducts. The building is fully sprinkled and served by the fire protection main entering at the north mechanical room. The building is served by town water and sewer.

2.1.2 Existing Program

The basement, first and second floors are occupied by the PPD, including the Communications Department. The basement level contains a two-bay heated garage, mechanical room, IT room, holding cells, intake area, lab and armory, and storage. The basement is not handicapped accessible. The first floor, accessible from a ramp on the west side of the building and an internal wheelchair lift, contains offices, an accessible public restroom, personnel locker rooms, and the communications headquarters. The second floor includes evidence room, meeting rooms, offices and a personnel workout room. There are no restrooms on the second floor.

The PPD consists of approximately twenty-five (25) full-time equivalent employees. The building contains three conference/meeting rooms, two interior parking spaces, three evidence-related spaces, two locker rooms (including shower, restroom facilities and a changing area), nine offices or workstations, seven program-dedicated spaces (ie. detention cells, booking room), and four support spaces (ie. storage, supply closet). PPD does not require sleeping quarters or full cooking facilities.

2.1.3 Existing Facility Deficiencies

Designed as a multi-story educational building, the facility is not well suited as a modern police department. Deficiencies described below are intended to recognize significant items identified by the Building Committee, and are not an exhaustive evaluation of the building deficiencies. The building is experiencing significant energy loss through aged, single pane wood windows and a lack of insulation. The roof continues to leak, the chimney is in need of repair, and areas of brick are deteriorated. On occasion, ground water has flooded the basement cells area and garage. Snow and ice falling from the roof also presents a safety hazard at the front walkway during winter months. The 1988 adaptive reuse project was envisioned as a multi-phase undertaking to convert the school building to serve as the police department. As a result of only the first phase of the project being completed, the building struggles to support the police department operations. No documented hazardous materials are known within the building, however, given the age of the building construction materials such as tile mastic, window caulking and pipe insulation may contain asbestos, and painted surfaces are likely to contain lead.

After testing confirmed a massive presence of mold in the building in December 2013, the Finance Committee recommended allocation of \$210,000, subsequently approved at a special town meeting, to conduct mold remediation. The PPD temporarily relocated to trailers in the front parking lot through September 2014 during remediation that required an additional allocation of \$15,000 to complete the remediation. While indoor air quality testing has confirmed the building is currently safe for occupation, it is likely that the prior mold growth remediated within the building in 2014 may return over time. The building lacks outside air from mechanical ventilation, and has no insulation in perimeter walls. As noted above, the building's mechanical, electrical (normal and emergency), and plumbing systems are aged and deficient. The building lacks sufficient MEP systems to support modern public safety systems.

The building lacks adequate heating and cooling; and the 120/208V main electrical service lacks additional capacity needed to serve the building or renewed building systems. The Information Technology (IT) equipment serving the dispatch center co-located in a basement mechanical space is located beneath overhead plumbing and HVAC ducts which present a risk for the equipment. The Modine heaters situated on the second floor are aged and in need of repair and have thermostats that are unreachable without a ladder. Finishes are aged and worn including frayed and stained carpets, peeling painted ceilings, rusting metal door frames, and aged plumbing fixtures.

Accessibility Deficiencies

The building has limited accessibility to the disabled. The building has no elevator which significantly limits access to the building. Due to the elevated first floor, wheelchair access is provided via an exterior ramp on the west side of the building to an interior mechanical lift to traverse the interior first floor steps. The lift has experienced multiple failures, and while it provides access, a variance is

required as it remains a barrier to access. Access to the basement, while possible, requires assistance to step up to the main floor level from the garage. There is no barrier free access to the second floor or the attic. It is not clear if all first floor facilities, doors, etc. meet accessibility codes as defined by the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB). There is only one accessible restroom, located on the first floor.

