



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Approve and Authorize to Proceed with the EMS Building Proposal & the Bidding

COUNCIL DATE:
May 14, 2025

TO:
City Council

CATEGORY:
Requests

FROM:
Ragini Varma

Background:

A need for a **public safety building (FIRE, POLICE and EMS)** in Lewiston, MN—or in any community—usually arises from a combination of practical, safety, and operational reasons. Here are some key factors that often drive the need:

1. **Aging Infrastructure**

Many police, fire, and emergency services buildings were built decades ago. Older facilities may have:

- Structural issues (roofing, plumbing, heating, etc.).
- Insufficient space for modern equipment and vehicles.
- Non-compliance with current safety, accessibility (ADA), and energy codes.

2. **Modern Operational Needs**

Public safety operations today require:

- Specialized training spaces.
- Secure evidence storage.
- Advanced technology infrastructure.
- Proper accommodation for staff wellness and mental health.

3. **Community Growth & Changing Risks**

Lewiston's public safety challenges (natural disasters, public health crises, staffing, operations etc.) evolve. Older facilities might not be adaptable or large enough for:

- Increased staff.
- New equipment.
- Updated safety protocols.

4. **Improved Response Times & Coordination**

A modernized facility can improve:

- Response times to emergencies.
- Coordination between police, fire, EMS, and other emergency services.

5. **Recruitment and Retention**

Modern, well-equipped facilities help attract and retain qualified police officers, firefighters, and emergency personnel.

6. **Public Trust & Transparency**

A new public safety building can include community rooms, public meeting spaces, and design features that foster transparency and public engagement.

7. The EMS Building Committee was established in 2009, initially working with Yaggy Colby to

develop plans. In 2013, the City contracted Five Bugles to conduct a site assessment, which confirmed that the current location was optimal for safety and response times. Between 2015 and 2016, the City purchased the surrounding property, and a few years later, the City Council formally dedicated the land to the project. Throughout the planning process, grant opportunities for facilities were explored but none were available.

8. In 2023, Representative Gene Pelowski and Senator Jeremy Miller introduced a bill seeking \$3 million in funding for the facility's construction. Members of Lewiston Emergency Services engaged with both the House and Senate bonding committees, but the Legislature did not pass a bonding bill that year, and no funding was secured.
9. The **Lewiston Volunteer Fire Department**, established in 1901, currently operates with a full roster of 28 volunteers. The department provides fire suppression and vehicle extrication services to approximately 4,600 residents across a 125-square-mile area. This service area includes the townships of Fremont, Hart, Hillsdale, Norton, Utica, and Warren, as well as the cities of Lewiston, Stockton, and Utica.
10. The **Lewiston Volunteer Ambulance** was founded in 1974. The current team includes one full-time director, one part-time EMT, and 33 volunteers. The service provides prehospital emergency medical care to approximately 4,600 residents and offers mutual aid to several neighboring communities. The department operates two BLS trucks and one quick response vehicle, all housed at the fire station. The ambulance office, located within the community center, also serves as sleeping quarters for one out-of-town member. However, the department lacks shower and laundry facilities. Of the 35 total members, 12 live outside Lewiston and stay in the office during their on-call shifts.
11. The **Lewiston Police Department (LPD)** currently employs a full-time Chief of Police, one full-time officer, and four part-time officers. All LPD officers hold full-time POST licenses. The City of Lewiston maintains two squad cars for community service. Currently, the department has no dedicated garage space. Officers share an office located at City Hall, which also includes a separate office for evidence storage. There is no private entrance available for public interaction with officers. The Lewiston Police Department operates as a community-oriented public safety agency.
12. **Current Facility & Challenges**
The fire station, located at 85 North Fremont Street, was constructed in early 1960s. The facility no longer meets current needs. It lacks ADA compliance, does not meet OSHA standards, poses safety concerns, and fails to provide a healthy working environment for staff. Additionally, the building does not offer adequate space for daily operations or proper storage of vehicles and equipment.
13. **Planning for a New Facility**
Since 2022, the Fire Department Board and the Emergency Services Building Committee have been working with an architectural firm to design a new facility. Both groups are prepared to

proceed with the bidding process and aim to break ground in September/October 2025, with project completion targeted for June/July 2026. This new construction is essential to support public safety services and accommodate future growth and service expansion.

14. Benefits of the New Structure:

- Brings all three Public Safety entities together under one roof
- Offers ample space for daily Police and Ambulance operations
- Enhances parking safety for all emergency volunteers
- Provides adequate storage for Emergency Vehicles
- Includes proper decontamination areas for all departments
- Features living quarters and bedrooms for out-of-town Ambulance personnel
- Offers shower facilities for all members
- Separates Fire Department turnout gear to help lower cancer risks
- Provides a shared training room for all departments and Ambulance EMR training
- Supports recruitment and retention of current and future volunteers

15. Project Development

The City of Lewiston has partnered with CRW Architecture since 2022, investing \$9,300 in professional services. A final design has been approved for a **12,222 square foot** slab-on-grade building that will replace the outdated fire and ambulance station on Fremont Street. The new **Public Safety Building** will house the Fire, Police, and EMS departments. The total project cost is **\$3,052,260**.

16. Funding and Financial Considerations

The City held a **CIP Public Hearing** for the Public Safety Center Building project on September 11, 2024. According to state guidelines, the City's maximum annual payment cannot exceed 0.16% of its estimated 2025 market value of \$124,574,600, which equals \$199,320 (.0016 * \$124,574,600). Due to project delays in 2024, the City can no longer borrow the full \$2.87 million previously authorized in 2024. Instead, it can borrow up to \$2,785,000. To ensure that annual payments remain below \$199,320 for the 30-year bond (which will be callable after approximately 10 years), additional cash contributions will be necessary.

17. Attached are the final proposal from CRW Architecture and the DDA Annual Payments & Bonding details for the project.

18. If the project must break ground in September or October 2025 and be completed by June or July 2026, the Council must approve moving forward tonight to allow construction bids to be received. If the city chooses not to proceed after receiving the bids, only the following design fees will be due: \$50,080 for Design Development, \$99,700 for Bid/Construction Documentation, and \$10,000 for the Public Bidding process. The \$31,040 allocated for Construction Administration will not be incurred or invoiced.

Staff Recommendation:

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Attachments:

[DESIGN PROPOSAL Lewiston Fire Station EMS Building.pdf](#)

[Prelim Bond Report 05052025.pdf](#)

[Mikes CFP 2025 update w draft audit numbers NOT OFFICIAL.pdf](#)

[UnOfficial Estimate for City Tax Only for 2026.pdf](#)