

**TOWN OF ELMORE, VT**  
**Maintenance Facility Informational Meeting #2**

**Meeting Minutes – prepared by G. Schwartz**  
**Status: Approved**

**Meeting Date: February 24, 2022**

**Start Time: 6:04 pm    Adjourn: 7:30 pm**

**Meeting Attendees: Caroline DeVore, Robb Wills, Glenn Schwartz, 10 in person attendees and 10 attendees via zoom**

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**The meeting was held at the Elmore United Methodist Church and via zoom. The meeting was recorded and is available at the following link <https://youtu.be/UmD9hZd7j1U>**

1. R. Wills welcomed everyone and began the meeting by presenting the following information;
  - The First half hour of this meeting will be the review the town meeting portion
  - The two Select Board Candidates will be given the opportunity to introduce themselves.
  - We will then move into the Informational Section of the meeting to discuss the proposed Elmore Highway Maintenance Facility
  - Unanswered questions from the past meeting will be answered
  - Q & A
  
2. R. Wills read the Warning For The Town Of Elmore Annual Town Meeting for March 1, 2022 including all of the Articles (see meeting video for details)
  
3. The following questions were asked regarding the Town Meeting portion of the meeting
  - 1) A question was asked regarding the Elmore Community trust as part of Article 5 (see meeting video for response)
  - 2) Stuart Wepler asked a question regarding Article 2 (see meeting video for response)
  
4. The two candidates for Select Board were given the opportunity to introduce themselves
  - Don Valentine presented first (see meeting video for details)
  - Warren West presented second (see meeting video for details)
  
5. Since there were no additional questions, the Informational Meeting for the Maintenance Facility began
  
6. Answers to the following questions from the previous meeting were answered (see meeting video for details)
  - Question: How soon can we put information back in front of the voters if the town garage gets voted down?  
Answer: The timeframe will be a minimum of 60 days

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- Question: I need to know specifically what money was spent on the Temp building and where did it come from?  
Answer: So far we put down \$50,000.00 which is ½ of the cost. Remainder due upon delivery in the spring/summer 2022. The funds came out of the general Highway budget.
  - Follow up Question: Where will the remaining \$50,000.00 come from?  
Answer: Funds may come from ARPA funds or taken from the Highway budget
  - Question: How much money is still in the reserve fund?  
Answer: The Garage reserve fund has a current balance of \$100,000.00.
  - Question: What is the total money from ARPA that we can spend in the new building?  
Answer: \$250,000.00 is available for the Maintenance Facility
  - Question: Is the concrete foundation included in the building cost?  
Answer: Yes
  - Question: Is fire suppression included in the estimated cost?  
Answer: Fire suppression should not be required as the designer has included a firewall in the building
  - Question: Has a variance to the 18 acre requirement been considered?  
Answer: A “conditional use” for less than 18 acres would have to go through the DRB.
  - Question: Has any money been taken out of the Maintenance reserve?  
Answer: No money has been used from the reserve. The balance as of today is \$100,000.00
  - Question: How has the engineering for the conceptual design been paid for?  
Answer: The money came from the highway budget
7. R. Wills stated that going forward we know that this facility needs to be replaced and that we have been putting away money for this project for the last 10 years. It is not a question of need it is a question of how much. The Select Board will be seeking as much input from the community as possible in this process
8. R. Wills then introduced Peter Garceau from Cross Consulting engineers (the town engineer) to speak about the project.
9. Mr. Garceau stated that they evaluated 3 properties and selected the lower Keith property as the most suitable for the new Town Highway Maintenance Facility. He provided a summary of their report and stated that the new design was based on a recent project that they designed for the Town of Montgomery. Mr. Garceau then walked through their conceptual drawings (copy attached).
10. The meeting was then opened to questions and answers (see meeting video for details)
- 1) Reference was made to Question #7 of the previous Informational meeting regarding the Highway Maintenance Facility. The question was “As a follow-up to the previous question. Do we need to store all equipment inside during the winter?” The answer supplied was Answer: “The current design is preliminary.

