

Ms. Michelle Hines,
Board of Selectman, Chairperson
Seekonk, MA 02771

June 25, 2025

RE- South End Fire Station

Dear Chairperson Hines,

As a follow-up to our May 12, 2025, Town Meeting, and to clarify the record in support of the construction of a new South Fire Station, I would like to submit documents, including copies of e-mails, beginning with my e-mail with our Building Commissioner, Jeffery Mello.

Jeffrey Mello <jmello@seekonk-ma.gov>

Fri 5/16/2025 7:37 AM

Hello Jeff, I am writing to you concerning the South End Fire Station and the Building Permit you previously told me was on hold. As we previously discussed, the chairman of the building committee applied prior to the expiration of the application period, for the building permit, to preserve the ability of the South End Fire Station, to be built utilizing the existing building plans under the previous energy code. Your review of the application indicated that the permit was on hold, needing an Earth Removal Permit to complete the application so a permit could be issued. You stated that if the earth removal permit was provided prior to July 1, 2025, the full building permit would be issued, allowing construction of the Fire Station with the existing plans, making it a shovel ready project. I then asked if the permit expired as of July 1, 2025, how much additionally would the new energy code add to the construction costs of the project. You stated in your opinion in a typical residential home, \$50,000-\$75,000; in the context of this Fire Station, \$500,000-\$750,000. My issue is at the Town Meeting of May 12, 2025, when asked by the Chairperson of the Select Board, what the additional costs would be after July 1, 2025, you gave the residential answer, not the Commercial or Fire Station answer as we discussed of \$500,000-\$750,000. To further validate your initial answer of \$500,000-\$750,000, I contacted the Architect of record for the project, Ted Galante of Galante Architecture, who confirmed your initial estimated amount, opining "at least that amount". I therefore request you confirm our original discussion, which is validated by the Architect of record, Ted Galante, of \$500,000-\$750,000 in additional costs if we cannot utilize the existing shovel ready plans, by July 1, 2025, responding to this e-mail.

Alternatively, the Chairman of the Building Committee is of the opinion, that little to no "earth" will be removed from the site. Could you issue the permit prior to June 30/ July 1, 2025, without the Earth Removal Permit, under the stipulation that no work on Constructing of the Station, demolition not included, will commence until the Earth

Removal Permit is issued. Preservation of this Building Permit, using the current plans and previous energy code, is paramount to this project.

Thank you. Gary Sagar

Good Morning,

I apologize if we had a misunderstanding when we met prior to the May 12, 2025 Town meeting. I was speaking of the entire cost if starting from scratch again assuming the new energy stretch code, new plans, mechanical designs, Comm Checks and all new permitting process which would easily amount to 500k. When I was asked by the Chairperson of the Select Board on May 12, 2025, at Town Meeting she asked specifically how much more the stretch code cost would incur, I said typically 50-75 thousand. I also stated I wasn't qualified to give pricing on anything else, (design, mechanical designs, Comm check ratings).

With that being said I am going to transfer the permit to the new system, as I see this project as just being put on hold rather than canceled. I will hold the existing drawings and designs, until the project commences or is canceled. Once in the new system I will need the contractor of record apply for an Earth Removal permit to get this issued. I will inform you once all files have been transferred to Open Gov.

Once again, I apologize for any misunderstanding.

Jeff Mello

Building Commissioner
Sealer of Weights & Measures

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We also had a discussion about the Owners Project Manager, OPM, when we build the station. I opined that I would like to see this function remain "in-house", as we have done in the past, saving at least approximately a quarter of a million dollars. The Commissioner stated his office, including his assistant, could provide the OPM responsibilities if asked. I offered the assistance of the Chairman of the Building Committee, and myself; we both possess the necessary licenser; a Massachusetts Construction Supervisors License, CSL, and would volunteer our services, to assist, with the Commissioner certainly taking the lead.

Additional e-mails in part between me and Ted Galante, Architect for the South End Fire Station.

Hello Ted, thank you for taking my call on your way to your convention. I was re-elected to the Board of Selectman on April 5, 2025. I held an interest in this project before that. I petitioned a Warrant Article for our May 12, 2025, Town Meeting. We didn't receive 2/3

of the necessary vote for a debt exclusion vote, to advance to a general election; we did receive a slim majority in favor, which indicates to me that the citizens want this station. It is the reason we plan to bring it back to a future town meeting. I have three pertinent questions I would like you to answer, as the architect who designed the building.