Operational Deficiencies

While the site does not present significant issues for PPD operations other than lack of adequate parking and occasional blocking of the driveway by adjacent Dunkin Donuts customers, the building presents the greatest impediments to operations. Situated on the unpopulated basement floor, the four detention cells must be monitored by PPD officers when occupied requiring expenditures for overtime. The building has no shower facilities for detainees, and lacks a matron/juvenile soft cell. Furthermore, there is no secure area to hold a detainee during booking, and as it contains the only fingerprint machine, equipment also utilized by the public for certain firearm permits. The building also has limited space and environmental controls for lab (small space with no windows) and evidence processing and storage. While the building contains two basement garage spaces, it lacks sufficient space for vehicle and maintenance storage and has no impound bay. During winter months, vehicles must be washed inside the garage bays, and the lack of covered parking can reduce response time during winter weather events. Furthermore, secure storage for materials such as road signs and sawhorses is relegated to the untampered, outside storage container.

The roll call room also serves as the break room for officers, and the locker rooms are undersized to meet the personnel needs. The male locker room totals 300SF and the female locker room totals 138SF, where 500SF and 250SF respectively is preferred. Administrative support staff have significantly limited space and are not always in the optimal location for adjacencies to critical staff. Office spaces for personnel are undersized and located in sub-optimal locations, some without outside ventilation, and others in shared spaces. The Communications Department including dispatch, 911 equipment and office space is all shared in a limited space of 723SF. The building lacks accessible space for community meeting areas and personnel training. In addition, although the building has a gym/weight room, the facilities are limited and are situated on the inaccessible second floor with no restroom facilities.

2.1.4 Current and Future Programmatic Needs

In compliance with MAAB, it is recommended that public buildings be accessible to the disabled. As such, PPD desires to have a facility that is fully accessible to the public. Staffing levels are expected to increase slightly over the next several decades, and office, conference/meeting rooms and support spaces should be right-sized and to support the current programmatic needs of the department. Locker room facilities should be right sized, and publically accessible restroom facilities provided.

Appropriate detention cells, booking areas, juvenile areas, surveillance, and shower facilities should be provided to meet current needs. In addition, mechanical systems with environmental controls to support lab facilities and evidence storage are needed. Separation of dispatch and 911 and associated IT equipment should be provided. Training space/community room spaces are also needed to support public safety needs. A large space for an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is also required to allow police, fire and other emergency operations staff to stand up a coordinated public safety response in

the event of a public safety emergency due to weather or other disaster (ie. Lawrence gas explosion). The lack of this type of space in proximity to support facilities such as showers, temporary dorms and public information areas diminishes the public safety department response to emergency situations.

2.2 Pepperell Fire Department

2.2.1 Existing Facility

The Pepperell Fire Department is served by two stations – Park Street and Jersey Street Stations.

2.2.1.1 Park Street Fire Station

The one-story Park Street Fire Station (aka Station Two) is located at 38 Park Street. Constructed in 1979, the purpose-built building was designed by architect Douglas G. Prescott. The 4,704 GSF building is situated on a 63,441 GSF lot with 150 feet of frontage. The assessed value of the building is \$575,100 (FY21).

Regulatory Context

The building is located in the Town Residence zoning district and the Sewer Overlay district. The site is defined by the Assessor as a Government parcel (14-159-0) classified as an Improved, Selectmen or City Council building, and an Institutional land use (note: there are buildings on the parcel – the fire station and the DPW pumping station). The building is located in an area of minimal flood hazard (minimal risk areas outside of the 1% or .2% floodplains). Behind the Fire Station (westerly side of property and next to the property - southerly side of property) are bordering vegetated wetlands that are jurisdictional under the MA WPA. If work is proposed within 100' of bordering vegetated wetlands, a Request for Determination of Applicability would have to be filed with the Conservation Commission. If work will fill or impact a wetland, the filing of a Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission would be required.

