

## PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE: ASSESSMENT AND PRIORITIZATION METHODOLOGY

Under the leadership of Chairman Bender the PPC followed a methodical, far-reaching effort to identify strengths and weaknesses in the public protection infrastructure within the Town of Mt. Desert.

After the committee's self-organizing meetings, the PPC as individuals and a group reviewed documents and presentations by department leaders. Some committee members reviewed historical documents related to prior efforts to assess deficiencies and corrections of those deficiencies. Those topic areas included waste water treatment, potable water supplies, ambulance services, police services, fire services, public works support and the communication infrastructure that supports many of these services. The committee chose to focus in more detail on the major town departments of fire, police, waste water treatment and public works after deciding not to focus further on potable water in part related to fire protection, ambulance services and wireless communication.

The department heads of fire, police and public works presented written material and orally describing their individual departments. Documentation of those presentations and the insightful questions of committee members are included in committee minutes.

The committee identified specific deficiencies and started to consider options for their resolution in order to propose a prioritization for their remediation. The committee adopted a standard methodology to help frame the process of comparing each problem area, one to the other, to arrive at a prioritization. The effort to prioritize was undertaken with the understanding that the Town's ability to finance the options was not a factor.

### METHODOLOGY DETAILS

The committee considered the attributes that the committee wanted to use to assess each area of interest. The committee chose: Public Safety, Employee Safety, Financial Value, Improved Town Image and Creates Community. Financial Value was defined as value to the Town for each dollar of cost. Creates Community was interpreted as meaning the propensity to bring citizens physically together as well as improve town spirit and citizen involvement.

The committee then weighted the attributes by private ballot on a scale of 0-5 comparing the importance of each attribute one to the other. The committee concluded a weighting of:

Public Safety	4.4
Employee Safety	4.4
Financial Value	4.1
Improved Image	2.4

Creates Community	2.4
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The committee then by private written ballot, rated each listed investment on the weighted attributes. The final weighted score was generated by multiplying each investments total score by the predetermined weighting. For example, if an investment was given a total Financial Value score of 8 (on scale of 0-10) the value of 8 was multiplied by 4.1 to arrive at a final Financial Value score that reflected not only the committee's assessment of the projects Financial Value but also the committee's assessment of Financial Value's importance as an attribute. Six committee members were present for the final balloting, including two citizen members, three town employees and one representative of an outside independent organization.

The results were:

INVESTMENT	COST ESTIMATE	SCORE
Maintain Fire Department Replacement Schedule	154k/yr	142.92
Maintain Public Works Replacement Schedule	74k/yr	139.56
Police Dept Privacy/Safety	1mm	136.15
Improve Volunteer FD Pay/Benefits	45k/yr	127.83
Provide Fire Dept Facility to support FT/Volunteer	1.5mm	126.07
Continue Sanitary Sewer Upgrade/Maintenance	4.2mm	114.49
Public Works Facility	1.5mm	110.75
Fire Dept Egress	100k	100.68
Increase Town Office Space	1mm	86.66

The committee then had an extensive discussion of the scoring system and how changes in some scores could alter the results. The committee also understood how the public works facility scored relatively low because the attributes of Improved Image and Creates Community lowered its total score. The discussion was important in that the

committee members, during many meetings, agreed that the Public Works Facility is in deplorable condition, in fact of questionable safety to employees.

By Consensus therefore the PPC offers the following prioritization.

1. The Town's annual appropriation for capital purchases for the Fire Department and Public Works Department are at appropriate levels and should continue.
2. The PPC supports the ongoing efforts to upgrade Waste Water treatment.
3. The identified deficiencies in the Police Department, the Fire Department and Public Works, should be addressed in that order.

The identified facility deficiencies for the Police Department that makes it impossible to protect citizens and town employees from potential physical and mental harm must be addressed first. Lack of privacy for interviews and lack of physical barriers for safety must be addressed first.

The dwindling manpower of the Fire Department must be addressed second. The PPC was of different opinion of the Fire Chief in that the PPC urges an aggressive support of volunteer fire fighters to attempt to delay or avoid the hiring of full time fire fighters and constructing the facility to support a combined department of volunteers and full time fire fighters. The Fire Chief is of the opinion that a full time core to the department is inevitable and soon necessary.

The PPC was appalled by the condition of the Public Works Facility and the message that such a facility sends to employees and citizens of the value of Public Works and its contribution to the daily safety of citizens and employees. Even though the solution to this issue is the third priority, the consensus of the committee is that a solution is absolutely necessary when funds and prioritization allows.

The PPC appreciates the irony of the fact the Fire Chief occupies a space that does not meet Life Safety Code. The committee anticipates that the solution to the Police Department facility needs may also resolve this condition.

The committee addressed the issue of the Town Administration's request for more space in the context of how other projects might be the stepping stone to providing more space for Town Administration needs. The PPC feels that this is the lowest priority from the Public Safety viewpoint and also recognizes there are other viewpoints that must be considered.

## NEXT STEPS

The PPC has started to review alternatives for solving the identified deficiencies starting with the first priority, the Police Department. The PPC intends to consider all alternatives including, alterations to existing structures, new structures and potential

changes of space needs by removing some Police Department functions and shifting them to regional resources.