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Final decisions regarding the number of bays will be made during public meeting once the design is complete and pricing is received.”

New Question: How can we put this project out for bid without knowing all of the parameters?

Answer: Before the project is put out to bid we will have had meetings with the community and have made decisions as to what we want to build. In addition to the lump sum pricing we may ask for alternates such as an adder for an additional bay or a deduct to eliminate a bay.

- 2) As a follow-up statement Mr. Cote suggested that the Town look at other facilities in the area such as Blow and Cote that house a large number of equipment pieces in a 3 bay garage.
- 3) Don Valentine commented on the layout of the conceptual drawing. No response required. Suggested the first bay be a maintenance bay.
- 4) Question: What is the impact on taxes?  
Answer: Based on a maximum amount of \$2,500,000 at an interest rate of 2.125% the maximum tax impact would be .07 or \$70.00/\$100,000.00 of assessed property value. However, due to our reserves and ARPA Funding it is possible that the tax increase could be as low as .04 or \$40.00/\$100,000.00 of assessed property value. Also noted that the \$2,500,000.00 includes a 20% contingency.
- 5) Question: Would a yes vote for the town garage result in an immediate purchase of the land and not allow for a possible reduction from the 18 acres?  
Answer: The Town currently has a memorandum of understating with the property owner for the purchase of up to 18 acres. The Select Board will meet with the DRB as soon as possible to see if a reduction in lot size is possible and determine the amount of land we would need to purchase.
- 6) Question: How much land do we actually need for the HMF?  
Answer: Mr. Garceau stated 6-10 acres but would be determined by the final design
- 7) Question: What is the price per acre?  
Answer: We are not trying to be elusive about it but the price negotiation was part of an executive session and in order to protect the Town’s ability to negotiate a price if this is voted down, the price has not been made public. C. Devore stated that if this does not receive a yes vote the agreement would no longer be valid.
- 8) Marc Cote stated that he was in support of a new garage but was concerned about the size of the conceptual structure.

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- 9) Question: Should the LSSU withdraw pass, 1) What would be the process of selecting a new school board be and 2) Is there room in the proposed budget for costs associated with the withdraw?

