



**PETER J. SIMONSEN**  
Chief of Police

## **TOWN OF NORTH CASTLE**

**15 BEDFORD ROAD**  
**Armonk, New York 10504**  
**Established 1736**



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General Memorandum

February 11, 2025

From: Chief Peter J. Simonsen

To: Town Administrator Kevin Hay

Re: Police Department Portion of Town Hall - Analysis

Kevin, below is my assessment, and analysis of the existing Police Department facility within Town Hall. It is important to first note that the original brick and mortar Town Hall building was built at some point in the 1940's. It was later renovated in the mid 1980's. This renovation, at that time, was purported to provide interim housing for the Police Department, Court, and other Town offices, until better accommodations could eventually be built, or otherwise obtained. Unfortunately, this renovation was fraught with cost over-runs, and poor-quality work. The result with which we are left is a significantly scaled back version of a renovation that was presented to the community for approval at that time.

The most apparent problem with our existing Police Department facility is that it is decidedly too small. Offices are over-crowded, locker rooms are over-crowded, there are not enough bathrooms, closets, storage spaces, and designated spaces for things like interviews, report writing, and the handling of persons in custody. For example, the Detectives' Office, which is shared by 3 Detectives, often working concurrently, is extremely small, and is insufficient to accommodate the amount and type of work done there. The Youth Office, where juveniles are interviewed accompanied by parents or guardians, is cramped and unsuitable for that purpose. In cases where several juveniles are to be interviewed, officers must try to find unoccupied areas in the Department in order to conduct those interviews in a manner that is in accordance with State mandates. Not an easy task. Even a basic thing like the width of the hallways is an issue, as they are too narrow for the type and amount of activity that we have regularly. Additionally, there is no designated or safe space for the handling and processing of incoming evidence, which at times contains deadly illicit substances. The Front Desk Communications and Dispatch area is comprised of nothing more than kitchen style counters on which all the computers and E-911 equipment are placed throughout perimeter of the three walls of the room. It is extremely confining and awkward, and all but impossible to operate efficiently while handling and recording the thousands of calls that we receive annually. This space is too small, and was



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inadequate even after the renovation in the late 1980's. It is nowhere near on par with the Communication/Dispatch arrangements of surrounding police departments, and the limited availability of space virtually precludes much, if any, improvement to the area. Our officers, impressively, do the best that they can to work around the limitations of space in the Front Desk

Spatial limitations also compromise the safe handling of prisoners into and out of the Courtroom, which is really not a Courtroom, but a meeting room. Officers are often forced to move prisoners through the hallway outside of the Courtroom, where members of the public stand while waiting to be screened prior to entry into Court, or to confer with attorneys. Even the judges must often navigate through members of the public, in order to traverse the hallway between the Court Clerk's Office and the Courtroom. These conditions present serious security issues for the judges, officers, and the public. Making matters worse, the Town Prosecutor is forced to use the building's front entry vestibule to conduct conferences with parties who are on the Court calendar, as there is no other location for this to be done, due to lack of space. This not only creates another safety issue, but leads to constant interruptions to conferences as people enter or leave the building. These safety issues do not end at the Courtroom door. Due to the size and dimension of the Courtroom and the limitations of space therein, prisoners, litigants, and others must come within close proximity to the judge, creating an extremely dangerous situation, a recipe for disaster. In light of the described conditions and the safety and security issues that have resulted, we have been extremely fortunate over the years to not have had a tragedy occur.

There are numerous other issues with the current Town Hall building. The HVAC ducts are filthy, creating an unhealthy environment in the building. The acoustic ceiling is used as a return for the HVAC system, clearly less than ideal. In particular, the building's heating system is antiquated, and despite some updates, is still perpetually problematic.

There is a scarcity of electrical outlets in the building, with some offices having only 2 or 3, requiring the use of extension cords and power strips to operate computers and other vital equipment, a potential fire hazard.

Other issues within the Police Department in the current Town Hall building.:

- 1) Numerous windows in the Police Department cannot be opened, constituting a fire hazard.
- 2) Insufficient number of rest rooms for staff.
- 3) Police records and Audio-Visual equipment stored in unheated/non-air-conditioned upstairs storage room.
- 4) Ground water is constantly entering the building, necessitating the continuous use of pumps and electrical power to prevent flooding. Even worse, the limitations of the building's sewage pump system, which is located at the very lowest part of the building,

requires sewage to be pumped upwards over officers' locker rooms. This has resulted in leaks of raw sewage into those rooms, at times rendering those areas, including the toilets therein, as unusable until repairs can be made.

