

# Deerfield Safety Services Steering Committee

## Recommendation for Next Steps

January 9, 2017

The community meeting on November 12th, along with the October Open Houses and the report which was mailed to every household in the fall, have increased understanding of the status of Deerfield's Safety Service facilities.

Based on the feedback at the meeting, we recommend that the Deerfield Selectboard move forward on the important issue of safety service facilities with the following steps:

A committee of citizens, (perhaps called **Safety Services Facility Planning Committee**) be formed for one year to complete further research and analysis that was recommended during the Nov community meeting. This committee could have subgroups (2-4 people) which explore a specific area including:

- a) One subgroup could meet with the current service chiefs to create a list of "needs vs wants". The Primex reports of 2015 would help identify the priority issues.
- b) Another subgroup could inventory all current buildings and land that could possibly be used for safety services. This includes the current central fire station (could it be used for police and or emergency services if the fire dept is housed elsewhere?), the VFW Hall and the fire station at the Deerfield Fairgrounds. There may be other buildings/land that should also be considered.
- c) Another subgroup could visit safety service facilities in neighboring towns and other rural towns of a similar size. This review of other towns could include conversations with safety personnel and SelectBoard members from the towns. It would be helpful to compare the experience of towns with safety service complexes with those of towns with separate facilities. Do those with separate facilities provide equally effective and successful safety services as those with a single complex? Does either choice appear to be better than the other?

Once the above-mentioned research had been completed, the committee could be charged with making a recommendation to the BOS and town regarding complex vs separate facilities and provide a list of "baseline" components that the buildings must have. Given that many at the Nov 12<sup>th</sup> meeting recommended a "phased" approach to new buildings, this committee could also recommend how a phased approach might be implemented.

We believe that limiting this committee work to one year and by dividing up their tasks, it will be easier to come to useful conclusions and to find volunteers willing to participate in the committee.

It was clear at the Nov 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, that continued involvement and communication with the town citizens is crucial to reach an effective solution to our safety service needs. To that end, we recommend:

1. The citizens' committee be requested to make one or two presentations to the community at large during its one - year life.
2. That the Fire Dept/Rescue Services and Police Dept plan annual Open Houses, as was offered this fall. It is essential that more residents see the inside of our facilities if they are to make an informed decision about what facilities are needed in the future.