



## TOWN OF KENNEBUNKPORT, MAINE

– INCORPORATED 1653 –

### **FAQ - Proposed New Town Hall and Public Meeting Space**

*Fall 2023*

This FAQ provides information about the proposed new Town Hall and public meeting space, including the reasons for the project, funding details, and potential tax impacts.

#### **Q1: Why is the Town considering building a new Town Hall and public meeting space?**

A1: The current Town Hall at 6 Elm Street has been in use for 63 years and has many limitations, including inadequate space for public services, absentee balloting, public records review, meetings, historical document storage, staff offices, parking and safety. The need for a new Town Hall was first surfaced more than 20 years ago.

#### **Q2: Why now?**

A2: In the last five years, the need has become increasingly apparent. To address ongoing issues and accommodate future growth, the Town undertook a programming space analysis in 2019, leading to the proposal for a new Town Hall that addresses these needs. In addition, the anticipated transition in the near future to a per diem fire crew will require the loss of the current meeting space at the North Street fire station. An expanded and functionally improved meeting space that will also serve as our voting location is an integral part of the new Town Hall design.

#### **Q3: What prevents building on the current Town Hall site?**

A3: Several factors affect this decision. The current site on Elm Street has location constraints and size limitations. The lack of sufficient space to create a new meeting room (see A2 above), is a serious issue. Additionally, parking is a significant issue as the existing site cannot accommodate safe parking for both the public and employees. The town also looked into adding a second floor on the current structure to meet all the necessary space programming needs, but the construction costs would be the same as on a new site, and the issues of lack of parking and meeting space would still not be addressed.

#### **Q4: How has the new Town Hall project progressed?**

A4: In June 2022, funding was allocated for the design and construction plans. Sebago Technics and Grant Hays Architects were hired for planning and design. A Town Hall building committee was formed in October 2022 to work with consultants. After reviewing various designs, the committee selected a single-story design for a 12,661 square foot building.

#### **Q5: What are the proposed spaces in the new Town Hall?**

A5: The new Town Hall will have office spaces (5,728 sq ft), meeting rooms (2,128 sq ft), functional support areas (1,728 sq ft), circulation space (2,068 sq ft), and mechanical spaces (1,009 sq ft). For reference, the current Town Hall is 3,723 square feet.

#### **Q6: Where can I see a design of the new building?**

A6: Citizens can view the project presentation including the architectural rendering and office layout [here](#).

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## **Q7: Is the new building going to be “green”?**

A7: The new building will be constructed to meet the newest building energy codes. The insulation, new mechanical equipment and materials used will provide for a clean and efficient building. Staff are also investigating the use of solar panels to offset the building’s electrical usage to save valuable resources and budget.

## **Q8: How will the project be funded?**

A8: The estimated cost for the new Town Hall project is \$8.8 million. The funding plan includes proceeds from the sale of the current Town Hall (\$1,000,000), reserve funds (\$800,000), public donations (\$500,000), and additional property sales (\$700,000). The remaining amount (\$5.8 million) will be raised through a bond.

The additional property sales include 49 Beachwood Avenue and a Town-owned property on School Street. 49 Beachwood Avenue is a one acre parcel and is the location of the old Public Works garage. The property is currently used for storage by the Wastewater Department and is not necessary for current operations. The property could be sold with the proceeds going towards the cost of construction and the property being put back on the tax roll. The School Street property is an 8-acre parcel adjacent to Parson’s Field (Map 009-009-050). The parcel was purchased in 2014 for \$385,000, before the purchase of the Village Parcel. This parcel could be liquidated to further reduce the amount of bonds or notes issued.

## **Q9: Why does the Town Hall cost \$8.8 million?**

A9: When the Town performed the first programming analysis in 2019, the project was anticipated to be more in alignment with the Arundel Town Hall. Unfortunately, with the COVID pandemic construction costs have increased dramatically from materials and equipment to labor. When Arundel Town Hall was constructed in 2019-2020 it was built for \$250 per square foot, our projected cost for 2024 is \$450 per square foot. Site costs for the new site also include all utilities and needed infrastructure, which have increased in the same time period. Our building, with meeting spaces, is projected to be just over 12,000 square feet; whereas Arundel’s is approximately 7,000 square feet. The estimate includes a contingency to preclude any other cost increases from the time of the vote to construction.

## **Q10: Why is the Town Hall being constructed on the Village Parcel?**

A10: During the Village Parcel Visioning process (2019-2020) the Town undertook a lengthy public engagement process with a steering committee comprised of 7 residents and 2 Selectboard members. The group interviewed 17 stakeholder groups, held two public visioning session with over 250 participants and held 11 public meetings. The final report identified the Village Parcel as the location to support a new town hall and meeting space.

## **Q11: What is the tax impact of the proposed bond?**

A11: If approved, the \$5.8 million bond over 20 years will result in a tax rate impact of \$0.11 or an annual tax increase of \$54.82 (\$4.57 per month) on a \$500,000 home. Additionally, the budget will see a \$482,000 annual decrease in debt payments from planned retirements between 2026 and 2029.

## **Q12: What happens if voters approve the project?**

A12: If voters approve the project, the Selectboard will move forward with the plans for the new Town Hall and continue to seek a reduction in the bonding amount.