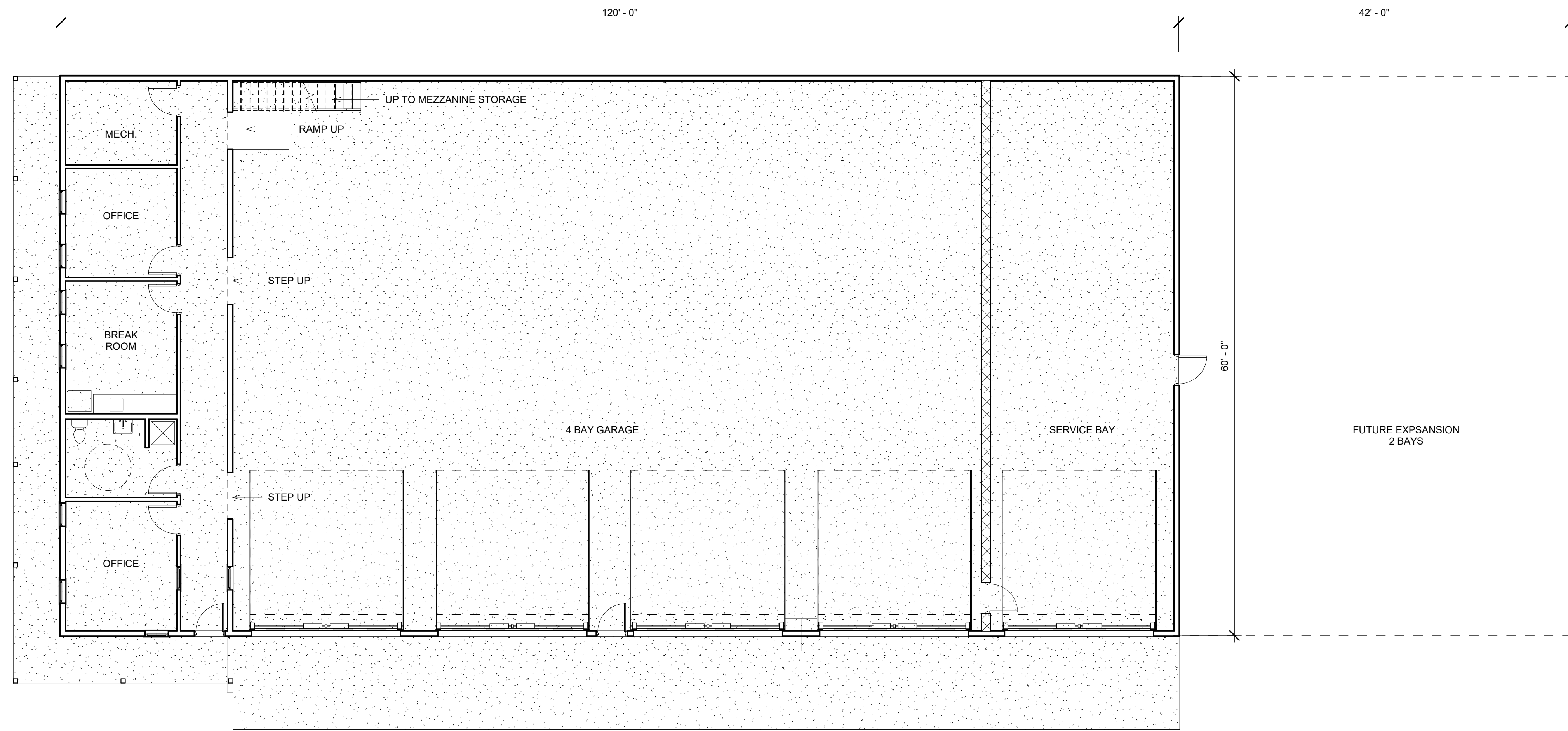
Answer: 1) This issue was covered at the school informational meeting on Tuesday February 22, 2022 (see website for link to meeting). The petitioners stated that they would form a committee to discuss this issue. The Select Board has not discussed this issue.2) The Town has not made any financial preparation for the possible withdraw. There are too many unknowns at this point.

- 10) Question: The petitioners suggested that the school board would be an informal nomination that the Select Board would approve. Did the Select Board agree to that?