1. The Chairman of the Building Committee applied for the Building Permit prior to the expiration date to preserve the ability to construct this Fire Station utilizing the current shovel ready plans, designed under the previous energy code. We need to receive an Earth Removal Permit prior to 7-1-2025 to preserve the "grandfathering" of this permit. Our Building Commissioner has opined that if this permit expires, it will add \$500,000- \$750,000 in construction costs to this project. Do you agree; or would it be more?

TG response – the latest version of the building code, specifically the energy code section, has requirements which can become costly very quickly. For example, the building envelope needs to now be designed with specific calculation to prove a limited number of "thermal bridges". A thermal bridge can be a masonry brick tie for example. Masonry brick ties connect brick to interior wall surfaces. The building for Seekonk would need to be re-designed with these specific calculations and re-structured accordingly. The insulation layers on a building such as this would also need to be increased on all sides and roof of the building, along with foundation insulation, below slab insulation, and much more. Windows and door systems may need to be re-designed and certainly re-calculated to ensure they comply with the new energy code. The roof structure would need to be re-confirmed to ensure solar panels can be added since the structure would need to be "solar ready". HVAC systems would likely have to be confirmed, possibly re-designed to ensure they comply with limited energy usage listed in the new energy code. An energy model may also be required in order to ensure the building meets the limited Energy Use Index (EUI). These systems can be quite expensive overall. So, yes, I do agree that the cost projections to meet new building code requirements might be at least as high as predicted, possibly more.

2. If new or amended plans, because of the expiration of this permit had to be drawn, what would the approximate additional cost be?

TG response – This is a very difficult question to answer since, without reviewing the entire set of drawings and specifications with each consultant, a formal dollar figure is difficult at best to predict. However, if we consider this a re-design by the entire team, which it fundamentally would be, I would estimate in the range of \$200,000.00 to \$250,000.00 to take the project from current status to be in compliance with the most recent version of the building code. I caution here that this is ONLY for redesign to comply with code, NOT a re-design of the building, use, office space, fire station, site planning, etc. If design other than code compliance would be necessary, the fee would be much higher. Once we are given direction from the town we would be able to define a fee in a more focused way.

3. We changed the scope of the project, eliminating the Communications Dept. being moved to this facility. We have for now, identified that approximate 1,400 sq. ft. space, as potentially office, which at this time will remain vacant; not require any changes to existing plans. We eliminated that large Communications Tower; the Town is separately through other financial means, removing the existing structure and cleaning the site. At this time the Town is financing the cost of the design

through other financial means. Our Warrant Article for Town Meeting was \$9,500,000. This amount was challenged by our Town Administrator as being insufficient. The Building, which is 8,300 sq. ft. in size, would be \$1,145 per square foot.

This amount would include all construction, furnishings, soft costs, and the complete project. Our Building Committee Chairman, who owns a construction company, is very proficient at current market conditions feels this is sufficient amount of money; your thoughts?

TG response – Current facilities are falling into the range of \$950.00 per square foot of construction cost. Usually soft costs are on top of that by 25% or so. This works out to be a bit above the \$1,145 psf you list, and closer to \$1,200 psf. The longer the project lingers, the more costs will increase.

TG response – I hope this answers your questions and provides useful information. Just for background, I am writing this email from a Fire Station Design Conference in Phoenix, AZ. We have attended and been regular speakers at this national conference for over 15 years. We discuss design trends, construction methods, cost metrics, and all things related with our national colleagues. We all leave those conversations with the reality that unfortunately costs are always on the rise, building codes are always becoming more stringent, and re-design takes a large team of people a fair amount of time to pull together. This is the same case everywhere, all the way from Spokane Washington to Seekonk Massachusetts, and everywhere in between. The sooner these decisions are made, the better off the Town will be.

Respectfully, Ted Galante

Ted, Thank you for your return e-mail; your answers align with our Building Committee Chairman and my opinion on costs.

I would like to ask for one clarification, and that is your answer to question (3).

"TG response – Current facilities are falling into the range of \$950.00 per square foot of construction cost. Usually, soft costs are on top of that by 25% or so. This works out to be a bit above the \$1,145 psf you list, and closer to \$1,200 psf. The longer the project lingers, the more costs will increase."

Is your estimate of \$950.00 per square foot based on the new code, or the previous code, that our project was designed under, that we are able to take advantage of? Can you give an opinion on the cost per square foot of constructing our project with the old energy code vs new energy code costs? Even at \$950.00 per square foot, X 8,300 square feet = \$7,885.00; leaving \$1,615,000, for "soft costs." We believe we can reduce our "soft costs", significantly, to stay within our requested \$9,500,000.

