



CITY OF WAUWATOSA  
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**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**Tuesday, January 22, 2008 – 7:00 p.m.**

PRESENT: Alds. Krol (7:22 p.m.), Maher (7:10 p.m.), Meaux (7:05 p.m.), Purins, Stepaniak, Treis, Becker, Birschel, Didier, Donegan, Ewerdt, Grimm, Hanson -13

ABSENT: Ald. Minear

EXCUSED: Alds. Herzog and Krill

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Archambo, City Administrator; Fire Chief Redman; Mr. Kesner, City Attorney; Deputy Chief Rice; John Sabinash, Zimmerman Architectural Studios

Ald. Becker in the Chair

**Fire Station Project.** Mr. Archambo explained that he would speak to the parking issue; Chief Redman would address departmental needs; Mr. Sabinash, Zimmerman Architectural Studios, would speak about compromises to be made if the proposed budget figure is reduced.

Mr. Archambo noted that if the Committee is not yet comfortable with setting a tentative budget figure (to include in a referendum question), one option would be to undertake the design process first. Once the project is bid out, and hard costs are identified, the issue could then be sent to referendum.

Chief Redman stated that in a May 2006 study performed by Zimmerman, program needs were identified within the context of properly designed operational areas. In referring to a number of charts, the Chief explained that the blue areas show current space; pink identifies unmet needs, and the balance defines program needs per the 2006 study.

Apparatus and maintenance functions. Having underground parking (and the resulting additional surface space) addresses some maintenance/apparatus and operational needs, and is an operational issue only to that extent. Accordingly, staff is comfortable with the proposed project despite some limitations. If the underground parking or surface parking to the north is eliminated, it is recommended that the building be reoriented on the site.

Designs cannot meet 100 percent of the apparatus needs on the locations under consideration. The existing lot is 30 feet deeper than are some properties immediately north. Locating bays on shallower parcels will necessitate construction of shorter bays.

(Ald. Meaux present 7:05 p.m.) -11

Cost. The May 2006 study presented two conceptual buildings costing an estimated \$11.2 or \$11.4 million dollars in total project costs. Either would require the acquisition of additional property. They do

not include underground parking, which if constructed, could bring total project costs to about \$12.5 million dollars. In both instances, a 31,160 sq. ft. building is envisioned.

(Ald. Maher present 7:10 p.m.) -12

Chief Redman noted that during discussions of possible property acquisitions north of the existing site, the owner of the adjacent lot should be contacted as he is willing to discuss selling off a 30' x 62' section of his lot in order to allow deeper bays to be constructed. Inasmuch as that property on Church Street is within the Historic District, such a land division may have additional challenges.

Chief Redman showed current apparatus bay configurations at all three stations. If shorter bays are constructed at station #1, a reserve engine cannot be housed behind a rescue squad. Station #2 is full, and houses two reserve engines. Station #3 is also full of equipment. There is no reserve ladder truck, but in either 2010 or 2013 the purchase of a new ladder truck will replace one of the engines. However, a ladder truck is longer than an engine truck; while staff would like to relocate a ladder truck to station #1, it cannot do so because of the shorter bays projected to be built.

Program Areas. The requested space has not varied from that proposed in the May 2006 report. The conceptual drawings presented previously simply show that all needs can be configured to fit on different parcels; the sizes of the different areas were not reflective of the recommendations of the report. The actual building will reflect the sizes proposed in the report for different functions. There is no intent to enlarge the building beyond the proposed 31,160 sq. ft. size.

It is likely that dormitory areas will be located above administrative offices; as such, some personal living space may be larger only because the activity below (administration) requires that square footage. The plan will not contain 'fluff.' Needs were defined based upon jobs to be done, methods for performing those jobs, and personnel required to perform them. The total proposed price is high, but it encompasses design, demolition, acquisition, construction, possible staging, and associated costs.

Mr. Archambo stated that he visited a newly construction fire station in Waukesha. Its size and staffing are substantially similar to that proposed for Wauwatosa; it is bounded by three streets and has a 23-stall parking lot. On-street parking is utilized, and some stalls in a lot across the street are used. There is no underground parking largely because the basement of the old building flooded regularly. The call count between the two departments is similar.

