

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES PROJECT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Q. If I support this what are the benefits to me and my family?**

A. We will have police and fire stations that meet all of the emergency needs for the Town of Middleton for 50 years and longer. We will have a multigenerational facility that offers programs both inside and outside (Town Green) for our community. This will make Middleton an attractive community to move to and will therefore increase the value of your property.

### **Q. How much will it cost?**

A. The cost is estimated to be \$61.7M. This assumes approval in June 2021 and construction beginning in 2022 and lasting approximately 24 months.

### **Q. How much will my property taxes go up if this project is approved?**

A. All Middleton taxpayers will see an increase in their property taxes to pay for this municipal facility. The average single family home valued at \$640,000 will see an increase of \$352 in FY2022 and an increase of \$1,152 in FY2034. After FY2034 the impact decreases each year.

### **Q. What is the town doing to offset the \$61.7 million cost of this municipal facility?**

A. We support the sale of unneeded town-owned properties. The proceeds from these sales and the property taxes they will generate will be dedicated to reducing the tax impact of the project. We plan a robust fundraising effort similar to the fundraising for the Flint Public Library, and we are pursuing grants from the state and federal government.

### **Q. Will the Food Pantry be part of this facility?**

A. Yes, the Food Pantry will be located in the Community Center.

### **Q. How did this proposal come about?**

A. In 2017, the results of a Facilities Study showed that Middleton's Fire Station, Police Station, Senior Center, and Town Offices had exceeded their useful lives and needed to be replaced or substantially renovated, expanded, and modernized.

In 2018, at the same time the Town was wrapping up its Facilities Study, the Middleton Golf Course owners approached the Town with an offer to sell the land at 105 South Main Street to the Town as the site of future municipal buildings. They did not want to sell for commercial or residential development. Selling to the Town solved the land problem that long plagued efforts to address the building needs and allowed the majority of the property to remain undeveloped.

In March 2019, Town residents voted to buy the 52-acre property at 105 South Main Street for \$3.8 million as the future site of a public facilities complex. Roughly half the land is restricted to passive recreation or conservation land.

**Q. Have you assessed the pros and cons of combined buildings vs. individual buildings?**

A. Yes, there are significant cost savings with combined buildings which is why many North Shore towns have decided to build combined fire/police facilities (public safety buildings). There are many shared aspects of these facilities and the savings of sharing training and lobby space, technology, electrical, heating/cooling are significant.

**Q. I thought this was going to be a project done in phases. Why do we have to do it all at once?**

A. There was strong community support to do the whole project at once. This support was reflected in survey responses and during our four public community meetings. Also, once the committee evaluated the costs of these facilities, it became very clear that there are significant cost savings in doing the whole project at once. This includes savings on borrowing, saving on cost escalation over time, the costs of maintaining our existing facilities, and economies of scale such as a single contractor, bulk acquisition of materials, and one mobilization.

**Q. What is the timeline on this project?**

A. Approval will be sought in the spring of 2021. The June 5, 2021 Annual Town Meeting will be asked for its approval. Because we are borrowing funds, a 2/3 majority is required. The project also requires a Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion override. That vote will be on the June 12, 2021 Annual Election ballot and requires a simple majority.

**Q. It seems like all of a sudden we need these facilities. Why do we need these municipal facilities now?**

A. There are a number of reasons. There has been tremendous growth in Middleton over the last 40 years, our population is getting older, and we have not updated our buildings with the changing times ([30-year statistics](#)). The Police Station, Fire Station, Council on Aging, and Town Hall have exceeded their useful lives. They are too small, outdated, do not meet basic requirements like handicapped access, and require millions of dollars in improvements.

**Q. Why can't we rehabilitate the current buildings?**

A. The Committee and its architects evaluated renovating and expanding the Fire Station, Police Station, Council on Aging and Town Hall. Some of the buildings cannot be brought up to current standards; as such, further investments are just stop gap measures. The estimated cost to rehab all the buildings over a ten year period is \$41 million. And this does not permanently solve all of the buildings' problems. The Committee believes such an approach is financially irresponsible.

**Q. What happens to the four existing buildings?**

The committee recommends to the Board of Selectmen that the existing Fire Station be torn down. The property can be used for parking and green space at the Flint Public Library. The committee believes that the Police Station at 65 North Main Street has market value and recommends that it be sold for redevelopment. Due to their unique histories the future dispositions of Memorial Hall and the Council on Aging are more uncertain. The committee recommends that the Board of Selectmen determine the best future use of these properties.

**Q. How will a new Town Common improve service to the community?**

A. Middleton does not have a traditional New England green or common. There is sufficient space at 105 South Main Street to have a Town Common. It would provide for a connection between people participating in programs in the community center and children playing on the Common.

**Q. Will this municipal project have a 100 ft buffer surrounding the property on all sides?**

A. Yes, this is part of the agreement we made with the family who sold us the land.

**Q. Can we use any of the property for commercial use in order to offset the cost for taxpayers?**

A. No, as part of the agreement the town signed with the sellers the land cannot be used for commercial or residential use. The land can only be used for municipal purposes.

**Q. If I support this Municipal Complex Project what do I do?**

A. We ask that you and every registered voter in your household come to Town Meeting on Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup> at 48 South Main Street, behind Memorial Hall, at 9:00 AM and vote YES on Article 22 **AND** vote YES on the ballot question a week later at the Fuller Meadow School on Saturday, June 12th from 7:00 AM to 6:00PM.

Parking for Town Meeting is available at Angelica's Restaurant, 49 South Main Street. Police will be on duty to assist in safely crossing South Main Street.