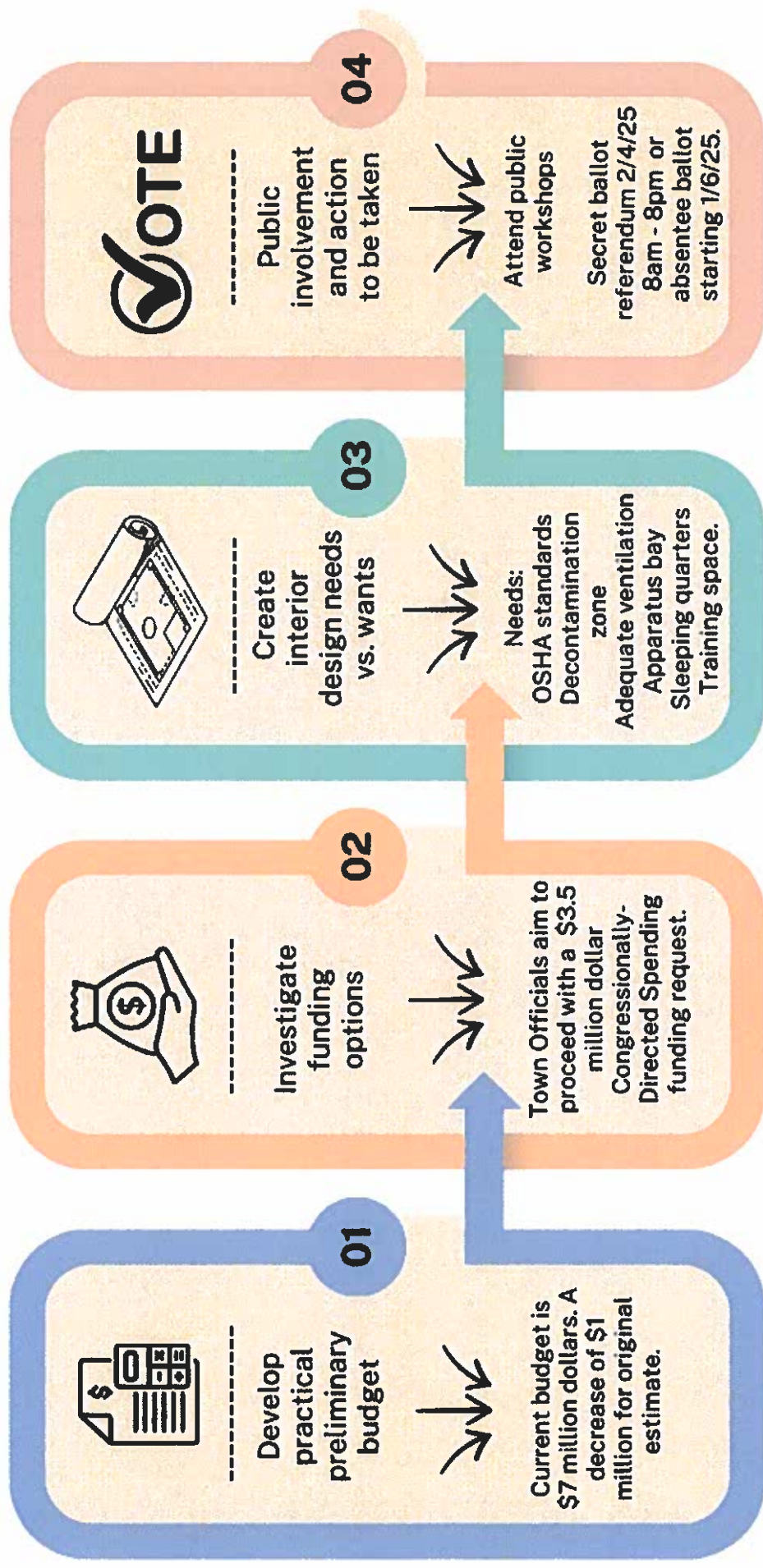


FIRE-EMS BUILDING PROJECT PHASE II

June 2024-Feb 2025

The purpose of a new building is to establish a facility that effectively supports the increasing demands of public emergency services. The needs for this station are centered around implementing modern firefighting - EMS standards and best practices while adhering to a practical construction budget.



