

Space Needs Analysis: Public Safety Building

HKT Architects met with key staff from the Police and Fire Departments on November 15, 2017 and reviewed exterior conditions on December 6, 2017. Based on those meetings, our on-site review of existing spaces, and Departments' responses to our questionnaire, the following observations are noted.

General Findings

The Fire Department provides fire suppression, rescue and emergency medical services, as well as fire prevention, law/code enforcement and fire education. The Fire Department is a Civil Service department, consisting of 23 career firefighters supplemented by approximately 21 call firefighters. The management team consists of the Chief and Deputy Chief assisted by an administrative assistant. There are four groups of career firefighters. Each group consists of one lieutenant and four firefighters working two 24 hour days. Career firefighters are responsible for fire suppression, rescue operations, EMS, fire alarm, fire prevention, fire education, code enforcement, operations of all apparatus, station maintenance, apparatus and equipment maintenance, training and all other related duties. Call firefighters, who do not work shifts, are also trained to Firefighter I/II. Their responsibilities include fire suppression and rescue operations. The business office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00AM to 4:00PM. The doors are open to the public 7 days a week from 7:30AM to 9:00PM, including the public meeting room.

The Police Department is dedicated to providing the citizens, business owners and visitors a safe and pleasant environment in which to live, work and enjoy the amenities of the town. The Police Department is responsible for law enforcement in the Town of Fairhaven and adjacent waters. The Police Department employs 42 full-time and 6 part-time personnel. They have 31 full-time and 4 permanent/intermittent officers, 6 full-time communications personnel, one clerk, and one part-time custodian. The sworn personnel consist of a police chief, six sergeants and 24 patrol officers. A sergeant and 5 officers are assigned as detectives. One of the detectives also serves as the domestic violence and elder protection officer. One officer is assigned to Fairhaven High School and Hastings Middle School as School Resource Officers. Officers are assigned to marine patrol duties on their department's 25-foot police Safe Boat. The Police Department is always on duty.

The site consists of multiple inter-connected structures along with apparatus aprons, a FD training tower, and parking for visitors, staff and equipment that cannot be stored indoors. The building includes approximately 21,880 gross square feet which includes basements, main floors and second floor areas both fitted and unfitted. The building was constructed in 1963 with modifications in 1997 and 2000.

The existing buildings, for both departments, consists of office space, dispatch rooms, meeting/roll call/training rooms, vehicle storage bays for fire apparatus, ambulance and police vehicles as well as towed equipment, records and file storage, a lunchroom/kitchen, exercise rooms, and toilet/locker rooms. FD space also includes dorm rooms and living space, a laundry facility, gear and hose storage, a maintenance shop, and storage for air and oxygen tanks. PD spaces also include a booking area, report writing room, evidence lockers and evidence storage room, and a room for the storage of firearms and ammunition.

Finishes include resilient flooring, ceramic tile, painted concrete floors, a raised floor in dispatch, painted CMU and gypsum wallboard, ceramic tile wainscot, and wood, GWB and acoustic tile ceilings.

Space Needs Analysis

Generally the physical space does not appear to support all of the operational needs of the departments. The sizes of the staffs and modern equipment have outgrown the physical space of the building as well as the site.

Fire Department:

The future of the Fairhaven Fire and EMS Department is expected to include the Emergency Management Agency and the Harbormaster Division. It is also anticipated that the FFD will also be involved in Community Mobile Healthcare. This system of pre- and post-hospital services utilize community paramedic resources to deliver coordinated continuum care which seeks to address gaps in service delivery and prevent unnecessary hospitalizations. That will require 3 full time ambulances.

Current conditions include an apparatus floor, built for smaller vehicles, that is filled to capacity. In addition the room is ringed with gear, decontamination washers, and other equipment which should be located in separate spaces. Alternative vehicles are located in the PD or off site. Dedicated decontamination areas, supply areas and workshops are undersized or non-existent. Dormitories are at maximum capacity and living spaces are not sized for the staff currently on duty. There is no conference room. A meeting room is used as a training center, by the community for meetings and as a voting precinct. This space is currently accessed through private FD spaces. Active and archived files are extensive and are located in many spaces. Office spaces are undersized. IT and mechanical spaces are limited and unsecured.

Police Department:

The Police Department maintains and enforces laws of the community and serves as a place where the public can report crimes, access reports and meet. Community Policing is an essential part of their organization and the building should be welcoming. Modern police departments include spaces for people that support the work of the department such as Clinicians, Crisis Counselors, Domestic and Support personnel, Chaplains and District Attorneys. The Animal Control Officer and the Animal Shelter are now considered part of the Police Department. The space they currently occupy is sufficient, however, if the Shelter ever privatized, office space will be required for two individuals.

Current conditions include a sally port but no cell block although those arrested are booked on site and held until they can be moved to a lock-up. A classroom is used for roll call, meetings and as a training center, and by the community. This space is currently accessed directly from a side entry but allows easy access to private PD spaces. The ambulance bays are adjacent and require pass through of this space when a call comes in. Office spaces are undersized. There is no conference room. The building lacks appropriately sized spaces such as a dedicated roll call room, Fire Arms/Fingerprinting/Sex Offenders Registration room, locker rooms, active and archived file rooms, report writing areas, workspaces for specialized officers and patrol supplies. IT and mechanical spaces are limited and unsecured. The department has specialized spaces that required surveillance and security such as the evidence lockers and room, bulk evidence, recovered property and the armory.

General:

Visitors to each portion of the building vary daily. Both lobbies are very small and have service windows that provide some measure of control and organization. All portions of the building should be secured and accesses with pass key/fob only. The building is staffed 24/7.

Areas that could be shared by the departments include:

- Shared lobby.
- Centralized dispatch for 3 persons, include supervisory space. Currently 911/Dispatch operates out of the PD and sends tone over to FD. Dispatch is run by civilian dispatchers.
- Emergency Operations Center planned with full IT and communications systems.
- Emergency generator powering the entire building.
- Large meeting room, with access off the entry lobby, is considered essential for use by both departments, by outside community groups, as a voter precinct and meeting space for organizations. This should accommodate 50 persons for training and function as the EOC.
- Exercise room.

- Light maintenance bay with tool room.

Existing and Future Identified Space Need Deficiencies: The proposed program for the Public Safety Building is attached as a separate document. This program assumes that a new building will be constructed to house all public safety personnel, vehicles and equipment.

Accessibility

The accessible issues at this building include a remake of the transaction counters and fixing hardware on doors and cabinetry.

There is only one egress from the basement and the stairs to the second level should be inspected to determine if they meet the code (built by staff). In addition there are a few rooms with steps located at the threshold which is a safety hazard, and code and accessibility violation.

Given the amount of work that is required in this building, it is likely that full accessibility will be triggered. Full accessibility requires that any spaces accessed by any member of the public must be made accessible.

Existing Underutilized or Under-Programmed Space Identified:

There are no underutilized or under programmed spaces in the building.

Recommendations:

If this building is to continue functioning as a police and fire station, it is clear that an addition and extensive reconfiguration of existing spaces will be required to create an appropriate and functioning work space for both departments.

- General and deferred maintenance items noted throughout this report would be addressed as part of any larger renovation/addition project.
- The addition of the Emergency Management Agency, the Harbormaster Division and possibly other public safety agencies like the Health Department or the Building Department would impact any renovation option.