Answer: No

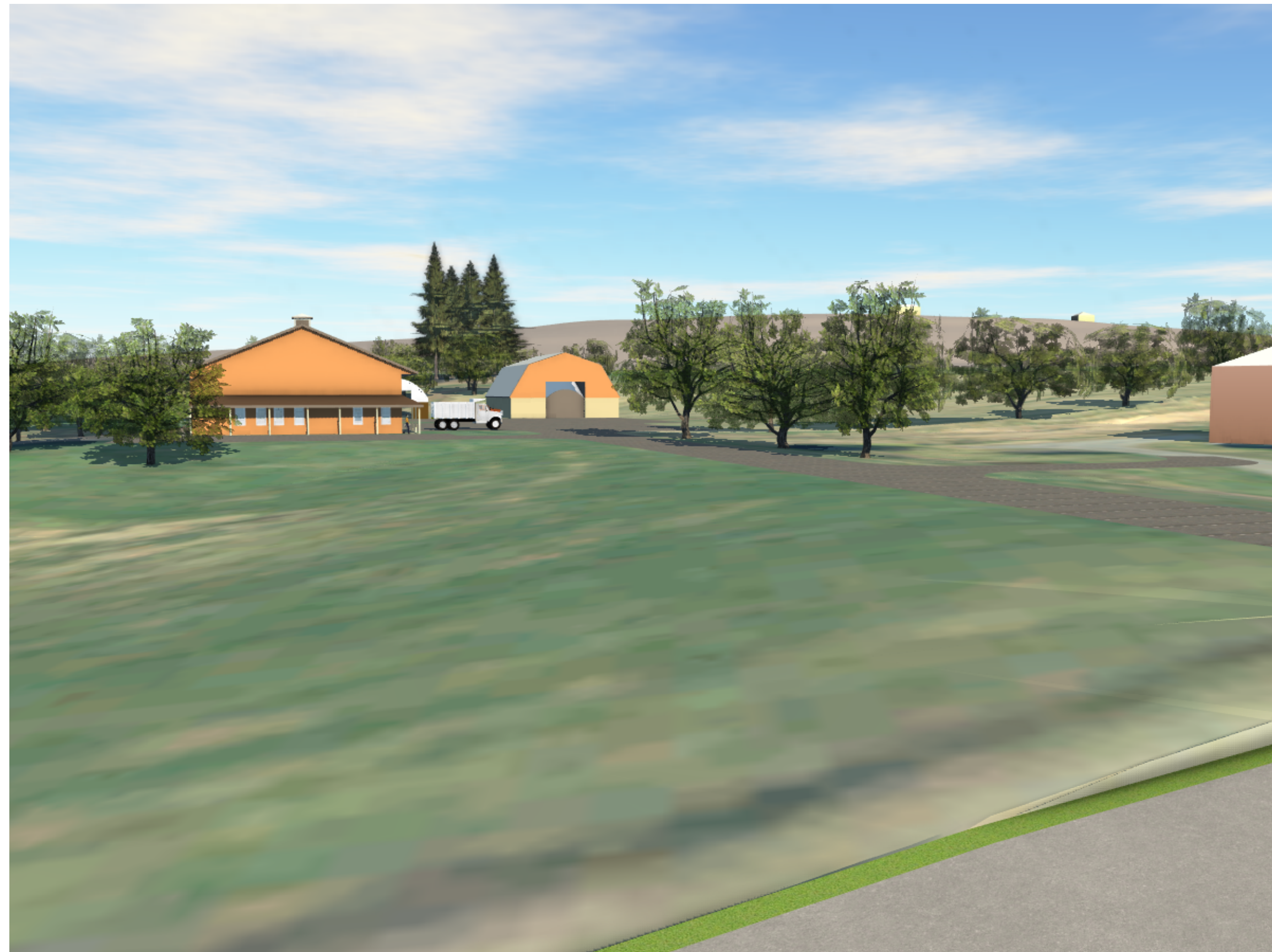
- 11) Question: Would the Select Board commit to an election for this committee?

Answer: The Select Board currently does not have enough information to make a decision on this matter. Due to the complexity of the situation the Board would seek legal counsel before making any decisions.





**First Floor Plan**  
 Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**View From The Street**

PROJECT: 21086  
 DATE: 01/25/2022  
 DESIGNED BY: VAE  
 DRAWN: VAE  
 CHECKED: P.J.G  
 APPROVED: P.J.G

Tel: 802-524-2113  
 Fax: 802-524-4881  
**CROSS**  
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS, P.C.  
 103 Fairview Rd.  
 St. Albans, VT 05478  
 © Cross Consulting Engineers, P.C.

