

Board Action Request

SUBJECT: Station #1 Renovation or Replacement

DATE: 3/31/2021

FROM: Mary Dahl, TFD Board Chair

AGENDA ITEM: Discussions and Possible Action to move forward with Station 1 renovation or replacement including direction to staff on next steps.

DISCUSSION: The Board has been discussing how to proceed with the Station 1 issue for a couple of years. Back in May, a Board-created committee made a final report on their findings relative to whether Station 1 could/should be renovated to meet the future needs of the District. The committee report ([Committee Report](#)) presented two options, one of which (Option A) does not, according to committee minutes, seem adequate to fully address the current needs of the District let alone its future needs (see page 10 and 13 in particular of [May 13 Committee Minutes](#)). The other option (B) may largely address current needs but does not allow for future growth. The price for Option A was \$900,000 and Option B was \$2,600,000. It is acknowledged that these cost estimates are very preliminary. The report goes on to recommend that the entire Board hear a presentation of the committee's findings by the architect who assisted in their work and by the District's financial director. Additional committee materials can be found on the District website by visiting the Station #1 page.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND: While not an exhaustive recitation of events leading to today, a short history of the genesis of replacing Station 1 may be helpful.

In June of 2008, the Fire Board voted unanimously to move forward with a \$15 million bond election to build two new stations in Rio Rico and replace Station 1 in Tubac. The bond election that November easily achieved voter approval. The notice and informational flyer produced by District staff is attached and can also be found at [TFD 2008 Bond Notice](#) .

By 2010, both new stations were built and placed into service. Due largely to the recession, its impact on local property values and an unprecedented foreclosure rate, plans for replacing Station 1 were set aside.

In 2017, recognizing the critical inadequacy of crew quarters at Station 1, an ill-fated attempt was made to renovate a portion of the vehicle bays for crew sleeping rooms. The project failed and was abandoned.

In 2018, Chief Horvath undertook to resolve the crew quarters issue at least temporarily by seeking and, ultimately, finding a modular unit adequate for staff needs. The board approved the plan in 2019 and the unit was occupied in 2020.

Having achieved a temporary solution to the most egregious deficiency at Station 1, staff undertook to re-state old and document new issues with the facility. Many of those deficiencies are basic building

code life safety concerns. A partial list of those deficiencies produced by staff in consultation with the County Building Official can be found at [Station #1 Deficiencies](#). A greater number of the deficiencies are to fire service industry standards for fire station buildings and building systems. There are many sources to learn about those standards, including these:

- https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/design_of_fire_ems_stations.pdf - “Safety and Health Considerations for the Design of Fire and Emergency Medical Services Stations”, a guidance document published by the US Fire Administration
- <https://www.wbdg.org/building-types/community-services/fire-station> - Information regarding fire station building attributes, emerging issues, relevant codes and standards, and additional resources, published by the National Institute of Building Sciences
- <https://www.firehouse.com/stations/architects/news/21011092/station-design-integrating-nfpa-standards-into-your-fire-station> - An article from the 2018 Station Design Conference stressing fire station design and its impact on NFPA standards compliance

Throughout 2019, the Board received informational briefings on the long- and well-documented inadequacies of Station 1 at several Board meetings prompting some Board members in September to request a few months up to a year respite before making a decision on Station 1 replacement to keep an eye on cash flow and to see how property tax revenues fare. In December, staff presented a Needs Assessment Study showing how a new station at the current site might work. The presentation can be found at [TFD Needs Assessment Study Board Presentation](#) and program statement is at [TFD Program](#) .

In 2020, the Board made the decision to sell the Peck Canyon tower for \$4 million. The discussions surrounding that decision included exploring the use of sale proceeds to replace Station 1.

These items are not in dispute:

- The residents of the District voted in 2008 to replace Station 1.
- Refinancing the current voter-approved Bond Debt resulted in a savings to the taxpayers of over a half million dollars.
- The District has about \$3.8 million in tower sale proceeds in the bank.
- The District Finance Director has advised and the Board has generally indicated its desire to sequester \$2 million in tower proceeds to cover lost tower revenues over the next ten years.
- Property tax valuations rose 5.2% this past year and are projected to continue to rise.
- The Station 1 remodel committee’s only viable option that may meet current needs is projected very preliminarily to cost \$2.6 million.

DECISION POINTS:

The Board needs to decide what to do about Station 1 and the District’s long-term facility needs in Tubac.

The first step, recognizing their work and out of courtesy to the Station 1 committee, is deciding if more information on the committee’s findings will be of value. The Board should discuss whether or not to ask

the architect and JVG to make a presentation of the committee's work, as recommended in the committee's report.

Assuming no presentation is desired, the Board needs to decide whether to pursue renovation or replacement of Station 1. This needs to be done by a motion of the Board and should also give staff direction going forward.

SUGGESTED MOTION: I move to replace the existing Station 1 with a new fire station and appropriate administrative facilities and that staff be directed to return to the Board with detailed information on a timeline, decision points, process and budget.

Attachments

- TFD Station 1 Committee Recommendation
- May 13 Committee Minutes
- TFD 2008 Bond Notice
- Station 1 Deficiencies
- TFD Needs Assessment Study Board Presentation
- TFD Program