

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Selectmen, TA Kim Hallquist
From: Emily Cobb, Police Chief
Date: June 6, 2023
Re: Request for expansion of dispatch center

Starting in April 2021, I began the process in earnest of exploring new CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) and RMS (Records Management Software) programs. I spoke with several different departments in the State and reviewed multiple programs. Ultimately, I settled on a program which will enhance the public safety service we offer to not only the Town of New London, but the towns we dispatch for as well. Given the cost of this program and what I believed would be most advantageous in both the short and long term for New London and the other towns, I applied for and was awarded \$413,000 in grant money from the COPS Office. This program is an improvement for the New London Police Department and will better suit our needs for records management and dispatching services.

However, for this program to operate effectively, we need more equipment and thus, more space in the dispatch center. As many people who have been on a tour of the police department have seen, you'll remember the very small and extremely cramped space we operate in daily. We literally do not have the space in the room or on the walls to configure this equipment properly, in a manner that is appropriate and ergonomically correct for our dispatchers. Our dispatchers are currently working on kitchen countertops that are only 18" wide in some locations. They currently have 3 monitors and a small iPad in their immediate workspace, and the new program will require at least 7 monitors. We need more space.

I propose to the Board of Selectmen that we expand the dispatch center into the Recreation office that is currently used for storage. It is not the area where the Recreation Director sits to conduct business. His work area is in the front office where the windows go out into the lobby. By expanding the dispatch center into the office next door, we will have the space to properly arrange the equipment needed for this project and provide a more appropriate work environment for our dispatchers. Additionally, I've sourced used dispatch center console desks from another department who happens to be undergoing a renovation of their own in late summer. When they acquire their brand-new desks, we will receive their old desks. Some dispatch center console desks can run approximately \$15,000-\$20,000 in cost, so this is an important and valuable acquisition for the Town.

I've received a quote from North Branch Construction to complete this construction project while they're here doing the Whipple project. The cost estimate for the construction of the dispatch center expansion is \$33,343.

I estimate additional costs not included in the North Branch cost estimate to include computers and/or hardware, Beltronics, and VC3, all of which I am currently working to obtain pricing on. However, these costs would have been borne by this project no matter if we expanded the center or not.

The cost estimate to complete this project when North Branch is not "in the building" is approximately \$66,000.

We will have to contend with some noise during construction. In speaking with Project Manager Nick Trudel from North Branch, they will be more diligent about what they're doing and if in the event we need them to cease construction while we have an incident going on, they will do so. Other department members and I have considered every possible alternative to this project, including moving the dispatch center to an entirely different area of the building, and none of those options made as much sense as this one does. The timeline for the project is approximately three weeks, and it would begin in July. Thank you for your consideration.