Plan and 3D View

Rev. No.	Date	Description

Town of Elmore  
 Elmore, VT  
**Highway Maintenance Garage**  
 VT Route 12  
 Town, VT

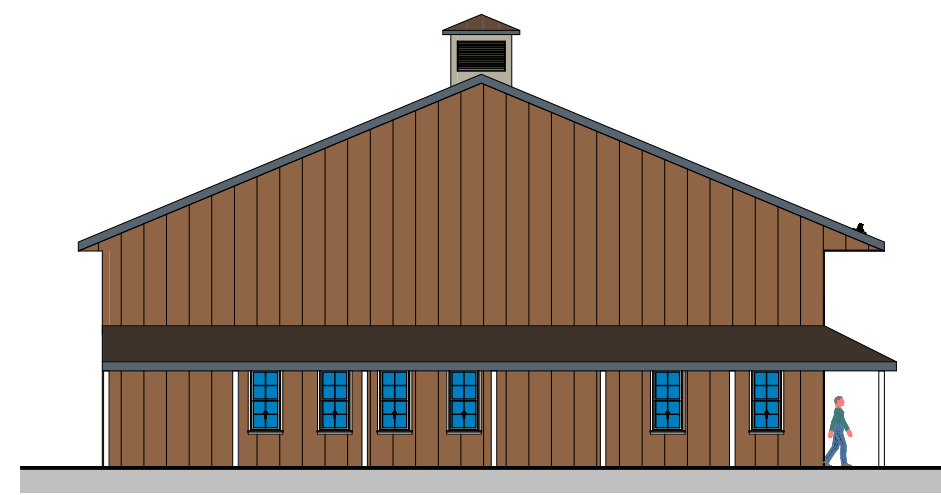
ARCHITECTURAL

**A-1.0**



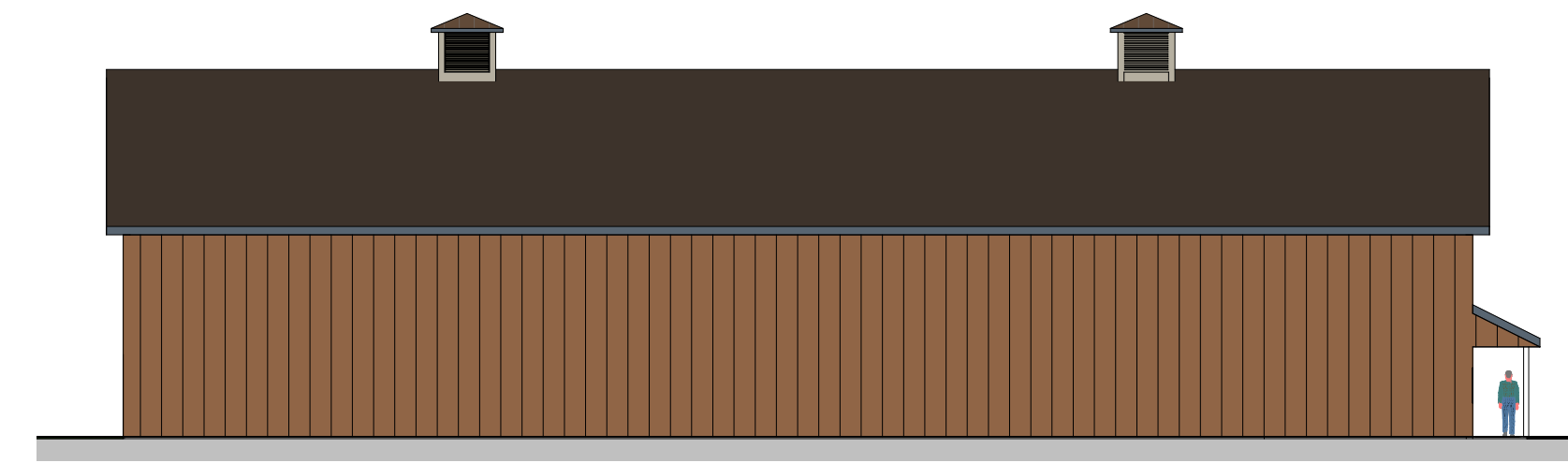
**South Elevation**

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"