(Ald. Krol present 7:22 p.m.) -13

The city's proposal is for 35 underground parking stalls; accommodations must be made for 12 city-owned fleet vehicles, 8 day staff, 12 on-duty staff and 3 miscellaneous vehicles. Proposed parking to the north must accommodate other parking, i.e., on-street parking lost due to construction, crew changes involving up to 12 vehicles, 3 handicapped stalls, and approximately 10 visitor stalls. Plentiful on-street parking is not available in this area and what there is ought to be reserved for business patrons. The proposed north lot can be considered something of a mixed-use lot that will have some availability to the public.

Mr. Archambo next addressed the possibility of leasing parking from neighboring churches. St. Matthew's Lutheran Church is not willing to exchange their current parking lot on the west side of Underwood Avenue for property farther south on the street. That lot is currently leased by the school district for use by school staff. The most the church would offer is the possibility of leasing some spaces in the lot. This offer, however, would not materially affect the dynamics of the fire station project.

Wauwatosa Avenue United Methodist Church is not interested in leasing parking stalls within its parking structure. They already lease a few stalls to a nearby law firm.

Mr. Archambo stated that he compiled some data from the six most recent Village projects and calculated the city-only property tax. The average value of the property is \$4.4 million dollars per acre. The current fire station proposal leaves the ability to sell off a one-half acre parcel for private development. If developed, data suggests that the value on that half-acre may be about \$2.2 million dollars. A developer could perhaps acquire other small adjacent properties to increase the lot size. On average, if this remnant parcel were developed, a tax value of \$14,344 for the one-half acre could be expected. If this figure were multiplied over 75 years (the proposed life of a new fire station), the amount would be \$1.075 million dollars. The cost of underground parking is \$1.3 million dollars. It is thought the remnant parcel can be sold for \$300,000. Based upon this analysis, staff does not recommend removing the underground parking from the project.

John Sabinash, Zimmermann Architectural Studios, reviewed opportunities to reduce project costs and the resulting compromises that would occur if implemented. Proposed space needs were also compared with actual space allocations at the Waukesha facility:

- No recommendation is made to reduce site parking
- Public entry, lobby space, and support work area square footage is proposed at 1,070 sq. ft. versus 1,232 sq. ft. actual at Waukesha (20% larger)
- Administrative area proposed square footage is 3,640 versus 3,431 actual in Waukesha; this figure could be reduced to 3,160 by reducing office sizes and storage
- The classroom/training area is already proposed to be substantially smaller than in Waukesha (450 sq. ft. versus 875 sq. ft.), though training storage is larger. The citizens' ad hoc committee had identified the Waukesha space as being more usable in the long term.
- Firefighter space (sleeping, dining, recreation, laundry, wellness, personal care) space is proposed at 3,390 sq. ft. in Wauwatosa, compared to the actual 4,487 sq. ft. in Waukesha
- Apparatus/operations areas in the proposal and at Waukesha are very similar (8,282 sq. ft., fire station project, versus 8,145 sq. ft. in Waukesha)
- Equipment/maintenance functions are not housed at the Waukesha station, so comparisons are not made.
- Building maintenance/miscellaneous functions can be targeted for a reduction in interior mechanical equipment, but that would not reduce square footage
- Square footage between the Waukesha station (30,740 sq. ft.) and the proposed Wauwatosa station (31,160 sq. ft.) is very close

Mr. Sabinash examined the project changes that would be required to deliver a total project under \$10 million dollars:

- Reduce interior parking from 32 stall to 10 stalls  
Savings: Construction cost, \$850,000; soft cost, \$110,000
- Construct a 25-50 year building instead of a 75-100 year building  
Savings: Construction cost, \$450,000; soft cost, \$65,000
- Relocate the mechanical system to the roof  
Savings: Construction cost, \$185,000; soft cost, \$25,000
- Reduce space (cut one apparatus bay, 1,800 sq. ft., cut Administration by 10%, cut Maintenance service by 10%)  
Savings: Construction costs, \$860,000; soft costs, \$174,000

