

Questions/Answers –

November 18 Council Meeting and Afterwards

By Mayor Voveris and Chief Crowson

1. The new conference room looks very large.

The current room is 152 square feet and will be re-purposed. The new conference room will be 273 square feet and allow the department staff to meet comfortably as a group for meetings and training. It will allow a conference table that seats at least 12.

The old room was 13'2" x 11'6" the new room will be 20'6" x 12'10".

This room can also accommodate Town Committee meetings when the Council room is not available.

2. Is the building being expanded to add more staff?

No. The staff that exists today is the full complement for our PD.

The staff as it exists today offers our community 24/7 policing.

The expansion is to address functionality and liability issues, not staffing.

3. The Chief has said he did not need more space.

What the Chief meant was that he would continue to operate his department whether his building was expanded or not. When he started out almost 3 decades ago he worked in a one room small office in Town Hall and then expanded to a trailer. The current department building as it exists today is a luxury by comparison.

The Chief is in support of the expansion because he has learned through police professionals our building and operation is sub-standard and compromises the safety of our staff and offenders brought in for breaking the law and exposes our Town to potential liability.

4. I thought the Council was taking this initiative to referendum.

The Council never stated this would happen. A prior member on the Council had publicly stated this might be considered.

The Council is comprised of an educated, talented and fiscally responsible group that will carefully consider this initiative. The Council spending power exceeds half a million dollars so the building expansion is well within the Council authority for decision and the current Council is very capable to make an informed decision on the initiative.

5. Why do we need a building that is possibly larger than Bethany Beach who has 15 police officers?

The size of the building is not a reflection of the size of the department.

It must allow proper form and function for the various tasks and procedures of proper operation. It must allow for safety in operation and separation of staff and offenders and separation of adult and juvenile offenders.

Bethany Beach PD shares space with their Town Hall and has 2 floors. Police have the majority of the bottom floor which includes dispatch/reception area, administrative assistant's office, Captain's office, Chief's office, Officer squad bay, kitchen, large locker room that accommodates full time and seasonal officers and includes a shower and bathroom, processing room, evidence room, radio/electronic room. Though the square footage was not available with our inquiry it would seem by sheer description of their areas and having no multi- purpose areas their square footage would exceed that proposed for South Bethany.

6. Why can't we just borrow other police facilities and process offenders at other stations?

With all neighboring towns and jurisdictions there is reciprocity between police departments. South Bethany helps its neighbors as well as our neighbors help us. All PDs realize the liability of processing offenders from other locations so the preference is to do such as an exception and not the norm.

Just like having house guests, however, one can wear out their welcome. If we were to count on our neighbors for proper processing there would come a point we would either be no longer welcome or would be charged a fee for the service. Additionally, the time it would take our officers to travel for such processing would mean time away from policing South Bethany. Finally, it is not only processing that is an issue with our current facility. We have too many areas that function as multipurpose and violate operating standards of proper policing.

It was recently suggested our officers could process offenders in Ocean City, Maryland. That is not something we would do. Maryland is a different state and there are rules of extradition.

7. It seemed the architect did not include all the necessary points that the State requires for proper function and standard.

The architect has total understanding of all the points that Chief Crowson wants included in the next phase to prepare architectural drawings. There have been numerous conversations and checks and balances. The architect had some confusion with Dr. Warren's mention of 100+ considerations to embrace and this is not where South Bethany wants to be or needs to be. The points that the Chief wants have been reviewed and accepted by the power that signs off on proper operation and these points will be itemized by the architect on December 9.

The architect will bring a hand sketched drawing to show inclusion of elements the Chief requires and will also include the offender bathroom which can be roughed in or built at the time of the expansion. Additional cost for such will be provided on December 9.

The 100+ DPAC standards do not all pertain to standards regarding police facilities since some pertain to operations. The standards that do pertain to facilities were covered in Dr. Warren's analysis and recommendations report and have been incorporated to the expansion our Chief has brought forward for consideration.

8. Is South Bethany seeking accreditation?

No. This would require adding more personnel for the frequent reporting that needs to be done to maintain it. Instead Chief Crowson wants to have an operation that would mirror such standards but not be required to have dedicated personnel.

9. Funding for the expansion and remarks on using grant money.

The project estimate is at \$206,000. The Chief has \$50,000 in donated funds from one of our owners who passed away and plans to use grant monies as well. Our PD receives \$25,000 in grant money from Sussex County annually. The Chief has the discretion to use the money as he sees fit and he would like to use 2 years' worth of such funds toward the expansion. The donated funds and the grant monies will reduce the funds needed from the Town budget considerably.

A remark came from the audience that perhaps if this grant money was used toward the building expansion it may negatively affect the PD's ability to operate.

The Chief advises these grant funds have always been used for supplemental programs geared towards community service and officer safety and at this time he can see no better use of the funds than towards a safer, more efficient police facility.

The funds are not needed for operations.

10. What other furnishing will the PD need after expansion?

At this time the Chief does not project a need for furnishings since no new personnel will be added and all current items will be placed so no multi-purpose areas remain.

He does have a donation commitment for a larger conference table and also has the LESO program to tap into any unforeseen needs. The LESO program is one throughout the country where PD's can access surplus items at no cost other than to transport them from their location. The program offers access to office equipment, furnishings, vehicles, boats, and a tremendous myriad of things.

Additionally the Chief will continue to seek grant funding to supplement needs of the operation.