

MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) REGARDING
BYRAM'S NEW MUNICIPAL BUILDING PROJECT
Updated As of May 15, 2017

Following is a list of questions that have been raised during public information sessions or public meetings, with answers.

Question:

Why do we need a New Municipal Building?

Answer:

The present Municipal Building includes two separate structures that are connected by an enclosed hallway. The original structure (serving as the finance/tax office and meeting space) was constructed in 1971, making it approximately 46 years old. The second structure (serving the main administrative office and police department) was constructed of 12 temporary modular trailers – with a life expectancy of 4-8 years – that were assembled in 1975.

There are visible operational challenges with the current buildings – particularly the police department – which does not meet current standards. The buildings are not mechanically efficient with failing heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. The modular units are well beyond their useful life with the ceiling framing system, interior partition framing, and subflooring in poor condition needing replacing. The roof of the original structure leaks and requires a new roofing system. The windows and doors are not energy efficient. The buildings are not ADA (American's with Disabilities Act) compliant.

Question:

Was renovating the existing building(s) considered?

Answer:

Due to the deficiencies of the buildings, reuse, modifying, upgrading, or adding to the buildings would be an inefficient use of funds, as all components of the systems and construction are beyond their life expectancy. New structural building code requirements and compliance issues associated with the ADA, along with fitting the police department to meet current requirements, the Building Subcommittee agrees that new construction is the more practical approach.

For More Information See Building Assessment Report Dated September 2015:

<http://byramtwp.org/useruploads/files/Building%20Assessment%20Report%20-%20Reduced.pdf>

Question:

Has the Township considered alternative sites for the municipal building?

Answer:

The Township has considered and reviewed numerous alternatives for relocation of existing municipal services currently housed in the existing building, including police department, administrative services and meeting space.

These sites included: An unoccupied retail property on Tamarack Road, the location of the now closed Adam Todd, a building at 7 Waterloo Road (now occupied by Capitol Care), and the former Lakeland Bank building (soon to be reopened as a Chase Bank).

| LOCATION | 2016 TAXES PAID | SQ. FT. | YEAR BUILT |
|--|---|---------|--------------------------|
| 7 WATERLOO RD (CAPITOL CARE) | \$40,689.00 VALUE REDUCED FOR 2017 \$999,000.00 | 15,596 | 1988 |
| TAMARACK RD. BARONEE-TOZZO TAMARACK, LLC (STRIP MALL) | \$21,988.50 | 6,880 | RE- DEVELOPED 2008 |
| 2 TAMARACK RD. BARONE TOZZO RESTAURANT, LLC | \$15,541.50 | 6,210 | RE- DEVELOPED 2008 |
| 251 RT. 206 (ADAM TODD) | 2016 TAXES \$51,375.00 (VALUE REDUCED FOR 2017) \$750,000.00 | 11,387 | RE- DEVELOPED 1972 |
| 80 RT. 206 (LAKELAND BANK) | \$26,372.50 | 5,060 | 1976 |

All these sites would require the cost of acquiring the properties and exempting them from taxes, as they would become Township owned. All of these properties had varying issues that eliminated most as viable candidates. The locations either were not adequate to support all or some of the Township services, three of the properties would require high cost of renovation after acquisition and two of the properties were not connected to the Township's sewer utility. The Township Building Subcommittee found no other property that would be suitable for relocation from 10 Mansfield Drive.

Question:

How was it decided to select the site on the Township property across from the existing building?

Answer:

There were many alternatives or combinations of alternatives considered, and the Building Subcommittee agreed the best option was to locate the new building across the parking lot from the location of the existing municipal building. There were also five specific site plan options considered. These are presented on the Township Website with a date of March 16, 2017. The option that minimized the site development costs and allowed current operations to continue in the existing building during construction and did not require leasing space was Option 5.

See link to Site Plan Options:

<http://byramtwp.org/useruploads/files/031617%20Site%20Plan%20Options.pdf>

Question:

Why is Option 5 (site plan) the best choice as currently presented?

Answer:

Site Plan Option 5 allows operations to continue in the existing building eliminating the need to lease and relocate offices to a temporary space. An environmental analysis was completed to assess the various

required regulatory approvals including Highlands, Flood Hazard Area and Freshwater Wetlands.

Question:

What improvements will a new building provide if it is built?

