

## Annual Report of the Sterling Building Needs Committee, 1999

Throughout the year, the Building Needs Committee worked with architect Greg Carell of The Carell Group on the development of public safety projects that meet the needs of the police and fire departments at reasonable cost. Police Chief Paul Constantino, Fire Chief Bruce Baker, and members of Sterling EMS were very helpful to the committee as we considered plans for a new police station at the Town landfill site and a renovation/addition to the existing police/fire station in the Town center.

In February, the Select Board requested that the committee consider alternative strategies for the location of public safety services. Funds were approved at a Special Town Meeting in March to add a second location strategy to the public safety buildings needs study. At the April meeting of the committee, The Carell Group presented the final study results, which included schematics, cost estimates and background information for two strategies:

Strategy A. Build new police station at landfill; renovate and add on to fire station.

Strategy B. Build new DPW at landfill (not part of study); renovate and add on to DPW for fire station; renovate fire station to be a police station.

This was presented to the Select Board at their May meeting.

An additional strategy considered by the committee was to build a new DPW at landfill, build a new combined police and fire at DPW site, raze the existing fire and increase Memorial Park area and public parking in the center. This was not included in the formal study or cost estimating process.

At the July meeting of the committee, it was voted to bring Strategy A to the public, both to inform them about the study results and costs and to receive comments, suggestions and questions from the public. An informational flyer was prepared and distributed, committee members and the architect made presentations to community groups, a lengthy article appeared in the *Meetinghouse News*, and the committee held two public presentations and an open house at the fire/police/EMS quarters.

A plan for the preservation and reuse of the old Town Hall was part of the committee's charge and the committee discussed a number of possibilities. In August, however, the Select Board voted to have the committee focus entirely on public safety building needs, noting that they would appoint a separate committee to address the old Town Hall.

The committee worked with engineer Bill Murray of Ross Associates on septic design and location issues, such as a design for a shared system for old Town Hall and fire, work on a Title V inspection, and fulfilling local and state requirements for the fire station septic system. In October, Murray submitted a proposal for the development of definitive septic design plans, noting that both the Sterling Board of Health and the Department of Environmental Protection require such plans to approve permits necessary to moving ahead on the project. At a special town meeting in December, voters approved \$25,000 to fund this essential step in the process.

Based on public response at meetings and to individual committee members, the committee's focus at the end of the year was on finding ways to reduce project costs while still meeting departmental needs for the future. The committee expects to bring both projects to the voters at the Annual Town Meeting, 2000.

We thank Police Chief Constantino, Fire Chief Baker, Sterling EMS, Tim Bragan, members of the Select Board and the Finance and Capital Investment Committees, the Board of Health, The Carell Group, and others who have helped the committee during a busy and involved year. We especially thank those community members who gave us valuable advice and information and attended our presentations and meetings.

Jack Chandler, Chairman and Treasurer

Janet Baker, Secretary, Cathie diGrazia, Dick Farrar, Mike Padula, Ron Pichierri, Barbara Sherblom

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