

Public Safety Building Update

By Fire Chief B. Michael Thurlow

I'm very pleased to report that as you read this all of the town's first responders from Fire, EMS, Police, and Dispatch are now working out of our brand new facility located next to Town Hall at 275 US Route 1. As you may imagine there are hundreds of details and logistical challenges that go into a successful transition like this for a 24/7/365 operation like ours.

Our staff spent months planning for the transition with the construction team led by Landry/French, our local Scarborough general contractor, as well as the many subcontractors that worked on the various systems. The move took place over a three week period in a phased implementation plan. During the week of April 6 the Fire and Police administration and detective bureau moved into the 2nd floor which was the first section of the building ready for occupancy. On April 17th the Police patrol officers and evidence technicians moved in to the main and ground floors, and started responding and working from their new spaces.

One of the most critical phases of the move was the transition of our Public Safety Communications Center. There are dozens of components that needed to move as many of them were repurposed from the old, to the new center. We followed a carefully orchestrated plan that assured our radios, 911 phone lines, and other critical components transitioned without skipping a beat or missing a single phone or radio call.

At 9:00 AM on Wednesday April 22nd two of our 40+ year veteran dispatchers (who started working on the same day), Eric Berry and Cathy Chandler, officially made the transition. Eric signed off from the old center which has operated continuously from that site for over 50 years, and Cathy signed on from the new communication center where we plan to serve the community for another 50+ years.

This past Monday, April 27th the final phase of the transition took place when the Fire/EMS Operations personnel moved along with the fire and rescue apparatus which is now responding from the new fire station bays.

It is important to note that this transition couldn't have happened without the hard work and dedication of our General Contractor, Landry/French, and the dozens of specialty subcontractors that work for them. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly made their jobs much more difficult. Extra precautions were taken to clean, disinfect, and plan work flows while also minimizing contact and maintaining as much personal distancing as possible. Many of the trades men and women on the job had their own struggles like many of you with child care and other pandemic and health related concerns that limited the workforce as we got down to the wire of closing out the project. Through it all the construction team has done a masterful job of bringing this critically important project to a successful conclusion despite a host of challenges.

I would be remiss not to mention the outstanding work of Tom Perkins, our owner's representative. Tom has been by our sides throughout the project making sure the Town's best interests have been represented. Tom is an engineer and a details guy who has dealt with literally thousands of issues and challenges as they have popped up. I'm not sure what we would have done without his expertise, sound judgment, and sage guidance over the past 18 months.

Chief Moulton and I along with all of our personnel are extremely pleased with how nice the project came out. The space is bright, functional, and will serve our needs for decades to come. We want to take this opportunity to thank all of those that helped make this project a reality. Town Manager Tom Hall who has been supportive of the need since he started here. The various town council's that approved the feasibility study and eventually the referendum vote. The Ad-Hoc Public Safety Building Committee that helped guide us through the process. The contractors who built this fine facility, and our personnel for their patience and input on the design details.

Most importantly we want to thank the voters for supporting this critically important project. We look forward to the day when things are back to normal and we are able to invite the public to an open house to see our new facility. In the meantime know that your public servants are on the job, serving 24/7/365 from our new public safety building at 275 US Route 1.