Basic Q&As

Was an independent study completed to examine the operations and facility needs to meet the growing demand of emergency services in Thomaston?

Yes, in 2023, the Town of Thomaston hired Port City Architecture (PCA) to independently assess the town's fire operations, existing facilities, and current and future facility space requirements. The study aimed to:

- Identify fire/EMS physical space requirements for the next 50+ years.
- Compare Thomaston's needs with benchmarks from similar towns currently meeting modern firefighting required standards and best practices.
- Evaluate the existing station's condition and its capacity to meet firefighting and EMS required standards and best practices.
- Explore alternative locations if the current site is inadequate.
- Recommend efficient operational best practices and a facility plan to meet goals and standards within a realistic budget.

Does Thomaston need a new fire/EMS building, right now?

Yes, the existing station was constructed in 1956, a time when federal and state regulations were minimal. In the near future, Thomaston may have to close its station due to the current building's structural weaknesses and outdated safety codes. These issues hinder Thomaston's ability to meet or adopt modern firefighting and EMS standards and best practices. Such standards are essential for delivering optimal emergency services, attracting and retaining qualified personnel, and reducing health risks for staff, particularly in cancer prevention.

Why is it not possible for the town to build a new station on the current site?

The current station has surpassed its expected lifespan, as noted in the independent needs assessment conducted by Port City Architecture. Several challenges render the existing station and site unsuitable for accommodating the physical conditions and functional layout required to uphold modern firefighting and EMS standards and best practices. These challenges include:

1. **Structural Vulnerability & Outdated Design:** The building's maintenance is impractical, with concerns found in its structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems despite a fair exterior condition.
2. **Limitations of Physical Space:** Retrofitting the existing structure or constructing a new one on the site is not feasible, as the lot is too small to meet the safety and efficiency requirements dictated by current firefighting and EMS standards and best practices.
3. **Outdated Safety Standards and Codes:** The existing station falls short in terms of space requirements, apparatus bay specifications, and compliance with codes. This includes:
 - No decontamination zone
 - No sleeping quarters
 - Poor Apparatus Apron for rapid call response
 - ADA code compliance is not met for door clearance and room sizing
 - Inadequate ventilation and separation of living and garage areas

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- Poorly insulated
 - No sprinkler system
 - Does not meet Essential Facility Structural Code
 - Electrical Service and Fixtures outdated

Why does this project cost more than the new West Rockport Fire Station?

The West Rockport fire station serves as a satellite station, distinct from the primary station in Rockport. Currently, Thomaston is in the process of designing a main building dedicated to fire and EMS services. A satellite station is a smaller, auxiliary facility strategically positioned to ensure quicker response times to regions that are too distant from the main station. Typically, these satellite stations have limited equipment and lack space for extensive training, living quarters, and equipment decontamination, which are features available at the main station.

Why was Thomaston Green selected as the site for the new building?

This site was selected for the following reasons:

- **Location** – Port City Architecture explored best site locations throughout the town based on data i.e. location of population, trends in call locations etc. to determine a radius location.
- **Land Prices** – When looking within the radius location and building criteria size there was few options, and those options were not available for purchase.
- **Project Cost** – Thomaston Green fell within the designated radius and met the required building size criteria. Since the town owns the Green, it could save a considerable amount of money by avoiding land purchases or extensive site preparation. In an effort to reduce costs, town leadership proposed the idea to the voters, who subsequently approved the use of part of the Green for the new location.

What is the current budget and strategy for financing the new building?

Since June, the leadership team has created practical preliminary budget, investigated funding options, and designed an interior layout to satisfy the space requirements for modern firefighting and EMS standards and best practices.

Practical preliminary budget - To date, town leaders have worked with Port City Architecture to cut 1 million dollars off the original design. Current budget is now \$7 million dollars. The building design meets requirements for modern firefighting and EMS standards and best practices.

Funding possibilities – Town leaders have met with representatives from Senator King and Representative Pingree's offices regarding applying for a Congressionally-Directed Spending funding for \$3.5 million dollars and the remaining \$3.5 million dollars would come from taxpayers.