Mr. Sabinash observed that Waukesha did not achieve longevity in its newest station. A shorter-life building will be less adaptable and have fewer sustainable ideas. If the mechanical system is relocated to the roof, the equipment will perform similarly, but will have a shorter life (15 years vs. 25 years, a 40% difference). If one apparatus bay is cut, the ability to house equipment, and some flexibility, is lost. Some of these options are more or less acceptable. (He also noted he would provide a corrected copy of his handout, which was found to contain a consistent error in the first line of Waukesha data.)

Ken Ehley, 7437 Kenwood Avenue, Treasurer of the Wauwatosa Business Improvement District, voiced support for the construction of underground parking. Utilizing only surface parking limits Village development opportunities.

Mr. Archambo commented that the Committee could opt to complete the design process and bid out the project before taking the issue to referendum, thereby having hard numbers to work from. The design work is estimated to cost about \$360,000 and would be an expense incurred regardless of whether the work was done before or after the referendum.

Chief Redman responded to a query about acquiring the 30-foot parcel adjacent to the current property, explaining that deeper apparatus bay lengths could be constructed if this property were acquired. The current bays are 80 feet deep, whereas the proposed bays (without the benefit of this additional property) would only be 50 feet deep. The additional space would allow for the storage of reserve apparatus. The Department has had to turn down offers to donate apparatus because there is no place to store it. The Chief clarified that the additional property would make it possible to reach defined program needs; the budget was based on achieving these program needs. The budget allocation for property acquisition would likely not have to be adjusted upward were the property purchased.

Ald. Krol suggested that spending over \$300,000 on design work may be 'too much, too soon.' He wondered whether the costs could be phased, whether acquisition of four properties north of the current station can be achieved, or whether it was possible to construct the station if just the two duplexes were and the 30-foot parcel were purchased.

Mr. Archambo acknowledged that it was possible to proceed with the project even if all four of the properties to the north of the current site are not acquired. However, if the north parking lot were eliminated, there would have to be more reliance on on-street parking, and construction timelines may be affected due to staging issues. The building may have to be reoriented on the site. Furthermore, there may be no remnant parcel left to sell.

Mr. Sabinash added that under a scenario where all of the properties are not purchased, a three-story building may have to be constructed. However, there is a height limitation of 34 feet in this zoning district and it would be difficult to fit three stories within a 34-foot commercial building. Uses (i.e., administration or firefighter living space) would possibly have to be spread out over more than one floor.

Ald. Stepaniak opined that investing in a 25-50 year building does not make good investment sense. As technology evolves, fire equipment changes. Will it require more space? More personnel to operate? How will development opportunities in the future impact demands on the fire department?

Chief Redman responded that the level of ambulance service calls must be considered in long range development. New construction has built-in fire protection, so current staffing levels and apparatus will likely suffice for many years, though it may be necessary to increase fire prevention staff because of new inspection demands. More specialized equipment in the future may require more storage space.

Ald. Stepaniak noted that underground parking seems to make sense since future expansion would require property on which to do so. In 1998 fire equipment decisions were made (the decision to use Quints) that led us to where the city is today. That decision has saved the city \$700,000 annually in operating costs. In a way, that decision ten years ago 'paid' for another fire station.

Ald. Birschel inquired whether an underground maintenance bay could be constructed. Mr. Sabinash replied that that would require considerable study due to the topography of the parcel; the land to the north is flatter. The opportunity to provide parking density lessens as that function is moved south.

Ald. Purins noted that building immediately to the south of the fire station should be discouraged, as this is where future expansion would need to occur. Mr. Sabinash concurred that possibly the parcel immediately south could be reserved for future expansion.

Ald. Donegan asked for clarification concerning the use of the north parking lot. Deputy Chief Rice explained that it would be in use during business hours (i.e., for shift changes, visitors, etc.) and would be more available for public use during the evenings and on weekends. It would be somewhat accessible to the public during the day.

