

FIRE STATION 1 COMMITTEE
TUBAC FIRE DISTRICT
APRIL 16, 2020

1. Call to order and Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm by Candy Clancy. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. **Roll call of Committee Members. Committee members present telephonically were:** Candy Clancy; Peter Benequista; Dennis Eshleman; Nan Fitzpatrick; Rich Bohman. Also present telephonically were Chief Horvath and Gabe Buldra of James Vincent Group and other call-ins who did not identify themselves.

3. **Review and restate the Committee's objectives:**

Candy Clancy stated that she would like to see an expanded scope of the Committee to make comparisons between building a new station and remodeling Station 1.

Nan Fitzpatrick stated that we should focus on the ramifications of remodeling Station 1 first before expanding the mission.

Dennis Eshleman said expanding the scope depends upon the timing of the decision whether to build a new station or remodel — if discussions are delayed for one year, we don't need to expand the scope of the Committee. However, if the Board moves to make a decision about building a new station quickly, then we should expand the scope of the Committee.

Pete Benequista said he was OK with expanding scope of the Committee depending on what the expansions consisted of. The more narrow scope is the most fundamental goal however and we should concentrate on that.

Rich Bohman commented that whether we expand objectives or keep it narrow, it will be additionally cumbersome due to Pandemic. He suggested that maybe we should consider postponing any discussions about building a new Station 1 at this time

Nan Fitzpatrick reiterated that we first should look at remodeling options to see if it's cost effective before expanding role of the Committee

Dennis Eshleman reiterated that timing of the Board's decision will dictate whether to expand the role of the Committee, i.e., if due to Pandemic the Board delays the decision, we don't need to expand the role of the Committee.

Rich Bohman reiterated that we shouldn't condense the timetable and discussion of remodeling or rebuilding due to the Pandemic situation.

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4. **Review and affirm this Committee's target date for a report and recommendations.**

Candy Clancy stated that the Board set the date of May 27, 2020, to hear the Committee's recommendations. Candy added that the term of the Committee can be expanded by the Board. Pete Benequista stated that May 27th was a reasonable date given the narrow scope of the Committee.

Rich Bohman said he's concerned that due to Pandemic circumstances the date should be extended, acknowledging that the May 27th date was determined to coincide with budget discussions of the Board. However, he indicated he feels that the date should be pushed back due to the Pandemic.

Nan asked if the County is planning on pushing back the date the budgets are due from fire districts.

Candy said that is a possibility, given that the IRS is delaying tax payments. She said she didn't know if the County is delaying but that she would investigate that.

5. Discussion and possible action on the viability of doing nothing with Station 1 in the current fiscal year:

Dennis asked Candy to define "current fiscal year." Candy answered — July 2020 to July 2021. Technically upcoming fiscal year, submitted in July 2020.

Dennis continued that given the current situation — financial hardships, quarantine, etc. it would be prudent not to do anything in the 20/21 fiscal year, and it's difficult for Committee to do a good job under the quarantine situation.

Nan felt that in order to plan going forward for either a new firehouse or remodeling of old one, we need to share the options with the public and get their input. She felt it was very important that all the components and building blocks of any decision be reviewed by the community at large and to give the community input in the process, before any decision is agreed to by the Board.

Pete agreed that due to the circumstances, it's "a no-brainer decision" to not spend any money for a while. This is notwithstanding the short list of problems with Station 1 provided by the Chief, like the diesel exhaust system, for example. Lots of people say that's a serious safety hazard and something needs to be done now. However, no one is shouting or screaming that it needs to be done now or that people will die or that OSHA will come down and shut us down. Since the Chief has taken care of one of the bigger problems - the sleeping quarters for the staff — I think we're good to go for the future.

Rich agreed with everything said. He also stated that he does not want to see a big capital expenditure put into the budget until we know what will serve the community best.

