MOODUS FIREHOUSE BUILDING COMMITTEE
MUNICIPAL OFFICE COMPLEX
MEETING ROOM 1
September 30, 2026
6:00 P.M.
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Draft

1. CALL TO ORDER

Craig Mansfield, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM

2. ATTENDANCE

Regular Members Present: Craig Mansfield, Edward Blaschik
Alternate Members Present: Brad Park
Absent: Irene Haines, Kevin Rutty
Guests: Todd Gelston, Don Angersola, Eric Cantar, David Stein (Silver Petrucelli) on Zoom
Audience: Jeff Miller

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Motion: Edward Blaschik moved, seconded by Brad Park, to approve the August 13, 2026, minutes as presented.
Discussion: None
In favor: E. Blaschik, C. Mansfield, B. Park
Opposed: None, Abstained: None, Motion passed.

Approval of the July 23, 2026, minutes will be added to the agenda for the next meeting, since they were not approved at the August 13 meeting.

4. OLD BUSINESS

A. Continued review of DD Estimate /VE Options – no discussion
B. Silver Petrucelli & Associates – See General Discussion
C. Bills and Invoices - none

5. GENERAL DISCUSSION

A. Discuss Board of Finance meeting and create a path forward.
Committee members discussed the decision of the Board of Finance to reject moving the Firehouse project to a referendum due to the cost, which they felt should be reduced, and some opinions that a new firehouse should be built on Mount Parnassus Road and not in Moodus. Craig Mansfield spoke about the efforts the building committee has made to reduce the size and cost of the Firehouse while ensuring that building and fire safety codes are met. The new building has been designed to meet the current and future needs of the town. The current location in Moodus has worked well for many years and moving it to Mount Parnassus Road would not work as well.
He recommended that the committee:

- Create a map showing how many houses would be more than 5 miles from a fire station, which is the standard ISO regulation for fire safety. Insurance rates for houses out of range would increase if the Firehouse was moved out of Moodus.

- Create a map showing how large the call volume is in Moodus compared to Mount Parnassus.
- Correct the inaccurate information that is going around. Administrative space is minimal, about 100 sq. ft for each office. Fire safety regulations require that the equipment bays be separated from the administrative and living areas. It is not a luxury building.
- The original plan was reduced by over 3,500 square feet. It has been minimized as much as possible, and must comply with the Fire Code which requires a fire pump, a 150,000-gallon underground holding tank, sprinkler system, a new electrical system, sleeping quarters, etc.
- Bringing the existing building up to code would be a level 3 alteration since over 50% of the building would need to be upgraded. That could cost over $12 million.
- The new building would go into bonding in 2029 when the Middle School will be dropping off.

Brad Park: it seems like the BOF did not understand the affordability of the project.
Craig Mansfield: 5 people made the decision for 9,000. Let the community decide. If they vote it down, then so be it.

David Stein and Eric Cantar met with Downes Construction to discuss project options and requirements. The existing building is completely out of compliance with current building and fire codes.
David Stein: the structural and envelope work, as well as mechanicals, must meet current energy codes and ADA requirements. It needs a sprinkler system; there must be fire separation between equipment bays and other areas. You can't just do low level fixes. You will spend money to remove things and then put them back. It's more cost effective to build new. You still need to build in all the mechanicals if you do it in stages, so it is not a simple solution to just make some alterations.
Edward Blaschik: we need to address the location of the Firehouse too. A lot of people think it should be on Mount Parnassus.

