

July 13, 2020

Ed McCarthy

Chairman of the new building committee

Putnam Valley Fire Department

Po box 21 , Putnam Valley N.Y. 10579

Putnam Valley Planning Board,

The following comments are in regards to comments made by town resident Patty Villanova.

The fire department is greatly in need of a new fire station. I am saying that, as a 46 year active firefighter here in Putnam Valley. I have served as a Chief or Assistant Chief for nine years. My job as a Chief is not only to make sure that the public is served, members are well trained, that property loss is minimal, and the department operates as professionally as possible. But as Chief my biggest concern is that the men and women of the department get to go home at the end of the day. The existing building has many shortfalls including, no showers. Firefighting is one of the most dangerous jobs that exist today. The number of cancer causing carcinogens we come into contact with makes it that way. We need to be able to shower, and change into other clothes after every fire, or we bring the carcinogens home to our families. No changing area, no diesel exhaust removal system, 2 of the apparatus bay doors are barely 9 feet wide today's fire trucks don't fit in them. You can barely park a pickup truck inside these bays. They are that small. Currently the air compressor is located right outside the office door damaging the hearing of our members. We have no storage space available, and no room for a reserve engine which would help lower our ISO rating. The current office is shared by every member. The Chiefs, firematic officers, president, vice president, treasurer, recording secretary, Board of Directors, and every committee all share the same office. The Fire Department is 100% VOLUNTEER. WE should at the very least be able to do our jobs, and return home safely to our families. As far as I know, my experience and training would provide a better view of what is needed in a modern fire station, than a comment from a resident, who is just opposed to the new building.

As to her concern over the Covid crisis and the timing of the new building. We the members of the Fire Department are well aware of what is going on around us. We too have been actively affected by it monetarily, physically, and mentally. A number of members have stayed home rather than risking themselves and their families. We are sorry for the timing, but we are also concerned for our safety and health, as well. This project goes back almost 20 years. It started out as an addition on the current firehouse. We cannot expand over the septic in front of the building, by orders of Putnam County Health Dept. WE couldn't expand to the rear; town hall is too close. We offered to swap ten acres of property with the town, for about an acre and a half, behind town Hall. It was denied. The Town Board told us to

put a plan together to replace the existing building. It took almost three years of looking at over 35 fire houses, in over a fifty-mile radius to pick an architect. Soon after plans were drawn up, and we went to Town Hall.

Mrs., Villanova complains that we are not actively seeking grants to help fund the project. In my lifetime I am only aware of one opportunity of a grant to construct a fire house. Are there a lot of grants available, Yes. But only one that I know of for construction. We spent weeks preparing the grant application. Going so far as to asking the English Department at Putnam Valley High School, correct for grammar, spelling, and punctuation. That is how hard we worked on the application. We never heard a word from FEMA about our application. We don't know for sure, but it could be because Mrs. Villanova sent FEMA a letter claiming our application was fraudulent. So yes, we have tried. She emailed a FEMA grant application to a member of the Town Board, who forwarded it to me earlier this year. That grant was not for a building. But for hiring a paid staff. We did not put the application in. We put in for grants regularly, but our unemployment rate here in Putnam County is generally so low, we are very rarely successful.

As far as cutting down on the scope of the project, we have eliminated several things from the original design. Including the GEO THERMAL wells for HVAC, and nearly thirty parking spaces. The building is designed to last over one hundred years. The design is five bay doors, but the bays are double deep in length, allowing us future changes within the footprint. But there is no ladder truck planned at any time in the future. The town Code prohibits buildings over two stories in height. The Putnam Valley Volunteer Fire Department is the only Department that covers its entire Town, in all of Putnam County. Compare if you will the PVVFD annual budget including the cost of the new building, at \$1,259 thousand with the town of Carmel. Carmel has three fire departments, total annual budgets combined are over \$6 million dollars. She compares us to the new fire station in Peekskill. Our new station is almost a third less in size. As far as her claim that as a result of a overpayment by the town, Where does she think the 2 million comes from. It is sitting in the bank waiting to be used as a down payment. In fact, the current Fire Department budget is \$1, 259, 000. Includes the cost of the new building. The town is going to hold us to that amount. We will have to build the station around those numbers. As far as what we have already spent on the building, the total to date is \$1, 418,194.82. This number has been greatly enlarged by all of the delays in starting to build. This is our fourth attempt to get this built. The planning board will not except any outdated documents, so anything over three years old has had to be resubmitted, and paid for over again, multiple times. I find it ironic that she is always trying to safe the taxpayer's money. And in reality, it seems that all of her stalling tactics have actually cost us more money. Mrs. Villanova states that there will not be a town referendum on the new Fire Station. That is correct, and that is according to the general municipal laws of New York State. We are a Fire Protection District. And as such we need to get approval from the Town Board to fund the project. She seems to have forgotten that she has been told this by three different Town Attorneys. But she still brings it up as often as she can. Such a referendum would cost the taxpayers about \$7,000 to \$10, 000 dollars and would not be worth the paper that it is printed on. All it would be is a popular opinion poll. The fire Department can go out to bond the new building. It is 100% legal. In fact, we are very close to

completing the financing of the building. As for the old building, we lease it from the Town. And once it stops being used as a fire House it reverts back to the Town. What the Town does with it, and how much that costs I have no idea.

As to her question of who is in charge, the Board of Directors is in charge of all money spent on the new building.

In closing I would just like to add a few items. First and foremost the safety and health of the men and women of the fire department is a priority. This building is long overdue. The brave , well trained , community minded members of this department in addition to volunteering their time, are also tax payers , just like the rest of you. There are roughly 11,000 residents in Putnam Valley, The Putnam Valley Volunteer Fire Department has roughly 85 dedicated active firefighters. It would mean a lot to know that the residents have our backs going forward.

Sincerely,


Ed McCarthy