Candy stated that based upon the discussion with the architect Paul Mickelberg, her recommendation to the Board would be that no funds be included in our budget for building a new Station 1. Another factor is that all the Citizen's Council meetings have been cancelled and we should get community feedback, including from households in Rio Rico, so that the community understands the choice between building a new fire station versus making renovations to the existing one. Otherwise, everyone will be in the dark. Just going to the website for information isn't sufficient. She stated that this is a very difficult time for the community and taxpayers, people are having a very difficult time and that we need to take a pause.

Committee members agreed with that statement.

Candy stated that for this first meeting, this would be a round-table discussion and no action voted on for our first meeting. All other Committee members agreed with this statement.

6. Report and discuss information derived from Chief Horvath prior to this Committee meeting:

Candy reported that she contacted Nan to contact Committee members to see if they had any questions to ask Chief Horvath.

Dennis said he was familiar with most of the helpful information compiled.

Rich said Chief did a good job putting together a lot of information in a short time. The one thing Rich gleaned from the Chief's info is that Tubac's station is a lot like many small stations in small communities around the country. They don't have the tax bases of bigger localities to build bigger, "state-of-the-art" stations. It's a short list of things that need to be updated and Tubac is not alone in having at least one of our stations outdated. There was a lot of information provided and I learned a lot but this is the only thing Rich wanted to comment on.

Nan stated that concerning the Chief's answer to some of our questions of remodeling vs. rebuilding — it might be beneficial to talk to the Chief to prioritize the issues, to parse out the

critical issues needing to be addressed. The Chief did a great job collecting a lot of information. When it came to the Chief's answer to the question of remodeling vs rebuilding, part of her answer was to list all the factors that are challenges — from inadequate living quarters to ADA violations to building code requirements — going forward it might be a good idea to discuss with the Chief all the various factors and parse out the critical issues that need to be addressed immediately vs. issues that don't need to be addressed right away and are of a lower priority and longer timeframe. In other words, to prioritize the list.

Candy replied that architect Paul Mickelberg prioritized urgent needs, which will be discussed in Section 8. Dennis will go over that in a little bit.

Pete said he was very impressed with all the information provided. It reminded Pete of "reading the Bible" — "all good advice but not necessarily cost-effective advice." Pete inquired about what site the information would be available on — as an aside it won't fit on any site considering all the info. he noted. After looking at the WSN website, Pete noted that in their own words WSM stated that this is a "prototype" i.e., generic plan. I would call it "a straw man." A basic concept that would work for any fire station anywhere — it's put out as a "straw man." It is not "there" yet. On one slide WSM provided, there was information that didn't open for me. These concerned the specifications of the station. It didn't cut it for me. For example, it called for a 44 car parking lot — I can't think of any need to park 44 cars except for a once a year pancake breakfast fundraiser. Pete asked where the new station will be built because it could not fit on the existing lot where Fire Station 1 currently resides.

Candy stated that other sites were considered in executive session and can't be discussed. Candy also cautioned that the scope of the Committee does not include the ability to talk about the plans for a brand new fire station. If we get approval from Board to expand conversation, we can talk about it then. However, individually, you can discuss privately with the Chief about those questions. Pete was told that Dennis would address some of these issues concerning his talk with the architect.

Nan listed some of the questions presented to the Chief and the Chief's answers. Nan noted the only other comment she'd make was about the modular unit. The modular can be used for up to 3 years, then the county will reassess whether to give an extension based upon number of employees.

Candy reminded the Committee that employees have never lived in Fire Station 1 — historically they have always lived in modulares. And when Tubac was a volunteer fire department, they lived at home. Candy stated that the new modular is a three bedroom, two bathroom facility. The modular will meet the needs of two employees on 8 hour shifts to be housed for at least 3 years. Candy noted there are exceptions made by the county concerning building codes and fire districts and exceptions are often made. Candy stated she didn't think administrative offices are best suited for Station 1. She stated that there could be space in either the Josephina or Ruta Cameron stations. Currently space is leased for helicopter staff but perhaps that could be used for administrative offices. Previously the Financial Officer operated out of Peck Canyon, not Tubac Station 1. She suggested we keep an open mind and think outside the box as to how to best utilize our four fire stations — in terms of housing administrative staff and fire fighters. Maybe the hundred burn permits issued at Station 1 could be processed at Peck Canyon - a 10 minute drive south.