Building design needs verses wants -The purpose of this building is to establish a facility that effectively supports the increasing demands of public emergency services. The needs for this building are centered around implementing modern firefighting and EMS standards and best practices while adhering to a practical budget which focuses on:

- Adequate but not superfluous size building
-

- Compiling with OSHA standards
- Decontamination rooms
- Training space
- Apparatus bay separation from living quarters
- Health and fitness requirements

Different individuals or groups within the community have expressed their desires, and while each of these wants holds some value, they also contribute to increased costs. These include:

- Acquiring land from a private owner instead of utilizing a section of the Green
- Incorporating elaborate exterior façade details for enhanced visual appeal
- Requesting to postpone the project until the economy improves

How can residents get involved in the process?

Residents feedback is needed at Public Workshops and voting on a referendum in early February.

The purpose of the **public workshops** is to provide a space for residents to directly talk with the architect and town leaders about anything and everything related to the project. The next public workshop will be on Jan 8th, 6pm at the town hall.

Secret and absentee ballot for referendum – On Feb 4th, 8am - 8pm, at town hall, voters will be asked to vote via secret ballot on a referendum to approve the project budget and give the town permission to apply for \$3.5 million dollars in grant funding to offset the direct cost of the new fire/EMS building. Absentee ballots will be available beginning on Monday, Jan 6th at town hall.

Permission from voters to seek this specific grant funding is time sensitive. Failure to submit an application during this round puts the town in jeopardy of obtaining any type of federal assistance to lower the cost burden onto Thomaston residents' property taxes.

Can residents' personal insurance rates and ISO rates be impacted by an inadequate station?

Indeed, if the town persists in overlooking this urgent issue, both ISO rates and personal insurance rates will be adversely affected, leading to a probable rise in personal insurance bills for residents.

Why is the new Fire-EMS building not a part of the former Lura Libby School complex?

The initial proposal to move town officers and departments to the old Lura Libby School included fire and EMS services. However, during the due diligence assessment, it became clear that this location was unsuitable for fire and EMS due to several factors: it did not have direct access to Route 1, there were safety concerns regarding the number of children walking to school, and the traffic patterns around the neighboring school posed additional risks.



Select Board & Budget Committee Joint Meeting
Monday, December 9, 2024

5pm

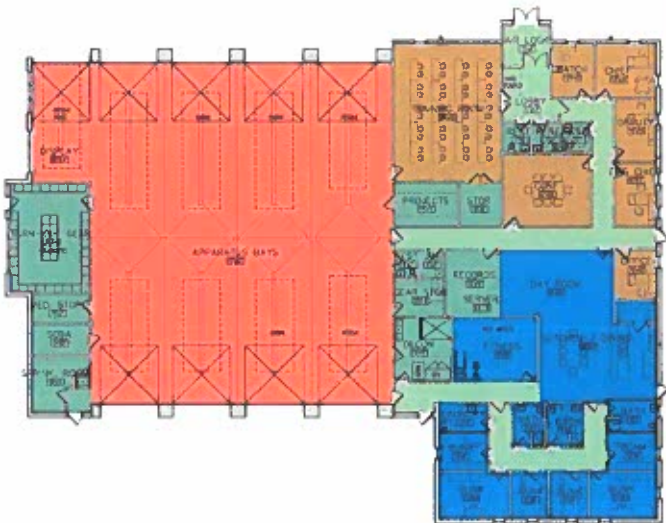
Proposed Fire & EMS Building Project

Preliminary Designs
Thomaston Fire & EMS Building Project



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Town of Thomaston to Hold Secret Ballot Referendum Election & Special Town Meeting New Fire and EMS Station to be Voted On

The Town of Thomaston will hold a Secret Ballot Referendum on **Tuesday, February 4, 2025**, from 8am to 8pm to vote on building a new Fire and EMS Station.

New Fire-EMS Building

On **June 13, 2023**, Thomaston voters supported reserving land at Thomaston Green for a new Fire and EMS Station, which saved taxpayers significant costs by eliminating the need to purchase private land. This vote demonstrated strong community support for enhancing our emergency services.