Thank-you Gary

Ted Galante<tg@galantearchitecture.com>

Gary Kraze;Paolo Carissimi <pc@galantearchitecture.com>

Cc:Lizamie Bustillo <lb@galantearchitecture.com>

Mon 6/2/2025 5:55 PM

Gary,

Pardon the delayed follow up. Yes, \$950 / sf is current code. Friday, we received an estimate on a new small fire station in Billerica that is about 9,000 sf and \$926 per square foot. Without the benefit of very detailed review time on the Seekonk project, it is difficult to provide accurate figures to you. We would have to spend a lot of time focused on this project, but it has been gathering dust on the shelves, and no one is as familiar with it as we all once were.

Maybe you aim for \$900.00 per square foot and keep some soft costs involved. All design team consultants will need to review their documents again and sort out what they are focusing on. All documents will have to be updated for legal bidding, so new dates on drawings, etc. Then the bidding and negotiations period, and full Construction Administration. None of the licensed professionals will be able to issue affidavits (which are required at start and completion of a project) without spending time on their documents, and in full CA mode.

Bottom line is you can likely build it with soft costs for the \$9.5 but it will take some doing to get there. I am trying to be optimistic for you, but not foolish in saying the building can be built for less than \$900.00 per square foot. Yes, the new code has expenses that would not be in place if the permit has been accepted, but without deeper analysis it is really hard to tell. The best strategy for you is to put the thing out to bid and see what the market says. The bidding climate has been tightening up, so you might be pleasantly surprised by what you learn this way.

I hope this helps,

Ted

Theodore (Ted) Galante AIA LEED AP
Design Principal 617 576 2500

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BOARD OF SELECTMAN'S MINUTES

May 13, 2020- Chief Healy stated the initial proposal was just for a south end fire station. Any town project should be done with consideration of the future needs of Seekonk. Adding Communications to the south end fire station will achieve that. They are outgrowing the current Public Safety facility. Chief Healy said it is important they all work together to construct a building and staff it properly. With everything going on, times will be tough. He thinks the south end station is needed. Taxpayers have been phenomenal about funding projects in this town. He thanked Mr. Cadime for his efforts. A motion was made by Mr. Viera, seconded by Mr. Almeida, and it was unanimously VOTED: To commence with the design and selection of a building committee for a south end fire station. Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Almeida – Aye; Mr. Sullivan – Aye; Chairman Andrade – Aye. Mr. Zorra wanted to make sure everything is included in the cost so that this project doesn't end up like the Banna Fire Station. Mr. Viera said Mr. Zorra doesn't know the whole story on that. He is going by what he is being told. Further Discussion of the FY'21 Budget Mr. Sullivan said he had a chance to review the Town Administrator's budget. He does a great job in

terms of planning and what is needed. We are going into a year that will be challenging for residents. A proposed 2.5% tax levy on residents means a \$1M tax increase for taxpayers. We have a debt exclusion that grew almost \$400,000. The taxpayers are looking at \$1.4M tax increase. Mr. Sullivan had proposals for consideration. He did talk to a couple of members. The big question is how to pay for it. We look to taxpayer relief and outside revenues. He pointed out that Mr. Cadime is requesting an Assistant Town Administrator/Human Resource position at a \$90,000 salary. Mr. Sullivan said he cannot support it this year but will support it next year. The Assessor's office has an unfilled position. Mr. Cadime noted that position should be filled by the end of the fiscal year.

Re: Public Safety, Mr. Sullivan suggested holding Fire and Police at 38. It has been a struggle to get to 40 individuals on both Police and Fire. That would save \$150,000.

