

CLARENCE FIRE DISTRICT NO. 1

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Board of Fire Commissioners:
Douglas G. Garlapo, Chairman
David R. Metzger, Vice-Chairman
David M. Bissonette
James Schlabach
Nathan M. Work

Treasurer
Kim M. Lash

Secretary
Yvonne Work

The Board of Fire Commissioners, Clarence Fire District No. 1, held a Special Meeting on **Thursday, April 30, 2015**, at 10355 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14031. The Board made a public presentation on the proposed building expansion.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Garlapo at 19:00 hours. He began the presentation with an overview. Clarence Fire District No. 1 is a New York State political subdivision with five commissioners elected by registered voters of the district for five year terms. The boundaries of the Fire District were posted on a map at the back of the room and were listed: the Newstead town line is the eastern boundary, Lancaster town line the southern, continuing to trace the outline are the roads of Gunville, Main, Goodrich, Greiner, Kraus, Clarence Center, Strickler and Keller.

Chairman Garlapo identified those in attendance associated with the Fire District.

Roll Call:

Present: Commissioners Garlapo, and Metzger (past Chief, Assistant Chief, still active), Schlabach (past Assistant Chief, still active), Work (active), Bissonette (past Chief and Assistant Chief) and, Treasurer Kim Lash.
Absent: Secretary Yvonne Work
Guests: Bob Shepard and Joe DiPerna from Stieglitz Snyder Architects, Chris Hogan and Dave Stanford from RP Oak Hill, Chief Bill Major, 1st Assistant Chief Jeff Schlabach, 2nd Assistant Chief Ken Beil, 3rd Assistant Chief Chad Hawes, 4th Assistant Chief Jim Havernick, as well as many of the 56 active Clarence Fire Company and 8 active Explorer Post members who are wearing the blue duty shirts.

Chairman Garlapo stated that Commissioner Bissonette will be giving a slide presentation that is an overview of the project to be followed by a question and answer session. Pens and pads of paper are provided on each table should anyone wish to take notes.

An article was published in the Clarence Bee stating the requests for information made to the Board were declined in a phone interview. The Board agreed that they wanted the first information on the project released at the public meeting to ensure that just part of the information wasn't delivered.

It was noted that all legal postings had been made. Special Meeting notices had been posted in locations within the Fire Hall and on the District sign board, in the Clarence Bee and on the Town and District websites.

Slide One – Commissioner Bissonette introduced himself again as a 30 year member whose father had been on the committee to build the current fire hall more than 40 years ago. He stated this project is a good thing for the community and the due diligence has been done.

Slide Two – **Meeting Agenda** is to deliver the what, why and how of the Building Expansion Project. The proposed addition and renovation is to the front third of the current building. The project is both operationally and fiscally sound.

Slide Three – **Firehouse Expansion** – View of the current façade and the proposed completed project.

Slide Four – **Rationale** – Many things have changed over the years and the current structure is in lack of code compliance by ADA, NFPA and OSHA. The hazardous and challenging job of firefighting needs both the right equipment and the right facility. There are more officers and personnel needed to run the operation than in the past and there is a lack of storage space for records and resources.

Slide Five – **Project Highlights** – There will be three additional truck bays in the equipment room. The distance between pieces of apparatus was illustrated. Equipment is larger than ever and firefighters need to be able to work around it safely.

Slide Six – **Project Highlights** – Fire Department Offices and work space. Five officers are currently working out of one office. This requires the difficult task of orchestrating when each can work their volunteer time.

Slide Seven – **Project Highlights** – There are two staff and 5 Fire Commissioners working from the District Office.

Slide Eight – **Project Highlights** – It has been documented health and wellness is important to firefighter safety and the training space currently is one universal in a coat room, which makes the facility use difficult for more than one person at a time. Communications and training space will be added. While Amherst Control is the district's dispatch there are times such as the "October Storm" where this building becomes the center of operations.

Slide Nine – **Project Highlights** – Safe storage of personal protective equipment. There is a constant risk to firefighters with the equipment moving around them while changing into firefighting gear.

Slide Ten – **Adjacent Residential Structure** – The initial project plans incorporated the building next door to salvage a sound piece of property. However the building is already sixty years old and in another forty it will therefore be 100 years old which could become an issue. The original single family dwelling's structural integrity was examined and extension renovation would be required to convert to commercial use. The structure added square footage to the project that is unnecessary and the connection to the existing firehouse would be too big. Incorporation of the house presented an integration challenge and all architectural renderings were less than pleasing. Using the residential building was determined to not be cost effective so the Board stepped back adding only what is truly needed. Additionally Chairman Garlapo noted that the less expansive campus required by removing the house will save the two mature red maples in front of it.

Slides Eleven and Twelve – **Financial Impact** – The total project cost is estimated at \$3.5 million. The district is saving every dime while still meeting the needs of the operation. \$1.4 million has been saved currently with an anticipated \$2 million total to be saved toward the project. Therefore only a \$1.5 million short term loan is required with a five year payback. There will be NO INCREASE in the tax rate. The building reserve fund will be used first then funds will be borrowed. The Clarence Fire District No. 1 stays with the New York State tax cap and a long-term spending plan which rarely requires borrowing is used. \$300,000 of recent building improvements reduced the overall cost of the current project.