The Park Street Fire Station is a non-contributing building in the Pepperell Center Historic District, a district listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Description of Site and Building

The site is predominately paved and has ten defined parking spaces. Access is from Park Street with vehicular access to both sides of the building. The building consists of a two-bay garage section and a fire department headquarters facility. Two overhead garage doors are situated on each side of the garage section of the building. The building is handicapped accessible. There are no known structural deficiencies associated with the building, and there is no current structural assessment of the building. The floor is a poured, reinforced concrete pad that is exposed in the garage and tile-covered in the headquarters. The peaked roof building is constructed of concrete block. The walls are predominately painted concrete block, and the ceiling is a suspended tile. Windows are vinyl replacement sash.

The building is heated by a natural gas fired furnace, located in the east mechanical room, supplying forced hot air through ducts in the attic. The 120/208V main electrical service is located in the chief's office which also houses the main fire alarm panel. The garage is equipped with a vehicle exhaust recovery system funding via a federal grant. The building has no fire protection system. The building is served by town water and sewer.

2.2.1.2 Jersey Street Fire Station

The Jersey Street Fire Station (aka Station Three) is located at 47 Lowell Road. Constructed in ca. 1955, the 48'x50' steel frame north section was designed as a Mass Electric Garage. The 48'x50' south section, constructed in 1997, was designed by Haynes, Lieneck & Smith Architects to serve as additional garage space for the Pepperell Fire Department. The 4,703 GSF building is situated on a 78,408 GSF lot with approximately 200 feet of frontage. The assessed value of the building is \$412,500 (FY21).

Regulatory Context

The building is located in the Suburban Residence zoning district, the Sewer Overlay district and the Aquifer-Watershed Protection Zone. This protection zone allows for buildings, but limited impervious area to 15% of the parcel. The site is defined by the Assessor as a Government parcel (31-16-0) classified as an improved municipal public safety building, and an Institutional land use. The building is located in an area of minimal flood hazard, but the adjacent DPW yard is close to the two municipal wells on Jersey Street and wetlands.

Description of Site and Building

The site accommodates 15 surface parking spaces for department vehicles, personnel vehicles, and public parking. Accessible from Lowell Road via the shared driveway with the Department of Public Works (DPW), situated south of the fire station, the site is largely paved with a greenspace along the roadway with a fire department memorial. A large metal storage container is located at the south side of the building.

The building is a single-story, high-bay garage space. Each section of the building has three bays served by overhead garage doors facing west. The building is handicapped accessible. There are no known structural deficiencies associated with the building, and there is no current structural assessment of the building. The floor is a poured, reinforced concrete pad. The walls and ceiling are metal with exposed steel structure. A small lounge space is located on the second level of the small enclosed space at the northeast corner of the south section above a storage room and restroom. A single level equipment storage room is located at the southeast corner of the north section.

The building is heated by ceiling hung, natural gas forced hot air heaters in each garage section. The 120/208V main electrical service is located in the south section adjacent to the main fire alarm panel. The building is has no fire protection system. The building is served by town water and sewer.

2.2.2 Existing Program

The PFD has daily representation of a full-time fire chief, one full-time firefighter/paramedic, one per diem EM, and one part-time administrative assistant. The PFD maintains five full-time firefighter paramedics, and additional per diem or part time EMS personnel as well as on call firefighters and EMTs. PFD has two deputy-fire chiefs, three captains, and five lieutenant EMT/firefighters. The PFD operates out of two stations (Park Street – Station 2, and Jersey Street – Station 3). Personnel are assigned to the stations based upon geographic location to their residences to allow for the most rapid response time possible to emergency calls. (Note: Station 1, aka Foster Street Fire Station, no longer exists.)

2.2.2.1 Park Street Fire Station

The Park Street Fire Station serves as the headquarters for the PFD. The garage section houses one engine, a tanker truck, and the PFDs two ambulances. In the headquarters section, an office for the fire chief, the PFD communications center and administrative assistant workstations are present. The space also provides a single-bed sleeping quarters, a small kitchen, two locker rooms (one is out of service), and the mechanical room. A large open, multi-purpose space serves as the dining area, community space, meeting room and fire chief's plan review area.

