

Support Proposed Police Station

To The Editor:

Readers of the paper will be aware of Tuesday's bond authorization vote to allow the St. Johnsbury Select Board to proceed with building the new police station. I urge St. Johnsbury residents to vote to support the bond.

The bond authorizes up to \$5.4 million, but as Kevin Oddy, Select Board chair, has made clear, that does not mean the Town will actually borrow that much money. The authorization allows the Select Board to take the next steps toward securing further grant funding to reduce the actual bond amount.

Mr. Oddy emphasized at last Tuesday's public hearing that the Select Board will not undertake the project unless they are convinced the final funding and financing package is in the best interest of the Town.

The project will rehabilitate the Main Street Armory, most recently housing the St. Johnsbury Recreation Center. While renovating the Armory, together with building a separate new fire station sometime in the future, is estimated to cost slightly more than building a new combined facility, there are major pluses.

First, it removes the liability of a derelict building that has been vacant since 2009. Even demolition would cost more than \$1 million.

Second, a restored historic building revitalizes the heart of downtown — a huge benefit that may be intangible but is no less valuable for being hard to put into dollars.

Third, it keeps our police headquarters in the middle of the special services district that it serves.

The Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, and Select Board have worked hard to get this project started. Completion is expected by mid-2023. The St. Johnsbury Police need a professional facility as soon as possible; they have put up with the cramped, decrepit facility they're in now for long enough.

The project webpage with lots of information is at <https://www.stjvt.com/armory-redevelopment-project>.

Please vote on Tuesday, Sept. 14, 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM, at the Welcome Center / Pomerleau Building.

—Scott Campbell
State Representative for St. Johnsbury