



#### Existing Conditions & Code Conflicts

The existing station is too small fundamentally, but it has other code problems as well.

- The second floor is not structurally sound, and almost certainly does not meet the 40 lb/sf required floor load capacity.
- Second floor is not accessible and lacks fire egress.
- The wiring is outdated.
- The underground oil tank is out of compliance.
- Headroom is insufficient and the building is very inefficient energy-wise.

To renovate would mean tearing down most of what is there before you found any component worth adding to. As such it is assumed that it makes no sense to convert in this structure. Rather the team should see this as an opportunity to look at a new facility on this or other sites.

#### Options reviewed were:

1. New Station on land owned by the Town in back of the existing Fire Station.
2. Combined building with Town Offices on same property.
3. Combined building with Town Offices and Town Meeting Place on same property (may not be possible due to wastewater disposal requirements for 300 people).

Initial cost projections for the Fire Department are in the range of \$1 million to \$1.25 million, depending on the size and the septic requirements. It should be noted that wastewater capacity appears to be very limited on the land owned by the town which is being considered. This will almost certainly limit the ability for a new Town Meeting space to be constructed on this site, and it may limit the community uses of a fire station.



PROGRAM OF SPACE NEEDS  
Middlesex Fire Department

Date November 22, 2004

SPACE/ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION / REQUIREMENTS / REMARKS	ADJACENT TO	EXISTING AREA (SF)	PROPOSED AREA (SF)
Fire Department				
Engine Space - Vehicles	3 Bays, 2 deep, Space for 6 vehicles			3,400
Equipment Storage	Coats & boots (8X10), apparatus, maintenance, fluid storage, air pack storage (10X12) and first aid.			320
Small Meeting Room/ Training Room				300
Small Bunk room	1 bunk / 1 side			130
Radio Room / Office				200
Kitchenette	Small			50
Bathroom w/ Shower	Single stall, unisex HC use			100
Emergency Generator	Disaster shelter			100
Air Compressor				50
Sub-Total			1,750	4,650
Halls, Walls, Mechanical Space	25-30% multiplier			1,395
Total				6,045

# PLANNING FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

## MIDDLESEX VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

February 10, 2002

### OVERVIEW

In 2002 the Department continued expanding membership, and has focused on training and the maintenance of our aging vehicles, equipment, and firehouse. This work demonstrated the need to seriously address fundamental aspects of the department and institute a five year plan.

A core weakness in any volunteer organization is maintaining consistent, focused attention on the multitude of collateral items. This may be even more true for a fire department. We join to help our neighbors and fight fires. We volunteer our time to do this and to train to do the job well. With families, jobs, and other commitments, often there is little time left for quality maintenance, repairing equipment, managing all the nuts and bolts, and keeping up with the ever increasing required paperwork. We keep up through the extraordinary efforts of a number of our members.

However well we keep up, we have not had the ability to plan ahead and take advantage of more efficient systems except in little bits and spurts when there is an extra portion of energy. We have made plans for a new Village Station, a need recognized ten years ago. We have discussed options for upgrading our trucks and equipment. Our front line Engine is 26 years old and our second Engine 22 years old. We need a second Tanker for Station 2. We have identified and conceptualized a number of improvements we should make. We need to make it happen.

We are exploring raising funds for the Chief to set aside a portion of time from his usual employment to work on Department development. This will allow us to move forward on the core issues, develop more efficient systems, improve our Town fire insurance rating, and secure grant money to help upgrade our equipment and lessen the burden on taxpayers.

### GOALS

Within the next five years we hope to achieve the following goals.

1. Build a new Village Station
2. Expand Station 2
3. Replace or recondition all trucks
4. Add a second Tanker and a Bucket Truck
5. Develop streamlined management systems and consistent record keeping

6. Improve Firefighter level of certification
7. Institute a training program and standards to meet ISO and State requirements
8. Improve retention of members and daytime coverage
9. Have dry hydrants at each water site
- 10.. Expand Department income

## CAPITAL ITEMS

### Village Station

Since newer trucks will not fit in the old station, a converted schoolhouse, and any building inspector would condemn it, building a new Village Station is a key to our future.

We are aware of one plan which would include a new station as part of a new Town Hall. There are concerns about this plan. The major concerns are adequate water to fill trucks, diesel fume management, parking for responding firefighters, and the loss of that parking and egress for the trucks during events at the Town Hall.

Whatever the eventual plan is, a new station is the first priority of the Department. The present building is unsafe, inefficient, and hinders our operations.

### Station 2

As the Town has grown, Station 2 has provided an immeasurably reduced response time. Presently an Engine and the Brush Truck are squeezed into one bay. To improve our operation we need a second Tanker at Station 2. We will need the entire building as soon as possible. We will also need to bring water into the building.