Slide Thirteen – **Recently Completed Projects** – Energy saving boiler, Plymovent Exhaust System, significant roof replacement, two HVAC units over the banquet room, energy efficient windows, air lock foyer entrance.

Slide Fourteen – **Cost Saving Measures and Environmentally Friendly** – Anticipated in the project are solar panels, energy efficient overhead doors, oil separator for floor drains to separate oil run off, considering reusable and recyclable building materials, will explore LED lighting throughout.

Slide Fifteen – **Proposed Timeline** – The building design phase has been completed, public referendum is May 5, 2015, design development phase May and June 2015, fire district acceptance July 2015 (two weeks), construction documents July – October 2015 (12 weeks), bidding/contract negotiations October – December 2015 (8 weeks), construction begins April – May 2016 (estimated 12 month project). Architects then showed a slide of the project floor plan.

Slide Sixteen – **Commissioner's Comments** – Chairman Garlapo reiterated that a short-term borrowing of five years is proposed. The bond anticipation note interest rate is lower than the traditional long-term bond allowed by law.

Slide Seventeen – Questions and Public Comment

Bill Schuster, 5500 Davison Road:

Question 1: What is the total square footage of the addition?

Answer: From Architect Bob Shepard – 7,000 square feet.

Question 2: How many current active members?

Answer: From Chairman Garlapo – 56.

Chief Comment: Personnel recruitment and retention is aggressive but firefighting gear cost alone is \$9,000 per firefighter.

Comment: He is pleased to hear of the short-term loan.

Question 3: Has the cost of a larger campus been figured into the cost estimates and have solar panel savings been justified?

Answer: From Commissioner Bissonette – yes.

Question 4: How will the \$600,000 be added to the current \$1.4 million saved to reach the total \$2 million savings? Are there any State or Federal monies included in the funding?

Answer: From Chairman Garlapo – The additional \$600,000 will be from two tax years of the regular operating budget. The Board of Fire Commissioners and the Fire Chief have curtailed any unneeded spending. The Board has a ten year financial plan and a longer equipment replacement plan. The timing of this building expansion project is critical as it is between fire apparatus purchases. Grant opportunities have been explored but big ticket items such as building expansions are not traditionally part of grants such as FEMA.

Jason Lahti, 5005 Goodrich Road:

Question 1: How many annual calls and fires?

Answer: From Board and Chief – approximately one alarm each day or 350 annually. There have been four fires in Town to date in 2015 with one in the district and the other three Clarence Fire District responded as a mutual aid company. Required response to a fire is three engines, two ladder trucks and twenty to thirty firefighters. During the day when firefighters are at their places of employment there is limited response requiring more resources than any one Fire Company in town can provide so mutual aid agreements are in place.

Question 2: What is the projected interest rate?

Answer: From Treasurer Lash – 1.25%

Question 3: Are additional equipment purchases planned?

Answer: From Board – no additional, the current equipment will be shifted to eliminate vehicle double stacking.

Question 4: What is the difference in scope of the current project decreasing from the \$6 million proposed previously.

Answer: From Architect Bob Shepard – review of the current floor plan which includes a locker room behind the apparatus instead of around it for firefighter safety. Three pull through bays, where there is only one now, which is also safer.

Roy Olsen, 4888 Sawmill Road:

Comment 1: He drove his blue truck for the previous project because it was his belief that it was an exercise in “one upmanship” and was wasted money. He is driving his green truck in support of this project and he thanked the Board and congratulated them for a responsible project. The firehouse is a community asset which is a facility we need to update. He approves of the gable roof.

Question 1: What were the \$300,000 of upgrades already made and will any need to be replaced because of the expansion?

Answer: From Board – The upgrades made will not be redone going forward. Roof top HVAC units were in need. The foyer entrance was single pane glass without an air lock, the west windows replaced are also now thermal pane. When the new district offices are built the district employees will move out and after minor updates the Fire Company will move into the vacated space.

Comment 2: Mr. Olsen mentioned that he has worked in the large commercial building business and the Board has made a good decision to start in the spring which will eliminate costs such as heating required in off season construction. Also, fire service must continue uninterrupted from the building. He encouraged the Board to consider LEED certification because he feels strongly about construction of green buildings. Many building materials have a high recycle content compared to those available just a few years ago. LEED certification should only add about \$20,000 to the total project cost.

Board Comment: Fire company LEED certification used elsewhere in the Town hasn't worked as well as projected but the Board has engaged both consulting companies with LEED certifications. The Board has pursued a FEMA grant to obtain firefighter hazardous materials gear in the amount of \$92,000. The grant would affect savings which could then be put to the building expansion project. Solar panels rebates may be available through New York State NYSERDA funding and the payback from the investment in the equipment is quick.

Slide Eighteen – Public Referendum – Chairman Garlapo reminded everyone that the vote is Tuesday, May 5, 2015 from 3:00 to 9:00 PM at Clarence Fire District No.1, 10355 Main Street, Clarence, NY 14031. All registered voters residing in Clarence Fire District No. 1 are eligible to vote. The election machines were delivered this morning. Please feel free to view all the spaces that were shown in the slides personally.

Chairman Garlapo adjourned the meeting at 20:15 hours and made the request to attendees when leaving to please note that parking lot traffic is only in one direction, so please pull around the building when exiting.

Attest,

Kim M. Lash
Fire District Treasurer

cc: Commissioners/President/Chief