

# Walden Fire District

PO BOX 264  
Walden, NY 12586

Dear Residents:

Last month, fewer than 3% of the residents voted against the proposition to construct an addition to the fire station and to make interior renovations. The Board of Commissioners is concerned that the public was provided inaccurate information immediately prior to the vote, without giving the Board a chance to respond to any of the misstatements.

As a result, we are providing you this letter to provide accurate facts, and to advise that we have decided to provide you the opportunity to vote, after hearing the facts. The special election will be held on October 21, 2014 at the firehouse from 6pm to 9pm. There will also be another hearing for you to ask questions of the Board of Fire Commissioners on October 1<sup>st</sup> at the firehouse at 5:30pm to 7:00pm. We strongly encourage you to attend this hearing if you have any questions or desire further information. We did hold a prior hearing for the public, but only two people attended.

## The facts

First, there will be no tax increase due to the addition. The District has been saving money for the past number of years in order to prepare for this renovation which will pay for about a third of this project. The District will be issuing a bond for the remainder of the project. The Fire District has no other debt and is pursuing this project only after all other debt has been paid. Again, there will be no tax increase in future years as a result of this bond! Instead, the funds that previously went into reserve for this project will now be used to pay the bond.

## Your fire department needs the space!

The Fire District requires additional space in the truck bays:

- Vehicles have had to be double stacked, one behind another. Vehicles have to be moved around in order to get some equipment out of the bay, which results in a significant delay in response time to get the equipment out of the door. Moving equipment in this manner is not the safest practice. Your firefighters need the space.
- One of the fire house bays was originally designed so that the ladder truck did not have to be backed in, and could be pulled through. Pull through bays significantly increase the safety of firefighters and reduce the chances of accidents and injuries. Unfortunately, this is not possible any longer as the vehicles are double-stacked. Adding the two additional apparatus bays will again enable the ladder truck to be driven straight in and through one of the bays.

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- The Department now owns additional equipment which it did not own when the firehouse was first constructed. The needs of the District expanded to require this equipment, but the District does not have adequate space for this equipment. These lifesaving pieces of equipment are each critical but have log jammed the firehouse, and consist of a heavy rescue truck, fire prevention trailer, a fire police/ training van, and a Kabota with a trailer.

Additionally, the van which is stored in the other station at N. Montgomery Street will be brought over to this station and stored here, which will permit the engine already located at the other station to be deployed more quickly. We also note that the two new bays will be two feet higher than the present bays, which will permit a properly sized ladder truck to be situated in the bay instead of risking the chance that the ladder strikes the top of the building.

Let us be very clear, that despite the accusation to the contrary, the District has no plans to add an additional vehicle. The purpose of the new bays is not to add new vehicles. We believe that you will understand the importance of the new bays, as we described above.

## We need a place to train!

Presently, there is no facility to train inside the firehouse. In order for our firefighters to train inside the firehouse, which we need to do frequently, we must move the vehicles outside of the firehouse. This is extremely inconvenient in the winter and is an unpleasant task. With the addition, there will be a training room and there will be ample garage space to train. Nothing is more important than training.

The new training room is critical to the safety and skills of the firefighters. The current facilities are not adequate to offer training. Although the District previously used one of its rooms for a training facility, the District was able to save the taxpayers thousands of dollars each year by moving one of the fire companies into that room and closing one of its other firehouses. Therefore, by closing an entire building, we now need to add one training room at the present time.

## Our space is not adequate

Presently, sixteen fire officers utilize a room of approximately 155 square feet, crammed with three desks, filing cabinets, office equipment and supplies. It is unfair to require all of these volunteer officers to do their required work while crammed into this space. The new addition will allow these officers to properly perform their duties.

The firehouse also hosts a number of other emergency service organization meetings and public training sessions.

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We also need the additional space for the following reasons:

- Some of our equipment is not able to be stored safely.
- We do not have sufficient space to store gear so that firefighters have access to it. Instead, it has to be kept in the cars of some of the firefighters.
- There is hose that has to be stored in the middle of the apparatus floor and not where it should be stored. This is dangerous.

We are sorry that you had received inaccurate and false information prior to the vote, without the District having had the opportunity to provide you with the correct information. However, we are now able to provide you with another opportunity to attend a hearing and then to vote on this most important issue.

We ask that you come out to the hearing, and then come out and vote.

We thank you for your attention to this matter.

Walden Fire District

Board of Fire Commissioners