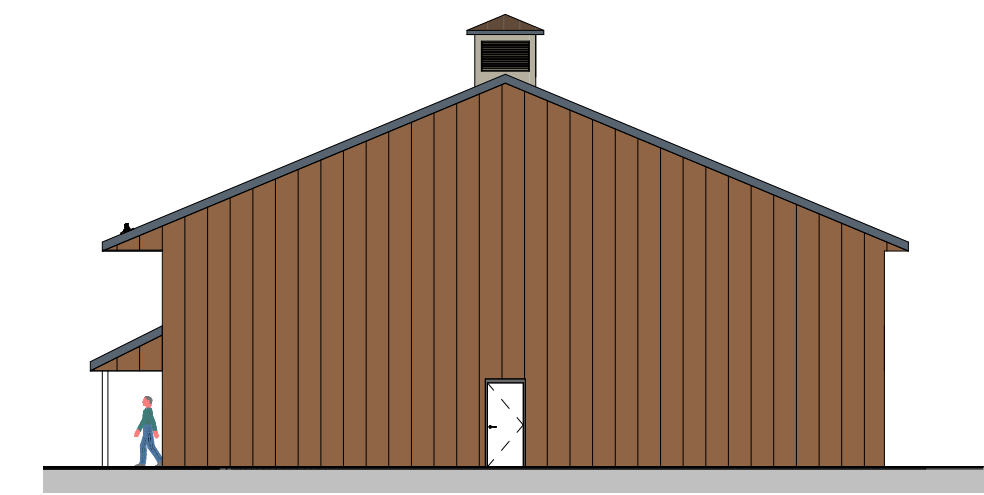
**West Elevation**

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"



**North Elevation**

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"



**East Elevation**

Scale: 1/16" = 1'-0"



**View From The Driveway**



**View From The Salt Shed**

PROJECT: 21086  
 DATE: 01/25/2022  
 DESIGNED BY: VAE  
 DRAWN: VAE  
 CHECKED: PJG  
 APPROVED: PJG

Tel: 802-524-5413  
 Fax: 802-524-5481

CROSS  
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS, P.C.  
 103 Fairview Rd.  
 St. Albans, VT 05478  
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**Elevations and 3D Views**

Rev. No.	Date	Description

Town of Elmore  
 Elmore, VT  
 Highway Maintenance Garage  
 VT Route 12  
 Town, vt

ARCHITECTURAL

A-2.0

© 2022 DWG20212086 Elmore Maintenance Facility/Concept/Revit/21086 Elmore Maintenance Facility.dwg  
 1/25/2022 11:46:15 AM

**Town of Elmore**  
**Box 123, Lake Elmore, VT 05657**

**Project Questions:** Elmore Highway Maintenance Facility

**1. Why does Elmore need a new garage?**

The current Town Garage building is nearly 90 years old — constructed in 1933. It was transferred to the Town following the construction of the State Park grounds. The building was not designed for its current purpose, but it has served the Town well. It has been modified through the years to better accommodate the size and type of equipment and materials required to maintain our current roads. No significant remodeling has taken place in the last 15 years, only annual maintenance.

Safety of our staff is critical. Though some modifications have been made to the building over the years, the existing structure needs to be replaced. The structure is no longer safe for 365-day use. Winter-Spring weather events in the last 5 years have impacted the foundation of the building as well as supporting structures and roof loading capacity. In December 2018, failing floor and ceiling supports prompted a deeper engineering analysis of the building and site. Structural issues make the building inappropriate for year-around use.

After weighing the report findings and repair vs. replace costs, the Selectboard believes that construction of a new facility at a new site is the best, most economical and most sustainable option for the Town.

**2. What is the impact of the recommended approach on the Town tax rate?**

The board is requesting authorization to spend up to a maximum of \$2.5 million on the full product. This includes land purchase, site development, building of the new facility, and demolition of the existing Town Garage. Based on a maximum amount of \$2,500,000 at an interest rate of 2.125% the maximum tax impact would be .07 or \$70.00/\$100,000.00 of assessed property value. However, based on the final configuration of the building, construction costs and application of reserve funds, the tax increase could be as low as .04 or \$40.00/\$100,000.00 of assessed property value.