2.2.2.2 Jersey Street Fire Station

The Jersey Street Fire Station has no full-time, on-site personnel. The facility is utilized by on call fire fighters. The building houses four engines, the ladder truck, a boat and trailer, an off-road vehicle (trailer housed outside), a flood light and support equipment including hoses, etc. The small lounge space on the second floor of the south section houses several sofas and a computer station. An industrial grade washing machine to launder protective equipment is located in an abandoned restroom in the north section.

2.2.3 Existing Facility Deficiencies

2.2.3.1 Park Street Fire Station

The Park Street Fire Station lacks a fire protection system to support a garage space and headquarters. The size of the garage is limiting options for acquiring equipment. Presently, apparatus must be parked in such close proximity that there is only inches between the rear of the vehicles in each bay and close to the building walls. The building lacks adequate sleeping quarters for personnel, and the chief's office is too small to support maintaining the department and building records, daily activities, and plan review for building projects. The kitchen is extremely aged and inadequate, and the day room lacks space and has no meeting room. One locker room is off-line and the remaining space is aged.

2.2.3.2 Jersey Street Fire Station

The Jersey Street Fire Station lacks a fire protection system to support a garage space. The building has no cooling (with the exception of a window unit in the second floor lounge space). It lacks all personnel facilities beyond the use as a fire station garage. The building has no washing system or mechanical garage area to service the apparatus. In addition, the Jersey Street Fire Station has no vehicle exhaust recovery system to minimize personnel exposure to diesel emissions from idling fire apparatus, and is ineligible for a federal grant as the station is not staffed 24 hours per day.

2.2.4 Current and Future Programmatic Needs

In compliance with the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB), it is recommended that public buildings be accessible to the disabled. As such, PFD desires to have facilities that are fully accessible to the public. To adequately meet the needs of the community, there will be an increase in the number of career staff of the new few years. This is a shift from reliance on paid, on-call personnel. Spaces should be right-sized to support the current programmatic needs of the department and the future increase to more career personnel. Locker room facilities should be right sized, and publicly accessible restroom facilities provided.

The current facilities do not meet the current needs for garage space, work space, offices, training spaces and storage. It is anticipated that a new ambulance should be purchased within the next several years, and current space limitations at Park Street will limit the options for replacement. In addition, dormitory space for three staff in four shifts is anticipated. Surge space for up to 16 personnel is also recommended in the event of an emergency situation (ie. blizzard, flood, etc). To support the department, adequate locker room facilities are needed for up to 30 personnel as well as decontamination/shower equipment, and training space for up to 50 people is desired. Adequate office space for the chief, fire prevention, administrative assistant, officers and EMS to write reports is needed. Adequate storage for plans/records, medical and firefighting equipment and EMS supplies is also needed. Support spaces including adequate kitchen facilities and a day room are needed as well as a physical fitness area.

2.3 Dispatch and Communications

The Town is part of a regional dispatch center, known as Patriot Regional Emergency Communications (PREC), which provides dispatch services for the Towns of Pepperell and Ashby (currently in negotiations with Townsend). The Dispatch Center provides emergency communications for police and fire departments.

2.3.1 Existing Facility

The PREC is located on the first floor of the PPD building, and communicates with public safety personnel via a communications tower situated on the roof of the building. A second communications tower is located at 102 Townsend Street on the Pepperell Water Tower. The PREC Dispatch Center and its associated IT infrastructure was installed in 2020, and the communications tower on the roof was installed in 1988.

2.3.2 Existing Program

The PREC is staffed by the Communications Director, which serves as the department head and reports to the Town Administrator, and seven full-time dispatchers and two part-time dispatchers. The part-time dispatchers work a four day on and two day off rotation. Two dispatchers work the day shift; two dispatchers work the night shift; and one dispatcher works overnight.

