



CITY OF NOVI
Public Safety Building Needs Committee

March 6, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

Mayor's Conference Room | Novi Civic Center | 45175 Ten Mile Road
(248) 347-0445

CALL TO ORDER 4:57 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Mayor Bob Gatt, Mayor Pro Tem Dave Staudt, Council Member Justin Fischer, Scott Olson, Ted Zuchlewski, David Landry, David Molloy

PRESENT: Mayor Bob Gatt, Mayor Pro Tem Dave Staudt, Council Member Justin Fischer, Scott Olson, Ted Zuchlewski, David Landry, David Molloy

STAFF LIAISON: Victor Cardenas, Interim City Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Erick Zinser, Director of Public Safety and Police Chief
Jeff Johnson, Fire Chief
Carl Johnson, CFO
Rob Petty, CIO

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Landry, Seconded: Mayor Pro Tem Staudt, agenda approved 7:0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – February 6, 2023

Motion: Molloy, Seconded: Fischer, minutes approved 7:0

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

1. Feedback from Committee Member Tours

Mayor Gatt welcomed the group and formally introduced Committee Members David Landry and David Molloy, both Committee Members had been able to attend the first meeting of the Committee. Mr. Landry is an excellent attorney and former City of Novi Mayor while Mr. Molloy is our esteemed former Chief of Police.

Mayor Gatt went on to explain that the process of forming this Committee began because the current Public Safety buildings are old and small. The space for men is little and for women almost non-existent. The current needs of Public Safety staff and our community have outpaced what the current buildings can offer. Our employees deserve the best so that the community and residents can be served the best. He noted that he was with the Police Department when the Police Headquarters was new 40 years ago and that while it was state of the art then the times have changed. Mayor Gatt envisions new Public Safety Headquarters for both the Police and Fire departments and for the old Police Headquarters to be re-utilized for another purpose. He then requested that the other Committee Members give their impressions of the current Public Safety buildings that they were able to visit and tour over the last month.

Starting with notes on the Fire Stations Mr. Zuchlewski began by stating that he visited and toured Fire Stations #1 and #3. He noted that station #3 was very busy and that the equipment being used looked good but that it was lacking in sufficient space, a proper sprinklers system, and parking. There were fifteen Novi Firefighters in Station #3 when he visited on a Saturday afternoon. While visiting Station #1 it was less busy, with about 6 firefighters present, but it also was lacking in space and needed women's facilities. His overall impression was that with the current Novi population and potential further growth the facilities require more than what we have.

Mr. Olson also visited Fire Stations #1 and #3. He thought the buildings were well kept up and looked nice on the outside but that the interiors were very dated, crowded, and give the impression of frequent retrofits. He was concerned that the stations as they exist now would be a "tough sell" to potential new recruits. Mr. Olson did appreciate that the staff were welcoming and gracious during his visit and he noted that his concerns were focused on the buildings as the trucks and equipment all looked to be in good condition.

Councilmember Fisher agreed that all of the comments made so far were correct. He thinks that of the group Stations #2 and #3 were especially showing signs of having outgrown the spaces and that you can only retrofit so much before the effort becomes futile. He was particularly concerned about the small size of the sleeping quarters and the very lacking facilities for women. He believes that it is time to invest in something new that will suit the size of the City.

Then moving on to the state of the Police Department, Mr. Olson stated that the current Police Department is very dated, with a 1980s style arrangement. The Interview area is too small and there is no confidential area easily accessible off of the lobby. Overall, there is a lack of privacy with the current arrangement, and it gives employees the feeling of being "in a fishbowl". The Storage/filing area is also very cramped. He believes a good potential improvement would be covered parking of some kind, either carports or a car garage.

Mr. Zuchlewski agreed with Mr. Olson and adds that there is a great need for women's facilities. There were no female officers when the building was built in 1975, the first joined in 1977, and there are now 15 women with more likely to join in the future.

Councilmember Fisher echoed the previous comments once more and notes that additional storage is especially needed. He appreciates that it is clear that the current staff takes pride in the building despite its shortcomings. He also noted that the City has many valuable outside law enforcement partnerships that would be better maintained with improved facilities.

Mr. Landry believes that the committee's aim is a laudable effort, with the population growth increase in Novi new public safety infrastructure is necessary and can't come fast enough. This growing need must be addressed for both the present and the future. He thinks the goals of the committee are for a good purpose and he hopes that residents agree.

Mr. Molloy said that while the Public Safety buildings look good to the casual observer, they are bursting at the seams. The Police Headquarters and Fire Stations all need addressing. He agrees with the previous committee member comments that everything has been retrofitted. He strongly supports the endeavor and looks forward to serving as a committee member.

Mayor Pro Tem Staudt concurs with the other committee members and especially on the point regarding adding covered parking. He indicated that when we built the new DPW that the covered area greatly improves the life of our vehicles and lowers maintenance needs. He also noted the large increase in Novi's population since the current Police Headquarters was built, we had a population of about 20,000 then and we are now at around 60,000. It is important that we look at the needs of the city now and also envision it 20 years from now.

2. Issuing Debt Presentation

Mayor Gatt welcomed City of Novi Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Carl Johnson to give his presentation on issuing debt.

3. Ballot Language Due Date

The Committee discussed upcoming deadlines for any ballot language to be approved by the Michigan Attorney General's office and which election could be an option to bring the matter to residents to vote.

4. Architect List

Interim City Manager Víctor Cardenas shared a list with the Committee of architecture firms who have done similar projects in Michigan. He noted also noted those we have worked with previously. If the Committee and City Council intend to go to bid then we should do so soon as we need both an architect to do a new needs assessment as well as an architect to create the actual designs for the new buildings, these roles could be the same architect or different firms.

Mayor Gatt stated that while the committee is making great progress they need to decide on exactly what we want/need in order to go forward with our next steps.

It was determined that a City Council agenda item would be added to allow the City to engage an architect to proceed with a needs assessment. Mayor Gatt also decided that the next meeting of the committee would not take place until after an architect had been secured.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT 6:26 p.m.