

Fire Station Upgrade

Construction has started on the upgrade of the fire station. The project will be completed in the spring of 2019. The facility was built in 1970-71 as a combined police and fire safety center for \$465,000 with funds from a variety of sources. Carleton and St. Olaf contributed \$150,000, local businesses \$25,000, Northfield \$82,500 and a Federal Civil Defense grant of \$207,500. Prior to 1971 the fire department was located on Division Street in the building which houses The Contented Cow. In 1971 the department had 3 trucks and served about 13,000 people in Northfield, Dundas and surrounding townships. In 2014 the Police Department moved to a new facility. Today the fire department, the Northfield Area Fire and Rescue Service (NAFRS), leases the building from Northfield and serves a population of 26,000 in and maintains 8 trucks.

Photograph of original fire station on Division Street

Photograph of fire station under construction in 1971

The general contractor for the project is Joseph Company, Inc. based in Austin. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$4,215,000. The construction itself is \$3,393,000. Soft costs such as legal and architects fees, temporary housing and miscellaneous furniture are \$539,000 and \$283,000 is set aside as a contingency fund. Northfield issued a 20 year Capital Improvement Bond for \$4,215,000 at 3.23% to finance the project. The annual bond payments of approximately \$300,000 are divided among the NAFRS partners in the same proportion as other operating and capital expenses. In 2019 Northfield's percentage is 71.57%, Dundas 5.55% and the Rural Fire Protection District 22.88%. These percentages are adjusted every two years to reflect changes in population, property values and fire calls.

The most obvious changes that will be made are an addition on the south side of the building and a new entrance from Highway 3. Less visible are the upgrades inside. The HVAC equipment, which dates from the original construction in 1971, will be replaced. The ventilation in the equipment bays considerably improved and a sprinkler system will be installed. An elevator will be installed and overall the building will become ADA compliant. There are 4 single room apartments in the upper level which will be remodeled to be compliant with the State building code.

Picture of upgraded facility showing the addition

The first stage involves work on the basement. Eventually the basement will house a meeting room for the NAFRS Board, a training room and several offices and storage areas as well as the mechanical equipment. The basement will be flood-proofed to a standard that is expected to enable NAFRS to dispense with flood insurance at a savings of \$13,000 annually.