2.3.2 Existing Facility Deficiencies

The PREC Dispatch Center has limited square footage within the police station facility. The space has no dedicated offices for the Communications Director or Dispatch Supervisors. The space has a single point of access/egress. It lacks a dedicated kitchen/break room and locker room with showers. As part of the police station facility, the space exhibits the same MEP and finishes deficiencies as the rest of the building. The communications tower is aged, and the building's electrical system and emergency power is at capacity which limits renewal of the tower as well as the building. The tower will require replacement if Dispatch is moved. The water tower site has an aged electrical system with battery backup for emergency power which should be replaced with an emergency generator.

2.3.3 Current and Future Programmatic Needs

The PREC program lacks sufficient space to separate daily operations (offices) from the dispatch floor. Furthermore, the IT equipment supporting the Dispatch Center is in a vulnerable location sharing space with mechanical and plumbing equipment in the basement. The building's communication

tower and associated electrical equipment is at supply capacity, and the water tower communications tower site requires a more robust emergency backup power supply.

Should Townsend join the regional dispatch center (possibly by July 2021), two additional dispatchers should be hired to ensure two dispatchers are available 24 hours a day. This redundancy of personnel ensures that two emergency calls can be handled concurrently.

2.4 Emergency Operations Garage

The Town has an Emergency Management Garage (replacement building under construction) located on the Town Hall site. This 40'x30' steel structure with a concrete foundation and two garage bays will hold two Auxiliary Police cruisers and two utility trailers plus Emergency Management and Board of Health supplies. The building has electrical service but no heating or plumbing.

2.5 Conclusion

Upon review of the existing conditions of police, fire and dispatch/communications facilities and their current and future programmatic needs, the Building Committee has determined the facilities lack adequate space and have inadequate MEP FA/FP services to meet the current and future needs of the public safety departments for the Town.

3.0 Options for Public Safety Facilities

Although the PPD and PFD have operated within separate facilities historically, co-locating these two public safety departments is recommended by the Building Committee. The co-location of these departments will provide shared use of spaces where appropriate, reduce facility operating costs, and strengthen communications on a daily basis and during emergencies.

3.1 Potential Site Locations

3.1.1 Site Selection Parameters

- *Zoning:* Fire and Police Stations are allowed in all zoning districts with various minimum lot sizes, and all districts, with the exception of the Mixed Use Overlay District (60 feet), have a maximum building height of 35 feet (however exceptions allowed by Planning Board approval in the Urban Residence and Commercial districts). It is preferable to locate a new public safety complex outside of areas prone to flooding.
- *Proximity to Population Center:* In an effort to maintain reasonable private property owner insurance rates, locating public safety facilities in proximity to occupied structures is preferred. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) Rating is an independent, for-profit organization that scores fire departments against its standards to determine property insurance cost, and assigns Public Protection Classification (PPC) on a scale of 1-10 (Class 1 being the best). Pepperell has a PPC of 5/9 that was completed 8 to 9 years ago. Rating 5 is within the water district, while areas beyond 1000 feet of the water district has a rating of 9.
- *Proximity to Major Roadways:* To maintain and improve response times in emergencies, it is preferable to locate public safety departments in proximity to major roadways in town. By locating on major roadways, apparatus and personnel can easily access the public safety apparatus, and apparatus can quickly deploy to all parts of the community. Furthermore, major roadways are the first streets cleared during weather-related emergencies making access easier for public safety apparatus.
- *Maintain Coverage:* The Town is traversed by the Nashua River, creating a natural barrier in the event of an emergency. Should the river reach such a stage as to overtake the vehicular bridges that cross the body of water or the dam be breached, a public safety presence is recommended on both sides of the town. As such, the PFD recommends maintaining one fire station headquarters with the primary apparatus garage and one fire substation within the town to ensure 24/7 coverage. In the event of a weather-related emergency, apparatus and personnel would be pre-deployed to provide coverage to both sides of the Town. This also provides better response times by apparatus to emergency situations than a single location as personnel must arrive from their homes in different parts of town.

