



City of Auburn, Maine

Communications & Community
Engagement Department

www.auburnmaine.gov | 207.333.6601
60 Court Street | Auburn, Maine 04210

FOR IMMEDIATE MEDIA DISTRIBUTION

Date: September 11, 2023

Contact: Liz Allen, Director of Communications & Community Engagement
Phone: 207.333.6601 X2070 | E-mail: lallen@auburnmaine.gov

AUBURN PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY TO APPEAR ON NOVEMBER BALLOT

Auburn City Council votes 6-1 to send question to voters.

AUBURN, MAINE – At their meeting on September 5th, the Auburn City Council acted on the ad-hoc public safety building committee recommendation to take the next step in building Auburn’s new Public Safety facility.

The city council decision followed multiple years of professional facility assessments and analysis, strategic planning, public safety building committee work (which included two city councilors, six citizens and staff), site evaluations, and numerous public meetings.

The need for a new public safety building, which would be home to the Auburn Fire and Police Departments, is critical due to issues such as accessibility, diverse workforce which includes gender accommodations, space constraints, lack of storage, and most importantly, life-health issues for first responders. A single public safety facility, which would replace Central Fire Station at 550 Minot Avenue, has been determined to be the best choice for both efficient delivery of services and overall costs to Auburn taxpayers. The public safety building committee did their due diligence by exploring all options, locations, and iterations of this project, and the committee felt confident that this facility makes the most sense for Auburn.

In 2011, the Auburn Police Department relocated from its home at One Minot Avenue to Auburn Hall as a temporary solution to space constraints, costly needed repairs, and as a cost-saving measure for the city. Twelve years later, the agency is still working from Auburn Hall, a building that was not designed to support law enforcement functions. A few of the challenges the APD faces at Auburn Hall include numerous safety concerns in the courtyard (prisoner interaction with the public, pedestrian safety, and access to police safety equipment), lack of adequate locker rooms, gender accommodations, lack of restrooms and training space, and insufficient storage for evidence, records, police equipment, uniforms, and supplies.

Auburn Fire Department's Central Fire Station, also known as Engine 3, was built in 1972. And while it was cutting edge at the time of its construction, Central Fire no longer meets the needs of a contemporary and diverse fire service. Some of the greatest challenges facing the AFD at Central Fire Station are health risks due to lack of decontamination spaces, lack of ADA compliance, lack of training space, and inadequate storage. Safely processing contaminated gear, dispersing diesel exhaust fumes, and protecting our fire fighters from cancer-causing exposures is among our highest priorities. The facility also lacks the ability to house Auburn's premier ladder truck which should be centrally located in the city.

This election season, Auburn voters will be asked to approve bonding the construction of a new public safety facility. The question on the ballot will read, "Shall the City of Auburn authorize the issuance of general obligation bonds or notes in anticipation of such bonds in the principal amount not to exceed \$45,000,000 and appropriate the proceeds of such bonds, together with investment earnings, if any, to fund the construction of a new public safety facility at 550 Minot Avenue in Auburn to house the headquarters of the City's Police Department and Fire Department, including all necessary professional services, real estate acquisition and off-site improvements related to such construction project, costs of issuance and capitalized interest as permitted?"

The strategic and effective management of debt by the city has positioned Auburn well to take on this project. Between 2008 and 2018, in anticipation of the need for a public safety building, elected officials and staff made deliberate and concerted efforts to reduce the city's outstanding bonds by 26.5%.

In the weeks ahead, the city plans to share video tours and other project materials on social media, and also has plans to host informational public meetings in each ward to connect and communicate with residents on the need for a new public safety facility. Resident are encouraged to visit auburnmaine.gov to learn more.

###