



CITY OF WAUWATOSA
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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Tuesday, December 18, 2007 – 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Alds. Herzog, Krill, Maher, Meaux, Minear, Purins, Stepaniak, Treis, Becker, Birschel, Didier, Donegan, Ewerdt, Grimm, Hanson -15

EXCUSED: Ald. Krol

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Archambo, City Administrator; Mr. Kesner, City Attorney; Mr. Braier, Finance Director; Fire Chief Redman; Deputy Fire Chief Rice

Ald. Becker in the Chair

Fire Station Project. John Sabinash, Zimmerman Architectural Studios, Inc., stated that his presentation would cover how project costs were generated, and would address eight questions identified by the Committee at the last meeting.

The grand total projected construction cost is \$8,000,000 -- \$6,700,000 for a 32,200-square foot building, and \$1,300,000 for 18,000 square feet of parking construction. The cost model is \$210/square foot. This compares with a square foot cost of \$194.50 in 2008 dollars for a Waukesha fire station and \$226.85/square foot for a Pewaukee facility.

‘Soft’ costs (professional fees, utilities, telecom/technology, furniture/fixtures and equipment, special equipment, occupancy costs and administrative costs) total approximately \$2,900,000.

Site acquisition costs (property purchases, demolition, site clean-up, fill, fees and contingencies) for the north location are projected at \$1,600,000, and at \$900,000 for the south site. ‘Enabling’ costs (temporary trailer housing, transport, set-up/take-down, utilities, technology and temporary apparatus) are estimated at \$900,000.

Question #1. In addressing the question of why there are square footage differences between the different locations, Mr. Sabinash explained that no building design exists as yet. What they did was make sure each site was viable; variations occur based upon the lot configuration, setbacks and other limitations of the location. In many instances, both the north and middle proposals allocate more space for certain uses than is specified in the proposal. For example, the north site supports a larger lobby than what is proposed, but a smaller maintenance area. The shallower depth of the north site precludes designing bays as deep as that permitted on the middle site. Once actual design work begins on the selected site, modifications will be made to bring these square footage figures into line with proposed figures so far as possible.

Ald. Donegan expressed concern that square footage allocations for administrative, classroom and lobby uses seem to come at the expense of equipment maintenance space, despite the department’s

claims that it is starved for maintenance square footage. If the proposed sites cannot adequately accommodate maintenance needs to reflect contemporary station design standards, that may be an argument for relocation of that activity. What is driving the design?

Mr. Sabinash reiterated that with any construction project, certain concessions must be made to accommodate the unique properties of the selected site while providing, so far as possible, flexible square footage that will serve a facility for 75-100 years. The drawings submitted thus far are not designs, but simply depict what can be fit onto a site. Once the site is selected design work begins to accommodate the various functions within the 32,200-square foot figure.

It was noted that relocating certain functions had been considered, based on an administrative function of about 6,000 square feet and a maintenance function of about 7,000 square feet. This would leave a fire station facility of approximately 20,000 square feet. The existing facility has 18,000 square feet. A question was raised concerning the net usable space in the existing building, excluding the apparatus function. The figure was not immediately available.

Chief Redman added that departmental needs and activities were balanced against the merits/shortcomings of proposed locations. The department is compromising the apparatus and maintenance operations somewhat, but the entire facility must be viewed as a package. The department can function with a 2,837-square foot maintenance bay and 6,821 square feet for the apparatus bays on the north site, though if more land depth were available, those areas could be expanded.

Ald. Maher sought assurance that proper analysis was performed when considering – and rejecting – the notion of separating and relocating departmental functions. If all functions are being ‘made to fit’ on the Underwood site, perhaps the relocation issue should be revisited.

Ald. Krill countered that the Community Development Committee had devoted much time to the level and types of activities conducted on the Underwood site and are satisfied that they should remain there.

Ald. Treis pointed out that the contract with Milwaukee County for the fire station on Watertown Plank Road precludes relocating activities to that site; the Mayfair Road facility itself will likely be facing major renovation within the next 40 years.

Question #2. The Committee had directed that reductions of 10-15% and 15-20% in the administrative/support/public/classroom and fire fighter spaces be considered, and corresponding cost savings identified.

Mr. Sabinash stated that in some instances, dimensions are dictated by building codes such that spaces cannot be made smaller without being completely eliminated. Future department needs must also be weighed when considering reductions, and how those reductions could impact functionality. Moving mechanical operations to the roof may result in square footage savings, but may not result in cost savings. A 10-15% reduction represents a 1,000-2000 net square foot savings, while a 15-20% reduction means 1,300 – 2,600 less gross square feet. This translates into a saving of \$162,000 - \$325,000.

This dollar value return must be balanced against functionality. For example, the ladder and ambulance bays must be of sufficient width and depth so that staff can access the vehicle from the sides and back to reach equipment. The deputy chief’s office can be made smaller now, but that means in the future it could not house more than one staff person

Question #3. Parking requirements were also revisited at the Committee's request. The north and south sites achieve targeted parking requirements (45), while the middle site can only provide 32. Command vehicle parking must be accommodated, as must parking for 2-4 police vehicles throughout the day. Overlapping shift-change periods must be planned for, as well as parking for visitors, training session participants, employment interviews and facility tours. The north site, if selected, will result in the loss of ten on-street parking places. It is uncertain whether some of these can be replaced to the south. Parking for businesses at the south end of Underwood Avenue must be preserved.

Deputy Chief Rice added that empty parking stalls are also used for laying out hoses and for extending the aerial ladders for testing or training. When the city experienced flooding several years ago, fire station #1 was used as a staging area and temporarily housed equipment from other departments via mutual aid agreements.

In addressing the suggestion that the city rent parking stalls in a nearby church lot, Chief Redman pointed out the lot is unavailable on Sundays and on school days. To the south of the fire station are very limited options for possible parking rental. It is assumed that parking requirements may increase over the life of the facility, though there will not likely be a significant staff increase in the future.

Discussion ensued concerning the pros and cons of underground parking. Reliance on surface parking only lowers construction costs, but eliminates the possibility that a 'remnant' parcel could later be sold for redevelopment. Questions were raised about how the use and/or elimination of underground parking would affect building orientation. It was noted that the underground parking is critical to the proposed 'middle' station location.

It was agreed that Committee of the Whole meetings will be scheduled weekly, if necessary, for the foreseeable future. The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, City Clerk

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