

FINAL

**LEBANON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL SESSION MINUTES
Wednesday, September 27, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Council Chambers**

Remote Via Microsoft Teams: [LebanonNH.gov/Live](https://lebanonnh.gov/Live)

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Tim McNamara, Assistant Mayor Clifton Below, Erling Heistad, Karen Liot Hill, Christian Simon, George Sykes, Douglas Whittlesey, Devin Wilkie

MEMBERS ABSENT: Karen Zook

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Shaun Mulholland, Deputy Finance Director Alesia Williams (Remote), Fire Chief Jim Wheatley, Assistant Fire Chief Jeffrey Libbey

1. Mayor McNamara called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

City Manager Shaun Mulholland provided directions for those participating in the meeting.

2. Special Meeting

- A.** Lebanon Fire Department Central Fire Station Replacement Proposal Presentation
(Presentation in its entirety can be found on [Pages 2-54](#), in the September 27, 2023, Council agenda packet.)

City Manager Shaun Mulholland opened the meeting and explained the general presentation and budget process.

Fire Chief Jim Wheatley shared a presentation with the Council to provide the background, rationale, and specifics of the request. Architect Robert Robicsek and Bert DeLaBruere attended online to provide details as needed.

Chief Wheatley stated that energy efficiency, gender appropriate facilities, air quality management, safety, roofing, structural deficiencies, and HVAC are all creating serious issues with the current facility. The safety study in 2019 identified the existing conditions and needs of the department. Crowded conditions in the offices, lack of ADA compliance, absence of decontamination facilities, and lack of a fitness area are also issues. Maintenance and repair of the facilities are increasing each year due to their age. Occupational cancer has become a serious issue due to exposure to certain chemicals and materials created by fires, and facilities are needed to decontaminate clothing and gear.

The outline, details, and cost of the proposed replacement facilities were presented. Each aspect of the current conditions and the benefits of the proposed facilities were shown in detail.

Councilor Liot Hill arrived at 7:30 p.m.

Significant energy upgrades are included in the plan for HVAC, EV charging, and solar. The current location of the central fire station is proposed for the new facility, which will provide an additional 10,000

sq. ft. of space. New locations have been found for offices and storage. The project budget totals \$22,669,936. Funding sources are being researched at present. The timeline is planned with December 2023 approval, January 2024 final design process, early 2024 move to temporary quarters, August 2024 demolition, and December 2025 move to the new building.

Council Discussion:

Councilor Sykes noted that there is new research on the safety risk to employees.

Councilor Below inquired about the relocation for overnight operations. Chief Wheatley stated that there would be a temporary structure for apparatus and job trailers for staff, which are part of the proposed budget.

Councilor Whittlesey inquired about the replacement of gear. Chief Wheatley stated that there is a five-year rotation of gear. Councilor Whittlesey asked about the cost of the modifications for additional truck height. Chief Wheatley stated that it cost \$118,000 for modifications, and the cost of trucks increased as well. Councilor Sykes noted that the ramp also had to be replaced to accommodate the truck height. Chief Wheatley added that the new facility would address that.

Councilor Liot Hill inquired about Station 2. Chief Wheatley stated that they are continuing to work on that, but Station 1 has greater impact. Station 2 is also in poor condition. Councilor Liot Hill asked how much of the cost of the new station would be defrayed by outside funding. Chief Wheatley stated that until there is a final design, it's not possible to determine the amount of funding. City Manager Shaun Mulholland provided additional details regarding funding and noted that not a large portion would likely come from outside. Councilor Liot Hill inquired how this project impacts other capital projects. City Manager Shaun Mulholland stated that would not be known until a future meeting, when they can provide clear details for the Councilors.

Councilor Sykes inquired about the life of the new building. City Manager Shaun Mulholland replied that the building is designed for 2039. Chief Wheatley stated that it would be for 50-70 years.

Councilor Whittlesey inquired if there were funding streams related to other CIP projects that could apply. City Manager Shaun Mulholland stated that other items are being funded at present, such as housing and childcare, but there may be new avenues in the future. Councilor Whittlesey noted that there are other sources for items not related to the fire station. City Manager Shaun Mulholland added that some CIP items remain unfunded. City labor costs have increased dramatically; and the cost of construction has also increased, but more information is coming. Councilor Whittlesey asked what the vacancy rate is for firefighters and EMT's. Chief Wheatley stated that there have not been vacancies, but it is a very competitive market for applicants. Better facilities would attract more applicants.

Councilor Liot Hill stated that she is very supportive of the project and thankful for the life of the current station. This proposal will become increasingly important.

Sarah Riley, Ward 2, inquired about a graphic for the 4-minute response time for the temporary setup. Chief Wheatley stated that they can prepare that. Ms. Riley inquired if it would be equivalent. Chief Wheatley noted that there would be a slight increase in response time, but many current calls fall below the 4-minute level.

Councilor Heistad thanked the Fire Department for their support of the community.

Councilor Sykes inquired if the temporary relocation plan would reduce the environmental risk to staff that they have now. Chief Wheatley stated that the temporary location for vehicles is separate from offices and areas for staff. Councilor Sykes stated that he is in support of the concept.

B. Fire Station Debt Analysis

(Fire Station Debt Analysis can be found on [pages 52-54](#), in the September 27, 2023, Council agenda packet.)

3. Adjournment

The special session ended at 8:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Howes
Recording Secretary