Since then, Port City Architects has collaborated with the town to conduct a needs assessment and create a preliminary design for the new station. Originally estimated at \$8 million, the project cost has been reduced to \$7 million. Voters will be asked to authorize borrowing up to \$3.5 million to finance the project, with an additional \$3.5 million sought through Congressional earmarks.

Town officials, including Select Board Chair Chris Rector, Town Manager Kara George, and Fire and EMS personnel, have engaged with representatives from Senators Angus King and Susan Collins' offices and Representative Chellie Pingree's office. A public open house in early October gave citizens an opportunity to visit the current Knox Street station and learn about the project. These efforts aim to secure additional funding to support this critical project.

Voter approval is essential before applying for congressional earmarks. The application window is typically brief, opening in March. This may be the Town's final opportunity to pursue congressional earmarks, as alternative funding sources for this type of project are scarce or nonexistent.

Project Benefits

The new Fire and EMS Station will:

- Improve response times with 24-hour first responder coverage.
- Meet OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) facility requirements.
- Enhance recruitment and retention of qualified first responders by demonstrating our commitment to their work and our community.
- Expand emergency services by adding training space, adequate sleeping quarters, and larger apparatus bays.

Public Workshop

A public workshop will be held on **Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 6pm** with Port City Architects and the Fire and EMS Building Committee. All citizens are encouraged to attend, learn more about the project, and ask questions.

Special Open Town Meeting

Following the Secret Ballot Referendum, a Special Open Town Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 6pm**. This portion of the meeting, like the Annual Town Meeting in June, requires in-person attendance to vote.

Town Meeting Agenda

- **Knox Street Rebuild Project:** Voters will be asked to remove the requirement that the Town receive "assurance of availability of other funds and grants sufficient to completely fund" the Knox Street rebuild project.
- **Code Enforcement:** Voters will be asked to adopt the 2021 ICC/IRC codes (International Code Council/International Residential Codes), recently adopted by the State of Maine, for Code Enforcement. An additional question requests adoption of the new proposed fee schedule.
- **Cemetery Sale:** Voters will consider approving the sale of Butler Cemetery on Thomaston Street to Mr. Lawrence Butler, a descendant who wishes to maintain the family cemetery through a private trust.
- **Georges River Regional Shellfish Management Ordinance Update:** Voters will consider adopting proposed changes to the GRRSM Ordinance, which governs shellfish management across five member towns: Cushing, St. George, South Thomaston, Thomaston, and Warren.

Key Dates

- **Select Board & Budget Committee/Fire-EMS Project:** Monday, December 9, 2024, at 5pm
- **Proposed New Fee Schedule Workshop:** Thursday, December 12, 2024, at 5pm
- **Absentee Ballots Available:** Monday, January 6, 2025
- **Public Workshop with Port City Architects:** Wednesday, January 8, 2025, at 6pm
- **Public Hearing:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at 6pm
- **Election Day:** Tuesday, February 4, 2025 (Polls open 8am to 8pm)
- **Special Town Meeting:** Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 6pm

DRAFT WARRANT ARTICLE

ARTICLE 2: Shall the Town vote to appropriate and authorize the Thomaston Select Board to borrow on behalf of the Town, a principal amount not to exceed Three Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$3,500,000) through the issuance of general obligation bonds or notes of the Town of Thomaston, which may be callable bonds or notes, the proceeds to be used for the purpose of financing the building of Fire-EMS Building (the "Project"); and further to authorize the municipal officers to accept any state and federal funds which are hereby appropriated for the Project, and to take any and all actions and execute any and all documents, contracts or agreements necessary or convenient to issue the bonds or notes of the Town and to accomplish the Project?

SELECT BOARD RECOMMENDS _____

BUDGET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS _____

TOWN OF THOMASTON FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Total Town Indebtedness

Total Debt outstanding and unpaid:	\$4,826,188.66
Total Debt authorized and unissued:	\$1,500,000.00 ¹
Total Debt to be incurred if this article is approved:	\$3,500,000.00
TOTAL	\$9,826,188.66

¹ This figure will be \$0.00 if Article 3 below is approved, and the TOTAL will be \$8,326,188.66.