Eric Cantar: changing from a commercial to a residential kitchen could save about $115,000 in equipment and the Fire Marshall must approve that.
Radiant slab heat ($62,000) contributes to equipment load, so we would need to compensate for that if it were removed, which decreases the savings. $90,000 is about the cost of both the equipment and the concrete floor. In addition, the radiant floor adds to the longevity of the fire equipment. $62,000 in savings will be spent on premature equipment failures.
You might be able to save about $300,000 by removing the concrete apron in front of the bays, and a few other things.
David Stein: there is no way we can catch up when the construction is delayed like this, it won't save anything. Redesigning it takes a lot of time, there are a limited number of resources to build it, plus bonding, and construction cost escalation.
Craig Mansfield: we have already spent $400,000 to produce construction-ready plans. It is very short-sighted to spend another $400,000 on a redesign.
Todd Gelston: townspeople are afraid of the sticker price, and they misunderstand what the distance is by the roads, north and south, east and west. It's not how the crow flies; it's the roads the equipment travels on. Renovation may be a little less than a new firehouse, which could be more than $16 million with construction delays. We need to know what the cost is to

bring it up to code with renovations, so people can compare the costs. If we can build it in stages, by the time we are done renovating what is the cost compared to the new firehouse? Can we repair it and make it the same footprint as the new one? And will it be adequate for our needs? Then people can see the difference. People appreciate the fire department but are very scared about the cost. We need to show specific cost comparisons.

Craig Mansfield: we have to build the mechanicals for the whole future building even if we build in stages, and building the rest later will be a lot more expensive. We won't even get 40% of what we need compared to the new building. To the Board of Finance - we should not be part of a political discussion, we need what we need. If the Ambulance Association wants to rent a separate house that's ok.

Todd Gelston: it doesn't matter if the ambulance is there or separate, we still need space for an ambulance, and sleeping quarters. It doesn't make a difference in the firehouse plans. We need to get on the agenda for the Board of Finance's October 19 meeting. A reduction of $2 million might be OK.

Craig Mansfield: the number we have now is a realistic one. We need to get on the Board of Finance's October agenda and work through the issues. Creating a cohesive plan for all our space will take years. We need some good estimates for renovations.

David Stein: $2 million is mostly for the site work, so you won't save anything by going to a different location. It will be very hard to get ready for the October meeting.

Todd Gelston: it is extremely important to have solid numbers for the public; credible information is a must. The Board of Finance can schedule another meeting. We could invite Bill Lindsey to the October BOF meeting and discuss the financial climate.

Craig Mansfield: we could go to the BOF in November with solid numbers, for a possible referendum in January. We can't estimate the costs of moving to a new location unless we have geological survey.

Todd Gelston: how does the firehouse fit in with the Moodus masterplan? Is it the best use of the property?

Craig Mansfield: whatever we could sell the building and property for we would spend on a new property; but there are things we can clear up like ISO requirements, and others.

6. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Public comments:

Jeff Miller: is $15 million set in stone? Can you guarantee it?

Craig Mansfield: yes, but the costs go up $100,000 a month when we delay. It has not gone out to bid yet. We hired Downes Construction and Silver & Petrucelli to design it.

Jeff Miller: is the price guaranteed not to go up? What if the construction company says $18 million?

Craig Mansfield: then it doesn't go forward. Norfolk got some congressional funding, and a lot of private donations.

Jeff Miller: Norfolk says that they got a grant of $2.5 million from the State of CT.

Craig Mansfield: we still have to get approval for the entire project even if we get a grant.

David Stein: there are some grants for equipment, and small city ARPA funds, but those are not for construction.

Don Angersola: there was talk about grants from the Federal government. They got shot down. There were many emails and phone calls made through Senator Murphy's office, our State Representatives tried, but nothing panned out.

Jeff Miller: an article in the paper said that the town was $22 million in debt.

Craig Mansfield: that is the debt service total, like your mortgage. Some of that will be dropping off by the time the project is bonded. We still have AAA rating because our debt is low compared to our tax base. That's why we need Bill Lindsey to come to the BOF meeting in October.
Todd Gelston: the Board of Finance has a goal for the cost of debt service each year. We moved it up to $3 million and it goes up and down, right now it is going down. We can easily handle the $3 million yearly expense to pay off this project. Bil Lindsey can explain that.
Craig Mansfield: let's meet on October 15 and continue the discussion.

B. Next Meeting is scheduled for October 15, 2026, at 6:00 pm
C. Other

7. ADJOURNMENT
Motion: Edward Blaschik moved, seconded by Brad Park, to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 PM. Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted
Martha Hansen,
Recording Secretary