7. Identify, compare and discuss, the merits of each option for the application of proceeds from the sale of the communications tower:

This was determined to be beyond the scope of the Committee and was not discussed.

8. Review and discuss information provided by architect Paul Mickelberg regarding WSM Architects concept site plan and floor plan:

Pete responded: It was noted that the Fire Station 1 building structure is OK and good for 20 more years. A rooftop exhaust system is needed. Modular quarters are good up to three years. Out of ADA compliance but there is no enforcement. Exempt from zoning laws. Offices need to be separated from equipment bays by a vestibule. A logical remodel would start with a new equipment bay. The layouts provided by WSM are prototypical, i.e., concepts intended to be adjusted for the specific needs of the users.

Dennis relayed the highlights of a discussion that Candy and he held with Paul. Paul stated the following key points:

The building is basically sound and would be structural viable for the foreseeable future, e.g. 20 years.

There are ADA compliance concerns which are generally adjudicated via court cases.

The biggest issues with Station 1 are centered on a misalignment with Best Practices for fire stations. Specifically, the most important of these misalignments is the need for an exhaust system from the equipment bays and an environmental separation (e.g. vestibule) between the bay and the rest of the station. Also, it would be preferable to have equipment decontamination, a fitness center, and kitchen in the other part of the station.

Paul also mentioned that there are two ways of addressing these issues: a) remodel structure to address items noted or b) add new equipment bay and remodel the remainder of the space.

Nan's statement: While ADA compliance is usually only enforceable by lawsuit, it was mentioned that being out of compliance is risk inherent. One recommendation was to bring things into ADA compliance as a best practices scenario.

I also jotted down that we were grandfathered on building codes / that we were also exempt from zoning requirements. But the issue was raised that, again, we should bring the station up to a best practices status, categorizing the things that need to be fixed into tiers of importance. The Exhaust System in the truck bays being in 1st tier of importance, along with separation of office space from apparatus bay.

Second tier of importance: Workout space / decontamination equipment area - by renovation or upgrade of present system in use.

Third tier items: These would be things that would be "nice to do." But I didn't jot down any specifics.

Elsewhere in my notes (but I didn't jot down the item number this fell under): The pros and cons of on-site versus off-site location of administrative staff from a cost and efficiency standpoint.

9. Determine, review and discuss the requirements and specifications that led to WSM Architect's concept, site plan and floor plan for a new Station 1.

Pete reported that in the interview, Chief Horvath reported that she took the initiative, within her authority, to start the planning process three years in advance for a the budgeted new fire station. No particular specifications or requirements were evident. The WSM concept plan was available.

10. Identify and sort out optional and discretionary features of the proposed plan for a new Station 1.

No discussion.

11. Identify operational issues with existing Station 1, and discuss feasibility of updating existing Station 1 to meet current codes and/or regulations and required capabilities and the resulting impact on grandfathered provisions:

Discussed in Item 8.

No discussions for items 12., 13., 14, 15., and 17.

16. Assess the feasibility and funding implications of all potential actions from topics discussed above:

Cost estimates for Fire Station Remodeling are needed.

18. Identify next steps and assignments for committee members:

A walkthrough of Fire Station 1 is needed and must be “agenda-ized”.

Budget cost estimates for FS1 remodeling are needed.

Dennis suggested deferring to Candy to assign. There is a need to look at the operational and capital expenditure budget as they relate to renovation costs.

19. Identify and submit necessary requests to the TFD Board of Directors:

Ask for the expansion of the scope of Fire Station 1 Committee, request approval for funds for WSM Architects and Vincent Group, modify capital asset budget.

20. Adjournment (Cannot identify the adjournment time since the recording device was not operating.)