



Town of Needham, Massachusetts Media Release

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Needham Fire Department Moves to New Headquarters

New Facility Replaces 90-Year-Old Station, Includes Modern Equipment and Health and Safety Improvements

NEEDHAM – Thursday, August 27, 2020 – The Needham Fire Department moved to its new home this week, a modern Public Safety Complex that will support fire personnel and allow the Department to better serve and protect the Needham community.

The new fire station, adjacent to the old facility at Chestnut and School Street, includes significantly more space to accommodate modern firefighting equipment and training and provides for improvements to protect the health and safety of firefighters and paramedics.

“This is a station all of Town can be proud of,” said Select Board Chair Moe Handel. “Firefighters put their lives on the line every day to protect us all. They deserve a facility that is supportive of their work and protects their health and wellbeing. This station will be a model for other communities for many years to come.”

The old fire station opened in 1931 and was last renovated in 1988-1989. As the Needham community has grown and firefighting has evolved, the old station was no longer adequate. Deficiencies included apparatus bays that were too small for modern fire trucks, insufficient area for performing equipment maintenance and repair, lack of facilities for storing and cleaning turnout gear, minimal existing office space, and inadequate facilities for firefighter support such as bunkrooms, toilets and showers.

“The Town has made a great investment in this building,” said Needham Fire Chief Dennis Condon. “I am convinced that the investment will serve the Town well for decades to come with a more enthusiastic, healthy and skilled workforce.”

The new facilities address those deficiencies and will meet the demands of a 21st Century Fire Station.

Importantly, the new station includes many features to reduce fire personnel’s exposure to carcinogens and improve their health. These include:

- Specialized washer/extractor located off the apparatus floor in the Decontamination Room where firefighters can enter the room directly from the outside to wash their gear after a fire or

hazardous event. The extractor has an added device that can remove biohazards from gear as well.

- The Decontamination Room also houses a device that can wash self-contained breathing apparatuses and other equipment, such as fire helmets. Boston is the only other municipality in Massachusetts that has the same washer.
- Personal Protective Equipment will now be kept in a separate turnout gear room, so that when the equipment is not in use it is kept away from personnel and vehicle exhausts. In the old station, gear had been hung on hooks surrounding apparatus, which made the gear more likely to become contaminated and unhealthy for personnel.
- As a cancer prevention method, all showers have a steam shower options, allowing firefighters to deep clean skin pores which hold smoke and other carcinogens after fires and other hazmat incidents.

The new station also includes enhanced training space and materials for firefighters to better develop their skills. Some of these include:

- A manhole cover on the mezzanine off the apparatus bays to simulate confined space training;
- An interior window prop for personnel to place ladders to and climb through;
- A stairwell to the mezzanine and the roof also acts as a training tower;
- Standpipes and sprinkler heads that firefighters can flow water to in order to practice realistic fire drills;
- Exterior doors that personnel can rappel out of.

The new station features four bays for fire engines instead of three in the old station. This will give the department the ability to grow along with the Town in the years to come. There are also five additional bays for smaller vehicles. The protected bays will allow the department to keep vehicles out of the weather and allow for department mechanics to make small repairs and routine maintenance on the vehicles, keeping them in better condition. In addition to stairs from the living quarters to the apparatus bay, firefighters can now take a slide instead of the traditional fire pole. It is believed that the slide is a safer alternative to a fire pole, which the old station had three of, as across the country firefighters have been injured and even have lost their lives through the years due to fire pole mishaps.

The fire department has a conference room equipped with a smart video monitor where the department can now hold team meetings, meet with contractors and other public entities or role out new software suites to personnel.

Work continues on a new Fire Station #2 in Needham Heights, which is part of an overall Public Safety Facility Improvement Project approved overwhelmingly by voters in 2018. Needham Police will be housed in the new Public Safety Complex on Chestnut Street when work is completed on that side of the building next year. Police dispatch has been moved into the completed portion of the new building, while officers are temporarily located at the former Hillside School.

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