

FAQ

2017 Property Purchase

Special Meeting of the Williamstown Fire District

October 24, 2017 at 7pm

Williamstown Elementary School, Church Street, Williamstown, MA 01267

Q: What are we voting about on October 24th?

A: To purchase the property at 562-580 Main Street. The property is currently unoccupied. The property is zoned as “light business”, and using it for Fire District activities would remove only approximately \$7000? per year from the town’s tax base. This vote does not in any way address the building of a fire station on this property; further vote(s) will be needed to authorize the construction of a fire station.

Q: How much will voting “yes” increase tax rates?

A: A “yes” vote will not increase tax rates. The Fire District is planning on using reserve funds which are generally put away to purchase new fire apparatus. Of note, the district’s tax rate remains the same as the previous fiscal year.

Q: Why does the Fire District need this property?

A: This is the only available property in town which would meet the needs of the District. It would allow for expansion of the Fire District’s services to meet the needs of the town now, and for many years to come. The District’s current property is very small, and does not even permit sufficient parking for firefighters and storage of additional fire

apparatus. The new property would allow space for parking and additional apparatus, such as a water tanker for fighting fires outside the town's hydrant district.

Q: Has the district considered purchasing any other properties?

A: The District has worked with an independent consulting organization since planning began in 2007 to assess the needs of the district and what properties in town could address those needs. In short, this is the only available property which will meet the needs of the District. Other properties considered since 2007 have included: The Photech property at the northern end of Cole Avenue; the former town garage site on Water Street; 101 North Street, formerly La Country Restaurant; the Chenail Field site directly north of Chopsticks Restaurant; 295 Main, across from Hoosac Bank; the Williams College-owned site on the corner of Church and Southworth Streets; and the former Agway site at 600 Main Street. Each of these properties had significant drawbacks, and none of these properties were able to meet the needs of the District.

Q: What are the advantages of this property?

A: First, the property is centrally located, with the majority of the District's calls within a 2-mile radius. Second, it is a safe location, with adequate lines of site to ensure safe movement of emergency vehicles, and is located away from schools and other areas with children. Third, the property is large enough to meet the needs of the District now and for many years to come, and will allow for storage of additional firefighting vehicles and for the indoor and outdoor training of firefighters.

Voting "yes" on October 24th will give the Fire District authorization to complete the purchase of the property only!

In order to move forward and proceed with the construction of a new fire station a further vote(s) will be needed. The fire district does not see that happening for 18 to 24 months.