



Metuchen Public Safety New Station Project Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

6/1/2023

Q: How old is the current facility?

A: The existing Firehouse was built in 1914 and the current EMS was built in 1955.

Q: Who is our Fire and EMS department?

A: Metuchen Fire Department started in 1882 and has been serving the Borough ever since. The Borough owns, administers, and maintains the land, building and equipment used for emergency response in the Borough's defined area. The firefighters and EMS themselves are **all volunteers**. They are your friends, neighbors, and relatives who have made a commitment to answer the call to respond to emergencies in the community. They train and meet frequently to keep up with mandated standards and to be best prepared when the call comes to serve.

Q: Why do we need facilities for volunteers?

A: Our volunteer emergency responders and support personnel save the taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars each year over what the cost would be if the staffing of our service was paid. The support spaces that provide for volunteer membership needs to encourage volunteer membership and participation and are an extremely cost effective solution to staffing requirements. Space for volunteers in the building promotes volunteer occupancy at the building and therefore quicker response times for emergency calls.

Q: How much will the project cost?

A: Total Hard and Soft costs will not exceed \$15,800,000.00. Hard costs are defined as the construction cost and soft costs are the fees associated with execution of the construction (legal fees, construction manager fees, architecture & engineering fees, testing, furnishing, etc.)

Q: How will the project be financed by Borough?

A: Borough is proposing spending of up to 16 million for the project. A 5% downpayment of \$761,905 was included in the 2023 Budget. We have requested grant aid in the amount of \$10 million, \$5 million federal aid and \$5 million in state aid. We have not heard back yet on our requests, and we would not go out to bond market for financing debt until we have received answers from both entities on our grant requests. The market would dictate interest on debt once we have grant funding answers. For short term financing we would get notes when we require them.

Q: Over what period will the bonds be repaid?

A: 30 years

Q: What are the reasons for the project and needed spaces?

A: There are several substantial deficiencies with the Firehouse building currently located on Middlesex Ave:

- The current Fire Station has many flaws. The building is a compilation of numerous buildings that have been combined over the years. There are many level changes and trip hazards throughout the entire building. Its maze-like design effects response time and safety. The overall building is undersized and the location on the site is very dangerous for pedestrians and the first responders.
- The volunteer members cannot fit in the existing meeting room for meetings and required training. When a large training event happens it must be moved to the apparatus bays which lacks classroom facilities and suitable climate control.

- In our apparatus bays the firefighting lockers are too close to the exiting vehicles creating safety issues. This is exacerbated by undersized 12 foot wide overhead doors which are 2 feet narrower than modern apparatus bay doors should be. The existing apron, bay configuration, lines of site, and size poses back-in and response dangers for personnel from our larger pieces of apparatus.
- It is evident for anyone who has attempted to visit or has driven past the facility that parking is deficient. The result is that people end up parking on the response aprons which interferes with emergency response and is a significant safety concern.
- Offices that service the public are not easily reachable by a public entrance as they should be.
- Records retention, including required secured records retention is a challenge in the current facility. Spaces are needed to meet our operational and mandated record retention requirements.
- The existing facility lacks a separate decontamination area as recommended by NFPA.
- The existing building does not have adequate office or mechanical areas.
- The existing building lacks essential storage spaces such as gear and fire-rated storage. Inadequate storage for supplies, personal protective equipment, fire department records, training materials, and building maintenance supplies.
- Public access to current buildings leads directly into secure portions of the building creating safety & security concerns.

There are several substantial deficiencies with the EMS building currently located on Middlesex Ave:

- Delayed response due to lack of street access.
- Prone to flooding. Had recently flooded.

Q: How was the size of the proposed station determined?

A: A programming process was conducted which takes the following factors among many into account:

- Operational needs
- Administrative needs
- Storage needs
- Building Systems
- Size of current fire apparatus designs.
- Industry standards and regulatory requirements such as:
 - National Fire Protection Association
 - Occupational Health and Safety Organization
 - Building Code of the State of New Jersey
 - Americans With Disabilities Act.
- Costs

Q: How will this improve emergency services to residents? What are the benefits of the proposed addition/ renovation?

A: Benefits of the proposed building include:

- Improved emergency response for residents with enhanced capabilities, greater flexibility and the ability to improve critical incident response times.
- Safer vehicles return and response and ability to relocate apparatus as needed to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of our emergency response.
- Improved safety for our first responders and greater protection from disruptive and potentially costly workplace injuries.
- Enhanced building security, public interface and separation of functions.
- Decreased risk of infectious-disease cross-contamination.
- In-house training facilities that support both hands-on and classroom training.
- Increased energy efficiency and incorporation of greener technologies.
- Adequate workspace, secure record storage (HIPPA Compliant), accessible meeting areas, adequate storage for necessary equipment and supplies complying with guidelines for separation and safety.

- Flexibility in design to accommodate future changes in emergency services.
- We can provide our first responders a facility commensurate with the level of professional service they provide to residents.
- Greater ability to retain volunteers, which keeps costs down while maintaining emergency response service levels.
- Improved parking

Q: What general noise considerations are being implemented?

A: Sirens/lights are generally used on firetrucks/ambulances only when exiting the building into traffic and should not be a routine event. Both the Fire and EMS understand that they are in a residential neighborhood and will be mindful.

Q: What is the intended general occupancy of the new building?

A: The intended general occupancy would be 5-6 nights a week, from approximately 6-7pm to midnight, and occasionally during the day for fire calls. Most weekends during the day would have some activity for training and weekend EMS coverage.