Estimated Costs of Proposed Bond

Estimated Interest Rate:	4.6%
Estimated Term:	30 years
Principal to be repaid:	\$3,500,000.00
Estimated interest to be paid over term:	\$3,885,630.82
Total cost of Principal and interest:	\$7,385,630.82

Validity

The validity of the bond and of the voters' ratification of the note and bond may not be affected by any errors in the above estimates. If the actual amount of the total debt service for the bond issue varies from the estimate, the ratification by the electors is nevertheless conclusive and the validity of the bond issue is not affected by reason of the variance.

Jodell Benson, Finance Director

EXPLANATION: The proposed Fire-EMS Building is estimated to cost \$7,000,000 and the town would like to apply for half, \$3.5 M of the needed money to come from congressional funding, however, voter approval of the remainder of the money (the \$3.5 M in this article) must be approved by voters before the Town can apply for the congressional funds. Failure to obtain congressional, or other, funds will require bringing this project back to the voters at a future date.

Tax Breakdown

20 Year Bond at 4.10% Fire EMS Station
Estimated Annual Payment \$259,821.74

30 Year Bond at 4.60% Fire EMS Station
Estimated Annual Payment \$217,405.24

Current Assessed Real Estate Value	Current Property Tax at \$20.00 Mill	Annual Tax Increase	Monthly Tax Increase	Weekly Tax Increase	Annual Tax Increase	Monthly Tax Increase	Weekly Tax Increase
\$ 100,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 55.00	\$ 4.58	\$ 1.06	\$ 46.00	\$ 3.83	\$ 0.88
\$ 150,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 82.50	\$ 6.88	\$ 1.59	\$ 69.00	\$ 5.75	\$ 1.33
\$ 200,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 110.00	\$ 9.17	\$ 2.12	\$ 92.00	\$ 7.67	\$ 1.77
\$ 250,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 137.50	\$ 11.46	\$ 2.64	\$ 115.00	\$ 9.58	\$ 2.21
\$ 300,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 165.00	\$ 13.75	\$ 3.17	\$ 138.00	\$ 11.50	\$ 2.65
\$ 350,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 192.50	\$ 16.04	\$ 3.70	\$ 161.00	\$ 13.42	\$ 3.10
\$ 400,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 220.00	\$ 18.33	\$ 4.23	\$ 184.00	\$ 15.33	\$ 3.54
\$ 450,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 247.50	\$ 20.63	\$ 4.76	\$ 207.00	\$ 17.25	\$ 3.98
\$ 500,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 275.00	\$ 22.92	\$ 5.29	\$ 230.00	\$ 19.17	\$ 4.42
\$ 550,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 302.50	\$ 25.21	\$ 5.82	\$ 253.00	\$ 21.08	\$ 4.87
\$ 600,000.00	\$ 12,000.00	\$ 330.00	\$ 27.50	\$ 6.35	\$ 276.00	\$ 23.00	\$ 5.31
\$ 650,000.00	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 357.50	\$ 29.79	\$ 6.88	\$ 299.00	\$ 24.92	\$ 5.75
\$ 700,000.00	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 385.00	\$ 32.08	\$ 7.40	\$ 322.00	\$ 26.83	\$ 6.19
\$ 750,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 412.50	\$ 34.38	\$ 7.93	\$ 345.00	\$ 28.75	\$ 6.63
\$ 800,000.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 440.00	\$ 36.67	\$ 8.46	\$ 368.00	\$ 30.67	\$ 7.08
\$ 850,000.00	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 467.50	\$ 38.96	\$ 8.99	\$ 391.00	\$ 32.58	\$ 7.52
\$ 900,000.00	\$ 18,000.00	\$ 495.00	\$ 41.25	\$ 9.52	\$ 414.00	\$ 34.50	\$ 7.96
\$ 950,000.00	\$ 19,000.00	\$ 522.50	\$ 43.54	\$ 10.05	\$ 437.00	\$ 36.42	\$ 8.40
\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 550.00	\$ 45.83	\$ 10.58	\$ 460.00	\$ 38.33	\$ 8.85

Estimated 2.75% increase

Estimated 2.3 % Increase