



## City of Homer

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov)

## Volunteer Fire Department

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## Memorandum

TO: Katie Koester, City Manager

FROM: Mark Kirko, Fire Chief

DATE: 01/30/2020

SUBJECT: Old Police station use

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I would like to provide my thoughts for consideration of the use of the Police Station after they move in to their new facility later this year.

To start, I reviewed the proposals that were submitted back in September of 2018 and feel that the Fire Department continues to have a very valid need to ensure that the property remain in the control of the City for department use. Previous assessments of the current fire department facility have determined that the over 60 year old structure can no longer meet the operational needs of the community. The fire station has many inadequacies with regard to useable space. Additionally, it has been determined that adding on to the station is not an option due to the existing construction deficits and the prohibitive costs of construction to make it compliant with an addition.

I believe that the Council and Community Leaders have recognized this to be the case in the past which in part is why the City conducting a Space Needs Assessment in 2014. The Assessment identified several areas that show that the current fire station does not meet the required standards.

I have spoken with the State fire Marshal about what would need to happen after the police vacate the use of the building before it can be used by anyone, be it City or public and their determination is clear. If the City were to repurpose the use of the building for office space or storage, a change of occupancy permit would need to be filed and a State inspection would need to be completed. If the City or any other entity wanted to remodel or make any changes to how it's used such as (restaurant, day care center, or retail space) or if the existing floor plan or footprint are changed it would require architectural designs to be submitted and approved by the State. The timeline for occupancy would be greatly extended.

The building cannot be used in a 24-hour capacity (sleeping quarters) without the installation of a sprinkler system.

Given that we know that the department will need to be replaced sometime soon and that there are not many options for adequate property that would be suitable for a new fire station. We should consider the existing police department property as a significant option for that purpose.

The department could make great use of the property in the meantime in the following ways.

- Additional storage for supplies and emergency response equipment.
- To be used for training space and class room space.
- An area for physical fitness training of our members.
- Would assist in work space during disaster management.
- Could potentially rent out space to Air Ambulance Service.
- Provide overflow parking for Fire Department staff and events.
- Alternate temporary office space should the fire department need vacate current location.
- Would allow us a location for public education opportunities without disrupting the daily FD operations.
- Additional covered vehicle storage.
- It would greatly enhance the operational value of the fire department.
- Auxiliary dispatch station during EOC operations

All of the above mentioned uses are in the best interest of public safety and community resiliency.

I would be happy to provide further information on how preserving the integrity of the building for future fire department use could only improve our ability to provide a better service to the community.

I look forward to further discussion on the topic.

Enc:

Pro/con list from September 5, 2018 “What to do with old police station” Worksession  
Old Police Station Costs Spreadsheet