February 21, 2021

Consider the Application of the Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) "Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant" Chief Rave advised FEMA has opened the application period. The grant will help fire departments come closer to meeting the NFPA 1710 standard and deployment of fire suppression operations. Seekonk relies on mutual aid. It will cover all regular salaries for three years. There is no cost sharing from the town. The deadline is March 12, 2021. Two firefighters started to prepare if approved to go for the grant. Eleven awards will be made in the State of Massachusetts. Mr. Andrade had concerns It goes contrary to what the Board has been doing. In conversations with the previous fire chief and Mr. Cadime, there is a benchmark for the Police and Fire Departments. There haven't been any discussions to modify the benchmark. They will have to alter that benchmark if the South End Fire Station becomes a reality. Working with Mr. Cadime and the former fire chief, the Board just met the benchmark of 40 in the Fire Department. February 24 2021 -9- Mr. Andrade noted grant money is for a certain amount of time. After the three years, the town will have additional positions to fund out of the budget. There are other departments that need attention. Chief Rave said there are 40 members including the chief and deputy chief. Sometimes there are six firefighters to cover the whole town. That is 4 at headquarters and 2 at Banna. There is not enough overtime to man that station. The Chief said the grant is to hire firefighters. He is down one firefighter and if the deputy chief position comes from within that would be two. He is looking at possible retirements in the next three to four years. There is the opportunity right now to have firefighters already trained and those individuals could be absorbed in the budget. Mr. Andrade said in the past these discussions were done ahead of time. Chief Rave said he saw an opportunity at no cost to the town. Adding one more person per shift would allow Banna to stay open with four firefighters 24/7. Mr. Andrade asked the Chief if the Fire

Department is operating in an unsafe manner. Chief Rave responded they operate in an unsafe manner according to OSHA. They have to rely on mutual aid. Chairman Sullivan talked about response time – just over 4 minutes. With respect to Chief Healy's presentation regarding the South End Fire Station, it would require eight individuals. That might be three years away. He is struggling with wanting to add to the 40. Mr. Viera noted response time could be up to eight minutes traveling from one end of town to the other. He said the Board has never put people in harm's way. He asked Chief Rave if the additional firefighters could be terminated after the three years. Chief Rave said there is no obligation to keep them. Mr. Zorra said if we are fortunate to get the grant he doesn't think it is fair to drop the new hires after three years. Mr. Petronio asked if the grant is for only new hires. Chief Rave said it would be going for new hires but could be for rehires but we are not in that position. Mr. Petronio asked if grant application is at the same time every year. February 24, 2021 -10- Chief Rave said once awarded there is no obligation to take it. He doesn't want to see his guys do all the work and then not take the grant. He felt maybe next year they would have more information on the South End Station. Mr. Petronio asked if it is position specific. Chief Rave said it is for any position on a fire apparatus at least 50% of the time. He said originally he was going to ask for four positions in the budget. He would ask for ten in the application. The salary for ten additional firefighters is \$650,000. With respect to Mr. Andrade's suggestion to table, Mr. Petronio said the deadline is March 12. Mr. Andrade had concerns with the comment about unsafe conditions and changing the benchmark to 50. Chairman Sullivan said there are a lot of decisions. He suggested Chief Rave meet with Mr. Cadime. Chief Rave understood. Mr. Zorra suggested a meeting prior to March 12 for further discussion. A motion was made by Mr. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Petronio, and it was unanimously VOTED: To table the Assistance to Firefighters "(AFG) "Staffing to Adequate Fire and Emergency response (SAFER) Grant." The vote: Mr. Petronio – Aye; Mr. Viera – Aye; Mr. Zorra – Aye; Mr. Andrade – Aye; Chairman Sullivan – Aye.

October 11, 2023

Joint meeting with the South End Fire Station Building Committee: M. Hines made the motion to open the joint meeting with the South End Fire Station Building Committee at 7:11 p.m.; it was seconded by C. Zorra, and it was unanimously approved. Vote: 5-0 all in favor i. Presentation of bid construction cost and total project budget for the South End Fire Station and Communications Center Plan Chair Jim Tusino provided the bid awards they received yesterday. In summary, subcontractor bids opened on September 28, 2023. They received 11 bids. They were relatively similar. The bid included demolition and removal and prep of the site at 69 School Street. The low bidder was \$758,000 over the architect's initial estimate of the design phase. The total project cost for the warrant article is \$11,201,457 and contingencies are built into the project. P. Pozzi asked for confirmation that the