In addressing the potential cost savings Mr. Sabinash identified previously, Mr. Archambo stressed that these are only estimates, as actual costs would not be identified until the project was bid out. In terms of referendum wording, it is likely the project will run between \$10.6 and \$12.5 million dollars. Mr. Archambo reiterated that if reductions to the plan greater than 10-15% are made, the underground parking is automatically eliminated from consideration. He cautioned against do so. Additionally, a reduction beyond 10-15% dictates the design process to the extent that some energy efficiency measures could not be used. The new Waukesha station reflects many compromises; the resulting high energy costs are the result of some of these compromises. Currently, energy costs are Wauwatosa's third highest operating expense.

Ald. Maher expressed frustration with the premise that maintenance activities need to be provided at the station located in one of the busiest areas of the city. Does this premise hold true from a long-term planning perspective? Could/should other functions be relocated in the future?

Mr. Archambo replied that given the cost of a separate, fourth location and the constraints on stations #2 and #3, maintenance almost has to occur at station #1. When looking into the future, an argument can be made for relocating station #2 if development along Burleigh Street occurs as projected. It may be that relocating certain functions will make sense at that time. The contract with the County for station #3 is favorable as the cost of several positions is included therein; no one wants to revisit that contract.

Chief Redman added that a maintenance bay at the new station #1 could be adapted to other uses should a decision be made in 15-20 years to relocate that function to a new station #2. Alternately, perhaps at some point it would be advisable to move the administration function to another station. Operationally, the important point is keeping these functions at a station.

Ald. Treis summarized several points: (1) Departmental needs have been identified. (2) Can a station largely meeting those needs be constructed on the present site and on property yet to be acquired? (3) An adjacent owner seems willing to sell off a 30-foot deep section of his lot which would improve the operational function of the bays. (4) The fire station will need one parking stall for every 500 square feet. (5) Mechanical equipment will last longer in the basement than on the roof. (6) If a basement is being constructed, underground parking is not an illogical extension of that construction. (7) The net cost of this project will be affected by the type of development that can be done on the parcel to the south.

Ald. Treis added that in 1942 the fire station moved to its current location from the building that now houses the Underwood Gallery. The old engines fit into the building on Underwood; current equipment could not, due to technological changes. The current facility faces the same dilemma; it can barely house today's equipment, and likely will be unable to accommodate tomorrow's. Continuing to delay a decision on this project means that construction costs will continue to rise.

It was moved by Ald. Treis, seconded by Ald. Birschel to recommend to the Common Council that the City proceed with the architectural design process on the assumption that necessary property will be acquired. –

Discussion ensued concerning the fact that contractors are being asked to bid on a project that may or may not be undertaken. Furthermore, adjacent property owners are still faced with the uncertain status of their properties. It was also suggested that voters ought to see a relatively unanimous vote of support for this project by the Council; a split vote does not bode well for the referendum.

Ald. Meaux stated he supports the referendum, but is not comfortable with spending design dollars in advance of referendum approval. He stressed that a successful referendum merely means the City has the authority to borrow a certain amount, not that it will necessarily spend that full amount. Ald. Becker concurred.

With the consent of the Second, Ald. Treis withdrew his motion.

It was moved by Ald. Krol, seconded by Ald. Maher to recommend to the Common Council that the City move forward with a referendum question that authorizes the borrowing of up to \$12.5 million dollars for the construction of a new fire station, which includes property acquisition and costs associated with a development design. –

Alds. Donegan and Didier indicated that before agreeing to the \$12.5 million dollar figure, they would like to see a narrative of the projected program impacts of the potential cost savings outlined previously by Mr. Sabinash.

Roll call vote, Ayes 8, Noes 5 (Birschel, Didier, Donegan, Ewerdt, Hanson)

Mr. Kesner noted that since there are two weeks until the next Common Council meeting (February 5), there should be sufficient time for the additional information to be provided. He indicated that he would be providing proposed referendum wording for the Committee's review. At the February 5th meeting, the Council can discuss the issue further, refine wording, request additional information, take action, or make a motion to hold.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Carla A. Ledesma, CMC, City Clerk

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