



New London Police Facilities Advisory Committee Frequently Asked Questions

When was the committee formed and what is their charge? At the 2024 Town Meeting, residents expressed support for the Police Department while requesting that the town present a viable property, plan, and budget to improve the working conditions for the New London Police Department (NLPD). In response, the Selectboard established the Police Facilities Advisory Committee (PFAC) to assess plans, data, and information compiled by consultants. The committee's role is to advise the Selectboard on the best course of action for enhancing the police and dispatch facilities.

How did the project come to be? The New London Police Station has remained largely unchanged for over a century. In the 1970s, when the Fire Department relocated from Pleasant Street to Main Street, discussions emerged about addressing the Police Department's needs once the Fire Department's new facility was completed. However, these conversations stalled until 2014, when questions about the condition Whipple Hall and Buker prompted a study of the existing conditions of the buildings which in turn led to questions about the suitability of the building for housing Police, Dispatch, and Recreation services.

In 2018, a Harriman study concluded that the current facility was inadequate for the department's needs. In 2019, the New London Buildings and Facilities Committee reviewed the study and found that it did not explore an option for renovating the existing building. A subcommittee was formed, and the Board of Selectmen approved hiring Dennis Mires, P.A., to study this possibility. The Mires report found that renovation was feasible but the issues with lack of secured parking, effective layout of rooms, and some of the programs identified as a need by the Police Department could not be met.

What is wrong with the current Police Station? The NLPD faces several challenges in its current facility, including sewage backups, poor layout, and critical communication equipment being housed in a shared space with a water main and sprinkler system. The building does not meet ADA compliance standards or current law enforcement facility requirements. Additionally, the site does not have an adequate area for secured parking for police vehicles or vehicles being held for investigation.

How much money has been authorized to date for this project? The Board of Selectmen has authorized \$72,196.46 for the architectural firm Lavallee Brensinger Architects and \$32,840.78 for the project manager, Colliers Project Leaders.



Can the current Police Station be renovated without building a new building? While continued maintenance is possible, bringing the current facility up to code and industry standards would be difficult due to the shared driveway and lot size restrictions. These limitations make renovation impractical.

How does the proposed building square footage compare to the existing building? The NLPD currently occupies 8,783 square feet in the Buker Building. A space needs assessment conducted with Lavallee Brensinger Architects, Colliers Engineering, and Chief Cobb determined that 14,136 square feet is required. This figure may be adjusted in Phase 2 as needs are further refined.

Were other locations considered?

Several sites were evaluated for a future police station:

- **0 Newport Road (across from Post Office):** The state might require a stoplight at Hannaford's, additional sidewalks, and curb adjustments, impacting feasibility.
- **176 Main Street (Sigma Data):** The narrow lot size, even with the adjoining bank parking lot, along with high property and renovation costs, made this option unviable.
- **198 Main Street (vacant house across from Peter Christians):** Cost concerns and potential traffic bottlenecks in this dense area ruled out this location.

Why does the proposed new building need to be larger than the current facility? The current station has served the community well for over a century, but the department's needs have evolved. Modern policing requires additional and larger equipment, improved facilities for staff training, and updated infrastructure to meet current demands.

Will there be sustainable design features? The new facility is intended to meet all current energy guidelines and code requirements, including insulation, lighting controls, and indoor air quality measures. The town plans to collaborate with the Energy Committee for additional recommendations. Additionally, as part of the conditions of the sale of the land, all outdoor lighting will be Dark Sky compliant to assist in maintaining the rural characteristics of the area.

Why are we addressing this need now?

The discussion regarding the needs of the Police Department have been happening for over a decade. The costs have gone up since the discussions began and they will continue to rise. Every day we don't do something is one day closer to all our expenses (potential water upgrades, sidewalks, etc) hitting at once.

What past projects will be coming off the tax base?

The following bonds will be coming off the tax base in the coming years:

- **2025:** Highway Garage & Fire Station (\$877,940), Academy Building Repairs (\$350,000)
- **2027:** Tracy Memorial Library (\$370,000), Various Projects (\$460,000)
- **2028:** Fire Engine Lease (\$946,000)
- **2032:** Library Sprinklers (\$250,000)
- **2035:** Sunapee Wastewater Upgrades (\$4,143,968), Bond Bank Refinance (\$1,622,000)
- **2044:** Whipple Hall Renovations (\$786,000)



What other sources of funding are being considered? The Town is open to working with many organizations to seek additional funding sources from utility rebates to federal grants, however none of these are certain yet and will be shared with taxpayers when appropriate.

How much will the project cost and how will it be funded? The project is expected to cost up to \$10.4 million based on the debt limit recommendation. The committee is requesting voter approval of an initial \$955,000 to purchase the land and to continue site and design work, which is included in the overall budget. The town will finance the project through municipal bonds. Any costs associated with future decisions about the Buker Building will be outside this budget.

Can we get a view into all the projected costs of the project now? Projects such as this work a little differently than residential or commercial construction costs. We do not have the total cost structure at this time and anticipate a lot of those numbers coming in during phase II. We will continue to update and inform the community of the costs as phase II progresses. However, our work with professionals experienced in police station construction gives us confidence to state that the facility we envision as satisfying the needs of the New London Police Department now and into the future will cost approximately \$10.4 million dollars.

How does the anticipated total project cost impact the taxpayers? With a \$10.4 million bond, a taxpayer with a home assessed at \$500,000 would pay approximately \$194.17 annually in the first full year of principal and interest payments, decreasing to \$84.55 by year 30. For the initial \$955,000 request, the cost to the same taxpayer would be \$18.50 in the first year, declining to \$7.35 by year 30.

Can you provide an overview of the project and its timeline? Once the warrant article is passed in March, the town will finalize the purchase of the land from the Garvey family. Initial site work will proceed in a step-by-step process to ensure efficient use of funds. Phase II will refine the design to balance the department's needs with budget constraints. Additionally, a study will assess dispatch space requirements to ensure a functional facility. Phase III, the construction of the police facility, will not begin until a future Town Meeting votes to appropriate the funds needed, which we expect to be up to \$9.445 million (\$10.4 million - \$955,000 being requested now to purchase the land and to do preliminary site work).