estimate was only for the building project only and did not include any engines or rescues, etc. Chair Tusino said it only included office furnishings, dispatch consoles, tables, etc. but does not include apparatus. ii. Discussion of Warrant Article regarding the South End Fire Station project Page 6 of 9 Board of Selectmen October 11, 2023 M. Hines suggested moving the project forward to Town Meeting and ballot to have the voters decide. The cost for building will only increase. She also said by the time it's built in 2025, there might not be staffing issues. C. Zorra said although he would like to see the station in South Seekonk, it is difficult to support \$11.2M for the project at this time. P. Pozzi said there are other building projects that need to be addressed, such as DPW, Medeiros Farm, and possibly the Tri County school project. J. Sullivan said the Staffing issues have been ongoing and he would like to get the staffing levels up before adding another building. He thinks, at this time, the Board should prioritize the projects they are faced with. Approximately 4 years ago when they initially discussed the project the cost was estimated at \$6M before the cost of equipment, engines, and staffing. Now it is estimated at \$11M and still without staffing and equipment. He would like to see staffing increase and be maintained prior to a new building being built. M. Healy said he is concerned that after eight years the Banna Fire Station is still not adequately staffed. If they move forward, 12 new firefighters would have to be included in next year's budget. He thinks both stations should be staffed before adding the South End Fire Station. Chair Tusino said the price of the project, along with the cost of energy codes, will only increase. He would like to project to move forward to Town Meeting. The Board is discussing staffing of the Firefighters but the Dispatchers will be able to move in on Day 1. Committee Member, Oscar Elmasian, said he thinks the geographical layout of the town is being overlooked, as well as if something happens to headquarters, the South End Fire Station could be used. He said to build the building and plan for staffing. iii. Hold any further discussions relative to the South End Fire Station Project M. Healy asked the Board if they want to move forward with project. M. Hines made a motion to include the South End Fire Station Building article on the Town Warrant for Fall Town meeting; it was seconded by C. Zorra. C. Zorra said he does not agree with the cost of the project but he supports discussion at Town meeting. It was voted: Vote: 2 in favor/3 against – Motion failed Mr. Cadime said it was a long and tedious project and wanted to recognize the committee, as well as the Department Heads for all their efforts and thanked them for volunteering their time. M. Hines made the MOTion to close the joint meeting with the South End Fire Station Building Committee at 7:46 p.m.; it was seconded by J. Sullivan, and it was unanimously approved. Vote: 5-0 all in favor.

Please refer to the minutes of BOS meetings- The current Chairperson is quoted in the Rehoboth Reporter on October 13, 2023, referring to the October 11, 2023 meeting-“We can't sit around and wait to build it to see if we have more (firefighters), Hines said. “Banna

Station runs, the (Public Safety building) runs, you can't say we're still going to have staffing issues. I don't think squashing, (a South End fire station) at this point is the right thing to do. " Hines noted construction costs would continue to increase in time so it made sense to start as soon as possible.

TOWN MEETING- MAY 12, 2025

I take exception to comments made by the Town Administrator during the Town Meeting, answering a statement by former Selectman Justin Sullivan. "Justin Sullivan, Emily Way. I'd like to ask the, through you Mr. Moderator, the Town Administrator, or the Chair of the Select Board. Is the Fire Chief designating the manning under their direction right now? Is it because of or in case of this to get passed?" " S. Cadime: Mr. Moderator, through you. Clarification. I didn't quite understand the question." J. Sullivan: "The Fire Chief, is he looking at how to man the South End Fire Station at your direction?"

S. Cadime: "So, we did not have a conversation. I know there was a presentation at the last Board meeting by the Chief in terms of how the South End Fire Station would be staffed. Those conversations were never had with me or the Board of Selectmen."

The Fire Chief on two occasions at two Board of Selectman's meetings, March 12, 2025 & April 7, 2025, was asked by the Chairperson about staffing, and other Selectman about equipment. He answered questions that were asked of him. I disagree he made a "presentation." I find it difficult to accept and understand the comments of the Town Administrator, that 61 days from the date of the first Selectman's meeting where the Fire Chief answered questions, March 12, 2025, again at a 2nd Selectman's Meeting, April 7, 2025, to Town Meeting of May 12, 2025; "we did not have a conversation" I believe any reasonable person using commonsense, would conclude that if the answers provided by the Fire Chief, were not acceptable to the Town Administrator or Board of Selectman, a "conversation" would certainly occur!

S. Camine:" The Board of Selectmen, when initially presented the South End Fire Station, it was the Board of Selectmen's mandate that the South End Fire Station, if moved forward, would be staffed 24 7; so that would include 8 firefighters. The reason the Board did not put this forward to Town Meeting was because with the discussion with the previous Fire Chief, the priority was getting staffing levels to 12 firefighters per shift for four groups. So that's why the South End Fire Station didn't move forward".