3.2 Property Type

3.2.1 Town-owned Property

Utilizing property already under the ownership of the Town will avoid the cost to acquire a site, and will not result in lowering the tax levy by removing a parcel from the tax rolls. Due to the limited additional site area at the PPD, the Main Street site is unsuitable for a public safety complex. The Park Street Fire Station site is also too small to accommodate the apparatus garage required to

support the PFD and PPD. The Jersey Street Fire Station site is adjacent to the DPW facility and may have sufficient space to support additional garage bays and a public safety headquarters for both departments. Other town-owned property may also be eligible for site selection upon further review of their site constraints.

3.2.2 Privately-owned Property

Privately owned property could be an option for a new public safety complex. A careful analysis of sites meeting the criteria for site selection described in this report is recommended. The cost of acquiring a new site should also be factored into the analysis.

4.0 Recommendations to Town Meeting

4.1 Construct New Public Safety Complex

New Construction

The Building Committee recommends the Town construct a new public safety complex to meet the current and future needs of the PPD and PFD including dispatch/communications. Following evaluation of the existing departments and facilities by a qualified architectural/engineering firm, a building program should be executed to satisfy the programmatic needs of the departments, and where possible provide shared facilities to support all programs to maximize usable square footage and minimize overall project costs and long-term operating costs.

Renewal of Existing Facilities

As part of any approach to a public safety complex, the reuse by the Town of any existing buildings must be part of the project. Notably, if any existing buildings are retained for use by a department, the project must include the renewal scope to continue to effectively serve their intended purpose.

Previous Renewal Projects & Designs

Police Station (former Shattuck School): A three-phase renovation of the former Shattuck School was initiated in 1988. The intent of the plan was to co-locate the entirety of the police department, the fire department headquarters and the communications department into one facility. Although the basement and first floors were fit out for the three departments as Phase 1, the execution of the remaining phases (phases 2 and 3) of the project was not completed. In addition, the MEP FA/FP systems continued to deteriorate over the last three decades resulting in the failure of the mechanical system and capacity issues for the electrical and fire alarm systems. In addition, the finishes (such as restrooms and locker rooms) are in poor condition. The basement and second floors remain inaccessible, and the existing accessible lift at the first floor is failing. Furthermore, the fire department relocated to the Park Street Fire Station following the IAQ issues, and their space has been reallocated to the Communications Department.

Park Street Fire Station: A conceptual design to improve workplace conditions for the fire department was developed in 2019 for the Park Street Fire Station. The conceptual design reorganized existing square footage to provide functional locker rooms, offices and a conference room as well as adequate storage and usable kitchen space. It also proposed a modest addition to provide suitable bunk rooms and a day room for fire department personnel. Notably, the concept design also provided a sprinkler system and improved fire alarm. This concept design did not address deficiencies in the apparatus bays.

Disposal of Existing Facilities

Should any buildings be retired from their current use, and the Town seeks to adaptively reuse them for a municipal purpose or to dispose of them, the buildings must be maintained while unused (at a minimum mothballing) until such as time as they are disposed of by the Town. Disposal of the property should be part of any new public safety project to ensure the structures do not deteriorate and may be reused. The Committee recommends referring any reuse or disposal of buildings to the Economic Development and/or Affordable Housing committees.

4.2 Request Funding from Town Meeting to Solicit Proposals to Conduct Conceptual Design for New Public Safety Complex

The Building Committee recommends the Town engage in a concept design effort to include, at a minimum, the following scope:

- Study of existing conditions and programmatic needs of fire and police departments including dispatch/communications
- Conduct site evaluation of town-owned and private properties
- Develop concept design for site and building layout
- Develop recommendations for existing building renewal scope and/or disposal
- Provide order of magnitude cost estimates for concept design, renewal of existing buildings, and mothballing and/or disposal of properties

4.3 Timeline for Public Safety Complex

January 2021 – April 2021: Community Informational Sessions (online due to Covid 19)

May 2021: Town Meeting Request for Conceptual Design Funding