In short, the current building is woefully inadequate for the purposes for which it is used, creating safety, security, health, and other issues. These issues will only be exacerbated as the Police Department grows in response to development and the inevitable accompanying increase in Town population. Renovation and expansion of the current building will be extremely costly, and will likely fail to eliminate all of the building's deficiencies and shortcomings, such as the ground water and sewage issues. Furthermore, the existence of load bearing walls from the original building would further complicate a renovation, and would add to costs. Furthermore, renovation of our current building to the degree that would be necessary to make it fully suitable for its uses would likely require at least partial the relocation of the Police Department, Court, and other offices during what would be a major and lengthy renovation process, adding to the cost of renovation. In light of all of this, from a Police Department perspective, it would be far preferable to move to a new facility, such as the one currently available at 333 Main St., rather than to try to renovate the current structure to effectively adapt it to current needs.

**From:** [Kevin Hay](#)  
**To:** [Alison Simon](#)  
**Cc:** [Joseph A. Rende](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Annex building  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 12, 2025 4:17:36 PM

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For the record. Thank you.  
Kevin

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**From:** Robert Melillo <rmelillo@northcastleny.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 12, 2025 3:50 PM  
**To:** Joseph A. Rende <jrende@northcastleny.com>  
**Cc:** Kevin Hay <khay@northcastleny.com>  
**Subject:** Annex building

### **The Importance of Purchasing a New Building for the Town of North Castle**

The Town of North Castle is in dire need of a new municipal building to accommodate its essential departments and provide a safe, efficient, and accessible workspace for employees and residents. The current building, constructed in the 1800s, has long surpassed its life expectancy and is no longer suitable for modern commercial use. A new facility is crucial to ensure the town can function effectively and meet the needs of its growing community. Renovating the current building would essentially require tearing it down entirely due to its extensive structural and safety issues.

One of the most pressing concerns is that the existing structure was never designed for commercial use. As a result, it cannot properly support the imposed loads required for a municipal facility. The building's foundation has significant cracks throughout, further compromising its structural integrity. Additionally, the building is located in a flood zone and was never properly designed for such an area, putting it at continuous risk of water damage and structural failure.

Accessibility is another major issue. The building is not fully handicap accessible, making it difficult for individuals with disabilities to navigate. The staircase leading to the second floor needs to be re-supported, and the upstairs bathrooms are hazardous due to deteriorating tile conditions. The first-floor bathrooms also require major renovations to meet current accessibility standards. A new building would ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), allowing all residents and employees to access town services without difficulty.

The current building is also severely overcrowded, particularly in the Building Department, which has seen an increase in employees due to growing town needs. The lack of adequate workspace forces employees to work in cramped conditions, leading to decreased efficiency, stress, and difficulty in performing daily tasks. The overcrowding also limits storage space for important documents and office supplies, creating a disorganized work environment that further hampers productivity. There are no private offices, making it difficult for staff to conduct confidential or focused work. The lack of sufficient square footage for employees leads to inefficiencies and poor working conditions, ultimately impacting productivity and service delivery. Furthermore, the Highway Department lacks proper sleeping arrangements

during weather-related emergencies, making it challenging for them to respond effectively to storms and other crises.

Health and safety concerns further emphasize the necessity of a new building. The existing structure is infested with rodents and insects, creating an unsanitary environment for employees and visitors, with mouse traps placed throughout offices as a temporary solution. In the summer of 2024, employees fought off thousands of yellow jackets in the Building Department, a problem that took the entire summer to resolve. Mice were being caught nearly every day, and mouse droppings and insect droppings on employees' desks made for highly unsanitary conditions.. Maintenance issues are widespread, including hazardous flooring, holes throughout the building, deteriorating restrooms, rotted gable vents, and broken siding throughout. Even the minor renovations done over the past 40 years are completely outdated and have far surpassed their life expectancy. Additionally, the building lacks modern security measures, making it vulnerable in active shooter situations or other emergencies. The building also has potential asbestos and lead paint issues, posing a health and safety risk to employees and the public. Proper ventilation is another major concern, as the outdated HVAC system fails to provide adequate air circulation, leading to poor indoor air quality. A new facility would incorporate up-to-date security features, ensuring the safety of both employees and the public.

Energy efficiency is another critical factor. The current building is a complete energy drain, leading to excessive utility costs and an unsustainable environmental impact. A new facility would be designed with modern energy-efficient systems, reducing operational expenses and contributing to a greener future for the town.

The existing building houses multiple essential departments, including the Tax Assessor and Finance Department, Conservation Department, Planning Department, and Receiver of Taxes. Given the importance of these offices in serving the community, it is imperative that they operate in a safe, accessible, and functional environment. The town's ability to provide efficient municipal services depends on the quality and suitability of its facilities.

In conclusion, the Town of North Castle must invest in a new municipal building to address the numerous structural, safety, accessibility, and efficiency issues plaguing the current facility. A new, properly designed structure will provide a safer, more functional, and energy-efficient environment for employees and residents alike. This investment is essential to ensure that the town can continue to meet the growing needs of its community while maintaining high standards of public service.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me anytime.

Regards,

*Rob Melillo*

Building/ Fire Inspector

Town of North Castle

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