

A New Fire Station for Greensboro, Vermont: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why do we need a new fire station?

A: The current Greensboro firehouse building is very old. According to the Greensboro Historical Society, it was originally built around 1800 as the "South" schoolhouse. In 1912 it was bought by the fire company, moved across the street, and remodeled to become the town's first firehouse.

The current Greensboro firehouse is also much too small. We cannot replace any of the aging fire engines that reside there now because a newer vehicle will not fit. There is no water supply, no bathrooms, no space for meetings or training, and not even enough space for the required equipment. The small side-entry door is always open, and townspeople are encouraged to go see for themselves what the volunteer firemen have to work with. The floor between the vehicles is rotting away, so if you go in, it would be best not to walk there. Expect to be shocked by the tight quarters, and if you tend to claustrophobia it might be better to look from the doorway.

There is no possibility of enlarging the firehouse on its current land, as the plot is too small.

Also, if the Greensboro fire department is called out to another town on a mutual-aid alarm, normally another fire department stands by at the Greensboro firehouse as backup in case there is a Greensboro fire in the meantime. Only one town (Walden) has a fire engine that will fit in our current firehouse. If it is winter, and the Walden equipment is otherwise engaged, no backup is possible.

Q: How long have we been planning for a new fire station?

A: After four years of seeking, the town first bought land for the new fire station from the Hurst estate in 2007. It was located at the south-east corner of Breezy Avenue and Country Club Road. This land was later swapped in 2010 for a small portion of the Mountain View Country Club's land just one intersection south on Breezy Avenue. The new site is much preferable, and has the advantage of having already gone through the Act 250 process with the MVCC (and it will not have to be done again).

So, the planning has been continuing, with stops and starts as opportunity presented itself, for nine years.

Q: Where will the new fire station be located?

A: The new fire station will be on the corner of Breezy Avenue and Hardwick Street, directly across from the ballfield at the Four Corners. It will be well set back from Breezy Avenue.

The main doors at the front of the fire station will face Breezy Avenue, and there will be driveway entrances on both Breezy Avenue and Hardwick Street.

There will be ample driveway space to safely pull out for emergencies, and to maintain and clean the trucks.

Q: Where can I see the plans to find out what the new fire station will look like?

A: The plans and a scale model are on display in town hall. The new fire station is designed to blend into the Greensboro landscape in a style similar to a barn. It will have two cupolas, a dark gray roof and barn-like windows. The siding will be cementitious fireproof clapboards, painted (most likely) barn red. Window and door trim will be white. If you have ever seen the Swimming Hole building in Stowe, it has a similar color scheme.

Q: Why is the proposed new fire station so large?

A: Actually, it isn't. It is only adequate. It appears large because the old firehouse is so much too small. The new fire station has the features that the old firehouse should have but doesn't. It has the space that is needed, plus one bay for future growth, and no more. Some of the new features are mandated by the government, such as a decontamination shower. Also, many fire stations that you see with smaller footprints have two floors. Greensboro's proposed new fire station is all on one floor, which saves building costs, but produces a larger footprint.

Q: How many vehicles will fit in the new fire station?

A: The new fire station will have five bays— four for the four trucks we have now, plus one more bay for a future vehicle, which may be a boat.

Q: Will the new fire station have a siren?

A: The new fire station will have a siren in one of the cupolas, but it may not be turned on often. Most volunteer firemen live or work too far away to hear a fire station siren, and the primary method of calling them now is by radio.

Q: I have heard that the new fire station will require a water line extension. Why do we have to extend the village district water line to the new fire station?

A: We are required by the state to have a sprinkler system in the fire station. It would cost at least \$100,000 to provide the holding tank, water pressure, backup systems, and a drilled well to do this. There is some risk that we may not be able to accomplish this at all with a drilled well, since the site is problematic in terms of sufficient water and/or potable water. It would be much smarter to get the water from Water District #1, and to run the water line out to the site would not cost that much more.

Q: How much will the new fire station cost, and how will the town pay for it?

A: We already have the land, and it is paid for. Now we only need the new fire station itself and the water line extension. There will be a vote on Town Meeting Day (March 5, 2013) to approve a \$920,000 bond, to be paid back over 20 years, to cover both the fire station and the extension of the water line.

Before the vote there will be at least two warned hearings to allow voters to learn about the plans, see the design, and ask questions.

If we delay, every year the cost will go up, especially as the state may make new requirements at any time. Example: if we had built the new fire station before 2012, we would not have been required to install a sprinkler system.

Q: More questions? Please e-mail them to Erika Karp at erikalakeview@vtlink.net and we will research the answers and add them to this list.