Answer:

Current Building Code regulations require that the new building be constructed with materials and methods to meet current structural standards, be fully accessible, be highly energy efficient, and meet all life, safety and environmental regulations. Design improvements will also include better and more efficient layout of office and public space, larger community multi-purpose meeting area, improvements to technology systems, significant improvements to the Police Department and better site access to Town Hall. Additionally, modern materials and the installation of efficient energy systems, windows, and building components will provide a more energy conscious environment.

Question:

What was the process used to define the building program and the floor plan options, creating the building size, layout and circulation plans?

Answer:

In the summer of 2015 all department heads individually met with the Architect to provide their input and wish list of items for the new building. This resulted in the Byram Township Municipal Building Programming Document dated August 26, 2015. At the October 20, 2015 meeting of the Mayor and Council the architect reviewed the programming document and it was concluded that the program need to be scaled down. The original program presented a building size of 20,464 sqft. At the November 16, 2015 meeting of the Mayor and Council the revised programming report (modification #1) was reviewed that was reduction of approximately 20% resulting in a new total of 16,309 sq ft. At the November 1, 2016 meeting of the Mayor and Council the architect was authorized to conduct additional program review meetings with each of the department heads and the Building Subcommittee to determine if there were further opportunities for modifications that could reduce the overall square footage. This resulted in Option 5, presenting building size at 14,385 sq ft.

Question:

What were the primary changes from the original program of 20,464 sqft that resulted in Modification #1 (16,309 sqft) dated November 2015?

Answer:

The original plan included incorporating the Department of Public Works offices, break room, shower and locker rooms. These facilities were removed from the new building, and it was decided to renovate the existing building instead. There were various reductions in the department spaces and the fitness center was eliminated.

Question:

What were the primary changes from the Modification #1 (16,309 sq ft) to the current program know as Option 5 at 14,385 sqft?

Answer:

Eliminated office space by moving to an open floor plan for the majority of the administrative spaces, a

modified lobby area and additional various reductions in department spaces.

Question:

Does the building plan include public meeting space?

Answer:

Yes, the plan includes a multipurpose meeting space that will be used for Township Council, committee, commission and board meetings, and will also be open to the Township's community groups.

Question:

If the new municipal building is built on the existing site, where will the Township operate in the current offices during construction?

Answer:

All operations will continue in the existing complex. After the new building is complete and all services are moved, the existing building will be demolished and the area will be used for parking and re-green the space. This avoids the need and eliminates the costs associated with moving to – and leasing of – temporary office space.

Question:

Will the Town use energy efficient construction practices to build the new structure?

Answer:

The Town is committed to using the most energy efficient construction practices that are practical and cost responsible. In many instances utility companies will now offer cost incentives to use energy efficient lighting, heating and cooling equipment. The Town will certainly be pursuing these options.

Question:

Has solar power been considered for cost savings?

Answer:

The use of renewal energy options have been discussed, including solar. These options most likely will be considered as alternative bids at time of bidding the project.

Question:

What will the building look like?

Answer:

No elevations or plans have been developed at this point, but the intent is that the building would be designed to reflect the Township's design standards.

Question:

Does the plan allow for an addition to be built?

Answer:

The site plan will support additional space to be added to the building if it is determined there is a future need.

Question:

Was a two story building considered and would it more cost efficient than a one story building?

Answer:

A two story building was discussed, but the architect advised that it would not be cost efficient. The Architect advised that the design would need to be structurally altered to support a second floor; ADA compliance would require an elevator and public restrooms would need to be duplicated on the second floor.

Question:

What repairs are needed, if any, to continue occupying the existing municipal building during construction of a new building?

Answer:

The Building Assessment Report dated September 2015 identifies the issues with the existing building. Also, there is a Building Mechanical System Evaluation report dated October 2014. The goal is not to spend any money on further improvements to the existing building and only do what is necessary to support continued operations until the new building is completed.

Question:

Did the Township complete site visits of other recently constructed municipal buildings and was learn?

Answer:

Several municipal buildings were visited including Wanaque, Hardyston and Warren Township. Each visit presented multiple learning opportunities that included design elements, site work considerations, funding options, construction oversight and other project lifecycle elements.

Question:

Will the animal shelter (BARKS) and recycling center remain on the municipal complex?

Answer:

There are no plans to eliminate the animal shelter or the recycling center. There is an expectation that improvements to the recycling center will included in the site work.