### Vehicles

Engine 1 is 26 years old and has serious rust problems. The rehab done some years back was very poorly done. This truck needs to be replaced or refurbished again by a competent company. If refurbished it will also need an upgrade of its equipment, like ladders, and the installation of a foam system.

Engine 2, our mini pumper, is 21 years old. We have spend significant amounts in the past two years repairing this truck. It is quite serviceable, but we need a larger truck at Station 2. We will replace Engine 2 with a larger truck and convert the mini pumper to a Brush/Relay Pumper.

Tanker one is 17 years old. During our last repair we had to have some of the replacement parts made. The water tank is likely to rupture at any time. We also need a second Tanker at Station 2. We need to replace Tanker 1 and add a second Tanker. Within five years we hope to have both Tankers be vacuum tankers, but our immediate need is for two serviceable tankers.

The Rescue, after repairs were made, is serviceable. It will, however, need to be replaced before the five years are up.

Our present Brush Truck, a pickup, will be replaced by the mini pumper.

We will add a Bucket Truck, similar to those used by the phone company. We do not have a Ladder Truck, and this unit will fill some of those needs for quicker roof ventilation and upper level access and rescue.

## MANAGEMENT

We are all volunteers; we do what we can when we can. We join to fight fires. We are faced with volumes of paperwork. We have not made the required filings to the State after each fire. Someone began doing this but no longer had the time. Training records are simply a list of who trained and what the subject was. They are not in any one place or organized in any way. We do our best to keep track of gear and equipment, the record keeping system is marginal. We have struggled to have a purchasing system, but it always breaks down because there is no management oversight.

Without these records we would simply be a victim in any law suit. Not making the State filings can result in a fine. We have no documentation to support a change in our ISO rating.

We need to immediately rectify this situation. We have purchased a new computer, so we have the tools we need. In the long term, we will need the services of a paid Administrative Assistant who will enter data and oversee the management systems.

## MEMBERSHIP, TRAINING AND STANDARDS

We have some highly trained and experienced members. We also have people with limited or no experience and training. We have people who just want to be involved.

Within five years a core group of members will be trained to the new Level 1 certification. All members who will be involved on the fireground will have passed our in-house certification. All members will be trained yearly to the State and ISO recurrency standards.

## COVERAGE AND RETENTION

These two items are problematic for most volunteer departments. Some people are very committed, others not. Some people have time to spare, others very little. Coverage during normal work hours is a function of work schedules, the ability to leave work, and the distance of one's work site from town.

Most departments now pay their members a stipend for attendance at training and an hourly fee for fire calls. This change seems to have improved coverage and retention for those departments. Within five years we will institute this type of system. As the town grows, we may need to consider paying two people to be on call during normal work hours.

## DRY HYDRANTS

Water supply is the most critical item in fighting fires. Dry hydrants at our water sites will greatly increase out time and efficiency at getting water to a fire. Dry hydrants are also a key item necessary to improving our ISO rating.

## INCOME

It is clear all of the items outlined above will cost money. Our present budget, nor the funds we have raised will cover these items. Few Departments in the local area have a budget as low as ours. For example, East Montpelier spends \$130,000.

When we consider the cost of Fire and EMS coverage, it is smart to do a cost benefit analysis. However, factored in must be the cost of peace of mind. You may never have the need to call the Department, but you do not know that. There is a cost associated with standing by. If you divide our budget by our number of calls, each call costs about \$300. There is some value in knowing that, but like insurance, having the coverage you may need makes tremendous sense.

Within five years we will likely see an increase in the Town's share of the Department's budget. Our goal is to limit this increase as much as possible. Many of the needs expressed above are short-term. We intend to increase our fundraising and enter into serious grant writing. We also intend to begin billing for calls when we can. The largest number of our calls are for accidents on the interstate, and many of those calls can be billed to insurance companies. We presently bill for filling swimming pools, and that type of activity could be increased.

## MAKING IT HAPPEN

It is good to have a plan, and this document outlines many of the steps we need to take. Many items addressed are immediate needs, immediate to a large extent because there has been limited planning in the past. Many of the items have been discussed in the past, some brought up every year, but no one has been able to put in the consistent time and energy to make it happen.

We can meet all of our goals, meet our immediate needs more rapidly, save the Town money, and save residents money with a reduction of our ISO rating by paying a person to make it happen. There is a need for consistent, focused attention on these matters. This will not be a long term position, but will enable the Department to meet the goals and institute systems so that an Administrative Assistant can handle the management needs. Writing grants could save us a tremendous amount on vehicles and equipment. The logical person to do this is the Chief. Funds for this position will be raised through grants, but seed money will be needed to get the ball rolling. There are community development grants we can apply for. These will give the Chief

time to put management systems in place and enable him to seek other grants for vehicles, equipment and infrastructure, and to manage the acquisitions and infrastructure projects. \$6000 will be needed to begin this process.