The \$2.5 million request includes a 20% “overage” estimate to allow for increases in material costs between approval and completion of the project. At today’s costs, the Selectboard expects the total project can be completed for \$2.0 - \$2.2 million. The board has negotiated a favorable price for the land we recommend for this project and the board will continue to aggressively negotiate for all construction expenses.

The range is likely between a low of \$0.04 and maximum high of \$0.07 increase.

**3. Why do we have to decide on this project now?**

In its current state, the building should not be occupied when there is a 2 inch or greater snow load. This limits use of the building (for safety purposes) from December through March. An investment in our Town Highway Facility must be made. The Selectboard, and the consultants we’ve retained to help study this project for the last 24 months agree that the best option for the Town is the one presented. A new building on a new site.

**4. What happens if the Town votes “no” on this project?**

The selectboard will reassess our recommendation based on feedback gathered through the public meetings we’ve held to understand why the Town doesn’t want to move forward. The earliest a new vote can take place is 60 days (May 2022 earliest). We would only set a new date once we understand why the project was voted down to bring a new recommendation forward.

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A delay of 60+ days would mean the Town will miss the 2022 construction season and any project would be delayed to a start in 2023 at the earliest. This 1-year impact would also mean a renegotiation and/or new search for land and increase in construction costs and potential increase in financing rates.

Delays only make this project more expensive.

**5. Can the design as presented still be changed to make the proposed structure smaller or reduce costs.**

Yes, if this project is approved by the voters, the Selectboard will form a committee to define the final plan for the new building. A “yes” vote allows the Selectboard to secure the land immediately, then finalize building plans, complete the contract bidding process and negotiate a final building plan. The entire project cannot exceed the approved \$2.5M bond request, but the Selectboard will seek to bring this project in at the least possible cost.

**6. Why did the selectboard buy a temporary building for \$100,000?**

The road crew must have a protected area for the Town’s equipment and an area to work on equipment. The current garage structure cannot be occupied with a snow load of over 2 inches. The new temporary building provides multiple options for short-term and long-term storage of equipment before and during the construction phase of the new building. If we cannot have a new facility by winter 2022-2023, this temporary building can be heated, but this is not an optimal course of action.

The Selectboard also investigated finding another garage (commercial and private) area to use for equipment storage and as a temporary facility. There are no facilities in the surrounding area. Morrisville is currently renting space for their equipment for \$100,000/year. Renting space could cost our town \$8,000-\$10,000/month and the selectboard is seeking ways to house equipment that doesn’t further reduce the funds we have to build a new facility. The Selectboard felt a better use of funds was to buy a building that can be later repurposed as the Town’s sand shed.

The new building will be moved to the new HMF site and used as our sand shed after a new building is completed. Funds would have to be included in the new project for a sand shed, this new building will be that structure.

Note that the Town is going to have to rent, buy or build space to store and maintain our road equipment - regardless of whether this article passes. The Selectboard is conservatively spending now to protect our building budget as much as possible.

**7. What funds does the Town have in reserve that can help decrease the cost of this project?**

The Town currently has \$100,000 in the reserve fund for the HMF. We have been setting aside \$10,000/year for the last 10 years. The Town was also awarded ~\$250,000 in ARPA funding that the Selectboard has earmarked for this project. We are working with the ARPA fund administrators and Lamoille County Planning Commission to confirm that these funds can be committed to this project. That would allow the Town to put ~\$350,000 of funds toward decreasing the total Bond that needs to be secured.

**8. Why do we need 18 acres of land for this new site?**

Elmore Town zoning requires that commercial buildings have no more than 6% “lot coverage.” Given the amount of impervious coverage required (permanent buildings, temporary buildings, and impervious parking and driveway areas, storage).

18 total acres allows for 1 acre of impervious space.