There is NOTHING in the Board of Selectman's minutes of previous meetings; or when Warrant Article 16 of the June 22, 2020, Town Meeting requesting to "appropriate the sum of \$425,000.00, or any other amount, to pay for the costs of designing, planning, and engineering for construction of a South End Fire. NO WHERE is there a "mandate that the South End Fire Station, if moved forward, would be staffed 24:7; so that would include 8 firefighters". There were certainly discussions during the deliberations of

this Warrant Article on need, staffing, equipment, response times, monetary benefit, etc, but no mention of a “MANDATE”. I think it’s ludicrous to suggest that we ask the Town Meeting to appropriate funds, create a Building Committee, wasting taxpayer dollars and two years of our volunteer building committee’s time, then as you correctly stated at the BOS Meeting of October 11, 2023, “I don’t think squashing, (a South Fire Station) at this point is the right thing to do.”

Please carefully read the content of the text below, comments will follow.

S.Cadime-“There’s also some concerns about the number of the 9.5. I personally do not feel the 9.5 is enough to support this project. I know the folks that have presented disagreed with me. I think that number is significantly higher. It is going to require not only the additional staff that we need to properly staff Headquarters and Banna, it’s also going to require an additional 8 for the South End Fire Station. It’s also going to need additional equipment, an engine, a rescue. An engine right now, currently, is a million dollars, a rescue is 450 – 500 thousand dollars. So there are additional costs that are associated with this.

So, the reason the Board did not submit (did not present this) to the Town Meeting is because there are other financial needs and obviously we have to balance those needs between education, the Town, and other significant fixed cost increases that we have. So the priority right now is getting (at least from my standpoint, obviously, I can’t speak to the Fire Chief), but at least with the Board of Selectmen is to get the current staffing that we have to 12 firefighters per shift and we are currently at 10 per shift. “

Town meeting was told what additional expenses would be associated with a South Fire Station; they overwhelmingly approved, Article 16 on June 22, 2020. Several attempts by prior and present Fire Chief’s to increase staffing have been denied. The information I received from Ted Galante, Architect, supports our belief that the station can be built within a budget of 9.5 million, providing we proceed as the Architect, Building Committee Chairman, and myself outline.

TOWN MEETING JUNE 2020

“P. Hoogerzeil: Read Article 16 as follows: Article 16: To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the sum of \$425,000.00, or any other amount, to pay for the costs of designing, planning, and engineering for construction of a South End Fire Station on land owned by the Town of Seekonk at 36 School Street, including the payment of all architectural and engineering services, and any other costs incidental or related thereto, to determine whether this amount shall be raised by taxation, transfer from available funds, borrowing otherwise; and ask the Town Moderator to establish a five (5) member building committee to facilitate the project, or take any other action relative thereto.

David Viera: Mr. Moderator, a proper motion would be: I move that the Town of Seekonk vote to appropriate \$425,000 to pay the cost of designing, planning, engineering for the

construction of a South End Fire Station on land owned by the Town of Seekonk at 36 School Street, including the payment of architectural and engineering services, and any other costs incidental to relate thereto.

And to meet this appropriation, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, authorize the borrowing said amount under the pursuant of Mass General Law 44 Section 7 or any other eligible authority and to issue bonds and notes to the Town; therefore. and that the premium received under the sale of bonds and notes approved by the vote less any such premium applied to the vote according to Mass General Law 44 Section 20 thereby reducing the amount authorized to borrow to pay such costs by the like amount and further that the Town Moderator establish a five-member building committee to facilitate the project.

Peter Hoogerzeil: We have a motion. Do we have a second?

Audience Member: Second.

Peter Hoogerzeil: Finance Committee?

Finance Committee Member: Mr. Moderator, the Finance Committee recommends approval on Article 16.

Peter Hoogerzeil: Thank you. Discussion on Article 16. Mr. Cadime?

Shawn Cadime: Mr. Moderator, just quickly. There was a presentation that was put forth and it is on the Town website. The feasibility study identified the need for this building. Obviously, for the Town residents, this would increase the response time in the south end as the south end begins to grow. But this would also allow for the Communication Dispatch Department to move over into the south end, freeing up some much-needed additional space for the Police Department, so there are multi-levels here. The initial investment, construction costs 3.5 million dollars (again rough estimate); apparatus for that station would be \$700,000. So total investment would be 4.2 million dollars. Then there would also be yearly costs of roughly \$800,000 for 8 additional firefighters; and that would include benefits, turnout gear, and the cost for that station. What we're looking here is, obviously, School Street (a property that is owned by the Town), and it would just solely be for architectural services and OPM. The design and further cost would have to come back to Town Meeting for approval.

Peter Hoogerzeil: Any more discussion on Article 16? Yes? Marcia Mello of 660 Ledge Road: Will you be...is this plan to knock down Monroe Corner School (the old Administration Building)?