Question:

Will the proposed plans meet the Police Department needs?

Answer:

The final plan for the Police Department will need to be reviewed appropriate State Agencies to ensure the new facility will be compliant.

Question:

It has been reported that the New Building Project is estimated to cost \$8.2 Million dollars. Is that accurate?

Answer:

The Mayor and Council have been careful not to mislead the public with cost estimates for this project at this time because they don't want to unintentionally provide inaccurate information. The \$8.2 million dollar amount was a working estimate for the project, based on a preliminary estimate presented by the Architect.

Question:

What is the current estimate for the project?

Answer:

The Township recently requested MJA Construction Services to provide a detailed independent estimate for the proposed project. Using the schematic floor plan and site plan information for the proposed new building of 14,385 square feet, MJA Construction Services presented a detailed cost estimate for the building in Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) 33 division format of \$7,327,260.

Question:

What does the cost estimate include?

Answer:

The estimate includes Construction Costs, Soft Costs, FF&E and Design/Construction Contingencies.

Question:

What are "Soft Costs"?

Answer:

"Soft Costs" are those costs associated with a project that are identified to pay for an architect, engineer, site designers, lawyers and any other non-construction costs related to the project. These costs are the front- end costs of any construction project.

Question:

What contingencies are included in the estimate?

Answer:

Since the project has not started the design phase, there is design contingency of 10% included in the project estimate. A construction contingency of 10% is included in the project estimate as well as a cost escalation factor of 1.5%.

Question:

What is FF&E?

Answer:

FF&E is “Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment” and the project estimate does include this cost estimated at \$250,000.

Question:

Is the Township required to take the lowest bid?

Answer:

The Township is required to follow the New Jersey Local Public Contracts Law (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1 et seq). Every contract awarded by the Township for the provision or performance of any goods or services, the cost of which in the aggregate exceeds the bid threshold, shall be awarded only by resolution of the governing body of the contracting unit to the lowest responsible bidder after public advertising for bids and bidding.

Question:

Has approval for the project already been given?

Answer:

The project cannot continue without securing the required funding.

Question:

Will the State contribute to the funding or are there any grants available?

Answer:

We do not expect that the State will contribute any funding to the project. The Township will continue to explore options for grants. The Township was being considered for grant to complete the storm water design for the site through New Jersey Future, but due to the delay of the project late last summer (2016) the Township lost out on this opportunity.

Question:

How will the project be funded?

Answer:

The Township is planning to fund the project by bonding. Initially, the bond ordinance will give the Township the opportunity to pay interest only during construction. Once the project is completed the final cost of the project will be covered by a permanent bond issue for a term of 20 years.

Question:

How will the cost translate into additional taxes to an individual taxpayer?

Answer:

It is too early to provide the specific impact at this time. However, the Mayor and Council are committed to making a recommendation to fund this project using the most cost efficient methods

possible. Every member of the Mayor and Council is fully sensitive to the tax impact of the project, and are taxpayers themselves. If the proposed estimate of \$7.4 million was fully funded with a 20 year bond, it would be an increase of about \$137 per year to the average taxpayer (a total of \$2,740 over that 20 year period).

Question:

I'm reading some conflicting opinions and claims on social media, and in response to online articles. Can you help me understand them?

Answer:

Members of the Council and Building Subcommittee have answered many of these same questions during our special meetings and open houses. Here are answers to some of the claims and misinformation we often hear.

Question:

Why is a jail being built as part of this project?

Answer:

The Township is definitely NOT looking to build a jail as part of this project. This confusion may come from the building plans showing a "Holding Cell" in the police department. A better description would be that it is an interrogation room or holding room for a prisoner until they can be transferred to the County facilities.

Question:

Is a courtroom being built as part of the project?

Answer:

The Township currently is in its 3rd year of a 5-year contract with Andover for a joint Court. There is no reason at this time to believe the contract won't be renewed, but as part of long term planning, we need to consider the Court as something that could – at some time in the future – need to return to Byram's Municipal building. With that in mind, the Building Subcommittee and architect have allowed for easy reconfiguration of the General Purpose Room to provide space for use as a courtroom if needed.

Question:

If there are really less than a dozen employees (or 4, or 9, or whatever opponents are claiming currently), why is such a large building being proposed?

Answer:

The Township currently employs 45 people, that breaks down to 33 full-time employees and 12 part-time employees.