

Q. I have heard that an RFP (request for proposal) has been issued for a “Gear Room” at the current firehouse. Why is this expenditure needed now, especially since you are preparing to ask the taxpayers for funding to support the construction of a new site? Shouldn’t we save the funds this project would use to further offset the costs of the new construction?

A. The “Gear Room” is the place within a firehouse to store personal protective equipment: boots, jackets, helmets etc. These items need to be moved from the truck floor in the current firehouse to 1) get them away from the truck exhaust, 2) allow our members to dress for calls away from moving trucks, and 3) provide space for fans for clean air.

Even while we are working towards the preparation of a revised plan for a new firehouse/emergency department to present to Bedford’s taxpayers, the Fire District Commissioners have an obligation to maximize efficiency and safety to the benefit of both the community and the volunteer corps of first responders until a new building – with an operationally functional “Gear Room” - is approved and subsequently constructed.

Regarding the RFP, the “Gear Room” project is included in the District’s current operating budget. There will be no incremental costs to the taxpayer for this project and we are soliciting multiple bids to secure the most competitive proposal.

Update: The Gear Room bids were all more than we wanted to allocate, so we have scaled down the project to something we can mostly do ourselves at a fraction of the cost.