Shawn Cadime: Yes. Marcia Mello: And how old is that building? Very old.

Shawn Cadime: It's very old and...I'm sorry, Mr. Moderator, through you. It is a very old building, but it's also a condemned building.

Marcia Mello: Why? Because it wasn't maintained properly? Just like the Old Town Hall. Seekonk, we've been talking about living here. I've lived here for 50 years, my husband was born here, his mother was born here. His grandfather came here as a young man and had a farm. My granddaughter is the fifth generation Seekonk person. It is not like it used to be, and it will continue to change if things like this go on constantly. Old buildings are not appreciated. They are knocked down. I think that if possible, you should look into doing something with that building rather than just knock it down and using the space. I understand the Fire Station, although, I think that possibly maybe you could move it over to the side of the building or something rather than knock it down and keep it as a historical building. Why is it condemned? Because of water damage and things like that?

Shawn Cadime: That's correct; structurally unsound.

Marcia Mello: Yes, because it hasn't been maintained; because the Town does not maintain these buildings. Thank you.

Peter Hoogerzeil: Thank you. Any other discussion on Article 16? Dr. Mathias?

Paul Miles Mathias of 363 Ledge Road: Mr. Moderator, the studies that were done on response time for putting a fire department building on that property demonstrated what?

Shawn Cadime: Demonstrated that the response time to the south end wasn't as adequate as national standards would suggest.

Paul Miles Mathias: Meaning? Mr. Moderator, could he elaborate on that? Could we have minutes, seconds, or something to tell us what the response time is from present to what it would be if they put up a fire building down there, and how it would be improved?

David Viera: Shawn, do you want me to kind of elaborate on that? Okay, if I may. I know you directed it at Shawn, but I'd like to obviously...

Peter Hoogerzeil: Mr. Viera?

David Viera: Okay. In my previous obviously capacity as Fire Chief, I can tell you that when there's a need for either fire apparatus or rescue vehicle, time is of an essence. And depending on the time of day, day of the week, so on and so forth, it could take you twenty minutes to get from one end of Town to the other (maybe even a half-hour). Sixty-five percent (I believe that's being fair), sixty-five percent of the calls are south of Route 44. Obviously, because of the makeup of the south end of Town being commercial. At night that changes. I believe 2 years ago, we had roughly eight structure fires. Out of those eight structure fires, I believe six of them were south of Route 44. So again, when someone is in

need of a rescue; when someone's in need of a piece of fire apparatus, time is of an essence. When you call the Fire Department, most people expect those pieces of apparatus to come out of the phone, and they don't. When you're waiting, it seems like eternity that you're waiting. We've needed a fire station in the south end for a long time. People refer back to an ISO study that was done a number of years ago that said the Town of Seekonk before we built the Headquarters Fire Station could get away with two fire stations. As long as keywords, "they were strategically located." Once the Headquarters Fire Station was built on Route 44 (I was the Fire Chief at the time), that changed. All that did was dictate that we would need three fire stations instead of two. We have fire apparatus responding to the south end of Town, the Hollister Road area, FedEx area, the Plats, going to avoid the traffic at Luther's Corners, going 44 to Hammond Street to Cole Street just to get around the traffic. We don't want fire apparatus driving through neighborhoods. Obviously, in emergency situations just to get there quicker. So again, it could take you 20 minutes to get from one end of Town to the other. Most often, you have two pieces of apparatus on the north end of Town, nothing to cover the south end. Thank you.

Peter Hoogerzeil: Mr. Cadime, you had some numbers to add to that?

Shawn Cadime: "Thank you, Mr. Moderator. So the average response time at the national level should be four minutes. That's what we should be shooting for. The average overall response time to north and central Seekonk is four minutes (4.05 minutes). The south end, when you start looking at the overall, we're close to almost 7 minutes. Some of the more significant ones: medical alarm, close to 7 minutes for a response time; a box alarm, close to 7 minutes.

The response time from the Public Safety Building to the South End is 9-12 minutes on average; a few responses have been as long as 15 minutes, depending on the time of day and weather. These times are only going to increase with all the planned development! These times are not acceptable as they greatly exceed "the national level", as stated by the Town Administrator, June 2020 Town Meeting. This certainly is the most important factor with this discussion.

