

# Town of Eagle Point

## FIRE STATION SPACE NEEDS STUDY INFORMATION NEWSLETTER

August 2017



**On October 2, 2017 at Special Elector's Meeting**, Town of Eagle Point taxpayers will be asked to vote on the question of granting the Town Board the authority to borrow funds for the design and construction of a new fire station. To provide town residents with information on the project, the Eagle Point Planning Commission has developed the following newsletter. Town residents can obtain additional information by attending public informational meetings and visiting the Town's website listed below in this newsletter, or by contacting Laurie Hebert, Town Clerk, at the Town Hall.

At the Town Board meeting on June 19, 2017, the board voted to recommend proceeding with the construction of a new fire station, on either a new two-acre site, or the existing ball field – the site to be determined by the voters at the Special Elector's Meeting.

### ***What is the make-up of the fire department with regard to facilities, equipment and personnel?***

The Eagle Point Volunteer Fire Department was formed in 1977 and operates out of a single station in Eagleton. The department maintains a main engine, two pumpers, a brush-fire truck, John Deere Gator with tracks, and a water and rescue trailer. The department includes twenty-two firefighters of which ten are Emergency Medical Responders.



### ***How did the Town Board determine the needs for a fire station project?***

In 2016, the Planning Commission completed an update of the town's 2008 Comprehensive Plan. One of the findings was the identification of space needs at the fire station, which was constructed in 1978. In January of 2017, the town board hired CBS Squared, a Chippewa Falls-based architectural and engineering firm experienced in fire station design, to complete a space needs study. The firm studied two options: expanding and remodeling the existing station in Eagleton or constructing a new station on a new site. A copy of CBS Squared's study report can be viewed on the town's website under Fire Department.

### ***Why did the town board choose the new fire station option?***

Based on discussions at town board meetings, fire department meetings and this year's Annual Meeting, the town board voted to recommend the new station option to the voters for approval at a Special Elector's Meeting. The consensus at these meetings was that the new station offered the best opportunity for the town to meet long-range space needs. Also, comparing the costs of a new station and remodeling/expansion suggested that it would be better to put our tax dollars into a new facility rather than the existing 1978 building. Constructing a new station also allows the existing station to be used for road department shop space.

### ***What are the proposed costs of the expansion/remodeling option and the new station option?***

CBS Squared estimated the total cost of the remodeling and addition option at \$530,000 and the cost of the new station option at \$884,000. Two sites for the station have been identified, which include the current ballfield and a new two-acre site immediately west of the sand volleyball courts. The cost of the new two-acre site is approximately \$32,000 including closing costs. The cost for the ball field site is limited to the expense of removing the existing ballfield amenities such as light poles and chain-link fencing.



### ***What are the pros and cons of each site for a new station?***

Both sites are located on 147<sup>th</sup> Avenue eliminating the visibility problems with the current station on State Highway 124 and the need for trucks to back into the station off from State Highway 124. In addition, each site offers southern exposure, which is an advantage in the winter months. A disadvantage of the existing ball field is that it will no longer be available as park space. The disadvantage of the new site is purchase cost.

### ***Did the town explore locating the new station closer to the south end of the town?***

The town considered the possibility of locating the new station farther south, where the population is higher. Consulting with the fire department members, the consensus was that a site in Eagleton provides the best response time for fire fighters, many of whom live in the Eagleton area. EMRs generally respond from their homes and are located throughout the town. The current station's close proximity to the center of the town allows equal access to the far northern and southern areas. Also, keeping the fire station near the town shop better enables road maintenance crews to remove snow during the winter season.

### ***I understand that the town purchased land immediately north of the existing station for the sole purpose of adding on to the existing station?***

When the town purchased the lot north of the existing fire station, the intent of the purchase was not solely for the construction of an addition to the existing station. Although the purchase offered that opportunity, the town took advantage of the availability of land immediately adjacent to town property when it became available.

### ***Why is the project decision being made at a Special Electors Meeting and not a referendum?***

By State Statute, towns in Wisconsin are required to hold a Special Elector's Meeting for the purpose of voting to grant authority to the Town Board to borrow funds for any building project. If a referendum is held, it can be only advisory and the town would still be required to hold a Special Elector's Meeting. At the advice of an

attorney with the Wisconsin Towns Association, of which Eagle Point is a member, the Town Board determined that the best use of the town's resources would be to spend time and effort informing electors of the project prior to the Special Elector's Meeting rather than spending it on a non-binding referendum.

** Will the electors have the option of voting no on a new fire station project?**

Yes. Electors will first be asked to vote yes or no on granting the Town Board the authority to borrow funds for a new fire station. If the majority of the votes are No votes, the project would not proceed. Electors will also be asked to vote on the ballfield site or the new two-acre site if the new station is approved.

**What will a new fire station cost me as a taxpayer if the project is approved?** 

On July 12<sup>th</sup>, the Eagle Point Volunteer Fire Department Members voted to donate \$100,000 towards the project. The funds are from an account that was created in 2015 as a result of a donation from the Shirley Dallmann Estate. The balance of the project cost would come from a taxpayer levy, which would be spread over a 10-year or 15-year period. The following chart describes the approximate tax impact based on a 10-year amortization for a \$100,000 home and a \$200,000 home. The terms of the loan are based on a State Trust Fund loan, which appears to offer the best rates at this time. Because the Town of Eagle Point's median household income level is too high, the town is not eligible for either the Community Block Grant or USDA Rural Development Grant programs.

Approximate Annual Tax Cost to Eagle Point Property Owners:

Assessed Value - \$100,000 Annual Tax Increase = \$25.87\*

Assessed Value - \$200,000 Annual Tax Increase = \$51.74\*

*\*Estimates assume borrowing \$800,000 at 3.5% for 10 years, amount may be different depending on final cost.*



**Where can I get additional information on the project?**

There will be several opportunities to obtain information. These include:

- August 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Fire Department Fundraiser at the Eagleton Park
- Tuesday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, Informational Meeting at the town hall from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM
- Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> Informational Meeting at the town hall from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM.
- Monday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Electors Meeting to be held at the Eagle Point Town Hall at 7:00 PM.

Residents can also contact Laurie Hebert, Town Clerk 715-288-6770, Town Board and Planning Commission members or view information on the town's website at <http://www.townofeaglepointchippewa.com>.

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