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**9. What is the size of the building being recommended?**

120 feet long x 60 feet wide

**10. Why is the recommendation a 5-bay garage?**

The Selectboard and Road Commissioner visited several VT towns of similar size, reviewed their facilities, discussed their building development process, etc. The board discussed similar building plans with 3 engineering firms seeking their input on our list of requirements. We used the Town of Montgomery's garage as a project that is of similar size and with similar equipment. Their recommendation was to have 4 storage bays plus one maintenance bay. The design anticipates future expansion of the highway department due to the growth of the Town. In addition, if all Elmore equipment is to be stored in a heated space, this is the number of bays that would be required.

It's not required to house all of our current equipment in a heated facility year around. We do anticipate adding equipment in the next 5-10 years. As our road crew size increases and our equipment increases or needs to be maintained, the additional bay would be of significant benefit – and would be less expensive to build now than to add on to our design in 10 years.

The 5th bay is estimated to cost \$175,000 if we build at the time we construct the full project. If we add on a 5<sup>th</sup> bay in 10 years, the cost will be significantly higher. The final determination of contracting for a 4 or 5-bay garage has not been made.

**11. Could we reduce the plan to a 4-bay garage?**

Yes, the selectboard will continue to evaluate the optimal number of bays from a construction, funding and overall balance of the project perspective.

**12. Can someone vote yes to this article, but only if there is a 4-bay garage?**

This vote is to allow the Selectboard to invest up to a total of \$2.5M on this project.

The selectboard will take into account ALL input from Elmore residents before contracting this work. We plan to form an advisory panel to work closely with the board, our Road Commissioner, our engineering team, etc. to define the final plan.

The voters are empowering their Selectboard to make these final decisions. A “yes” vote is empowering the Selectboard to manage this project, communicate project status to the Town, hear input from the town, but ultimately, the voters are empowering their Selectboard to make the decisions that are in the best interests of the Town.

The board can make a decision to build a smaller garage.

**13. Why does the Selectboard make the decisions on the project and not an elected committee?**

The Selectboard is the Town's elected governing body. The board can appoint sub-committees and boards (like the Planning Committee and Development Review Board) to provide additional input and insights on this project.

The Selectboard has administered the Town's budget with nearly a flat year-over-year spend for 15 years. The board has accrued \$100,000 to invest in a new building, knowing that a significant investment would be needed.

The selectboard members in the 1970s and 1980s highlighted that a new Town Garage was needed. The selectboards for the last 10 years have noted in the annual Town report that a new garage was sorely needed. We

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**Box 123, Lake Elmore, VT 05657**

have now arrived at the time that we can no longer wait for this investment.

**14. How many properties were evaluated as part of the selection of a site for the new Highway Maintenance Facility?**

The selectboard, Road Commissioner, zoning administrator, project consultant (B. Burley) and Cross Consulting Engineers were involved in defining the site criteria. Approximately 28 Elmore properties were evaluated and ranked for this project. A top ~20 list of properties were visited and owners were contacted. These properties included unimproved and improved land (with and without structures). Properties included those on the market for sale, and land that was not on the market for sale.

Of all landowners contacted, only one land owner was interested in selling the Town acreage for the project. It's worth noting that no other Elmore landowners with land that met the board's criteria were willing to sell the Town land.

The Town was also offered a potential land "swap" of acreage abutting the Elmore State Park. This land swap may have also required an investment of cash from the Town to "purchase" the land or make a more attractive exchange with the State of VT (this was not "free" land). A swap was estimated to take 12-36 months to complete with the State of VT. The selectboard included the potential "swap" state park land in it's evaluation.

Cross Engineering evaluated the State Park land along with two lots owned by the Keith family on Rt 12. Three total lots were evaluated.

The Keith lots were recommended by the engineering firm based on the total land development expense required to make the land "buildable" for our purposes, access on Route 12 and additional criteria outlined to the selectboard.