"The other piece that we also looked at was how much Mutual Aid we're doing in the South End. We have over close to 100 Mutual Aid calls going over to the south end which means not only are we asking for other communities to actually respond and handle these calls, we're actually losing revenue by having other communities because they're gaining all the revenue associated with these calls getting over here. So, from a monetary standpoint, it makes sense to build a south end fire station so that we can make sure that we're reducing Mutual Aid. The second piece is that we know the type of service that we actually implement in the Town of Seekonk from a public safety standpoint, versus other communities. So we absolutely want to minimize the amount of Mutual Aid whenever possible. These are some of the driving forces. You can actually see the entire detail of the

minutes and the reasoning behind the South End Fire Station on the presentation that is on the website”

Please note- these quotes are from a Town Meeting that was 5 years ago, (June 2020). The data, in the feasibility study, is available online at the South End Fire Station Building Committee web page, “South End Fire Station Study”, which is data whose most recent numbers are from 2014, 11 years prior; Barack Obama was our President! The relevance to this is that the Town Administrator made a convincing argument at the time, using this data as a positive to promote the approval of Warrant Article 16. These factors, 5 years later, have significantly increased the need for this Fire Station.

The Town Administrator further stated, as listed above, **“The other piece that we also looked at was how much Mutual Aid we’re doing in the South End. We have over close to 100 Mutual Aid calls going over to the south end which means not only are we asking for other communities to actually respond and handle these calls, we’re actually losing revenue by having other communities because they’re gaining all the revenue associated with these calls getting over here. So, from a monetary standpoint, it makes sense to build a south end fire station so that we can make sure that we’re reducing Mutual Aid.”**

With the significant increase in the fee for our Rescue’s, recently increased by the Board of Selectman, using the call volume for Mutual Aid of 100, which 5 years later has most likely increased, we are potentially losing hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, while proving a lesser level of service.

Paul Miles Mathias: Mr. Moderator, just one other question if I may.

Peter Hoogerzeil: Yes.

Paul Miles Mathias: When we built the centralized Fire/Police Department on 44, we closed down two other stations, I think. One in the north end which has subsequently been reopened; and there was one down on south end at Luther’s Corner, correct? We were told at that time that the real reason we were building the Fire/Police Complex was that we would no longer need those two, and yet here we stand trying to reopen what we closed 15 years ago. Thank you.

Peter Hoogerzeil: Thank you. Any other discussion to Article 16? Yes ma’am, here?

Lori Andrade, 280 Warren Avenue: I just want to support what’s already been said by the Board of Selectmen (the amount). I live near Four Town Farms. Many of our homes down there are wells. Seven minutes, unacceptable. The houses would be burned down. There was a recent(in the last couple of years) a house that was almost ready for the family to

move in, a generator went wrong with the building and it completely burned to the ground. There is definitely a need on top of medical needs, other needs. I'm asking you to consider the warrant. Thank you.

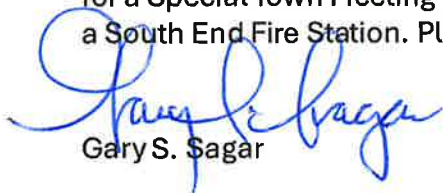
Peter Hoogerzeil: Thank you. Any other discussion to Article 16? Seeing none. Since there is borrowing, this is going to require a two-thirds vote. All those in favor of Article 16, please raise your hand? All those opposed? Article 16 passed the two-thirds vote.

I am providing by a separate document the following:

1. Warrant Article 15- Annual Town Meeting- April 2, 1979- Adoption of NFPA code (This code is referenced by Fire Chief David Rave, February 24, 2021 BOS Meeting)
2. 1986 Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District-SRPEDD Master Plan- Public Facilities-Police and Fire Department
3. Traffic Volumes- Fall River Ave. Rt. 114A- 4 locations only- & Traffic Volumes- Fall River Ave. Rt.6, with supporting documents.

I am submitting this information in support of building this much-needed public safety, community asset. I fully agree with your statement as quoted in the Seekonk Reporter From the Board of Selectman's Meeting of October 11, 2023, "Hines noted construction costs would continue to increase in time so it made sense to start as soon as possible." Quoting the Architect," *The longer the project lingers, the more costs will increase.*"

I recognize I have submitted a substantial amount of information that needs adequate time to be read and digested. I therefore request an agenda item for our next Board of Selectman Meeting, which I believe is July 9, 2025, and includes a discussion and vote for a Special Town Meeting during mid-late September 2025, for the purpose of approving a South End Fire Station. Please contact me with any questions or comments. Thank You!



Gary S. Sagar