

# SPECIAL TOWN MEETING QUESTION OF THE WEEK



**Week 6:**

**Why Are the Proposed Public Safety Facility and New Elementary School So Large?**

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The proposed Public Safety Facility and new Elementary School are designed to reflect current standards and improve support for their missions. As such, the designs add space supporting staff effectiveness, add new capabilities, and foster safe operations. Even so, through open and transparent design processes, the Building Committees secured space reductions.

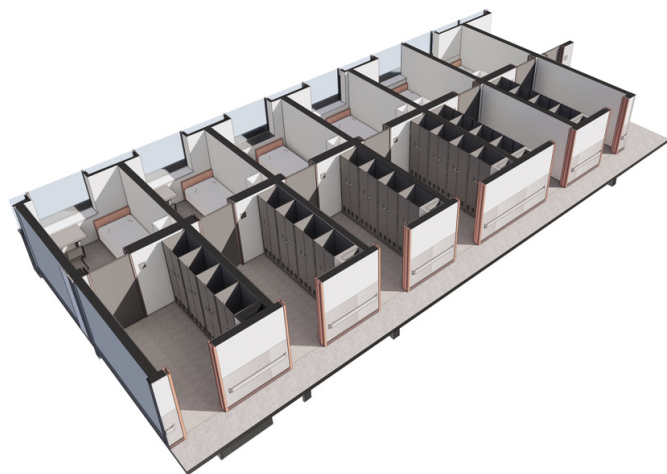


# Public Safety Facility

Formed in 2020, the Public Safety Building Committee conducted over 50 public meetings that defined building needs and the proposed design, in an open and transparent manner. The Public Safety Building is bigger in part because the Town's existing facilities are woefully undersized. Also, the design adds features missing in the current North Fire Station and Police Headquarters, including:

- Dedicated office and meeting space, allowing officers to complete confidential police work with victims and family members in privacy.
- Bunk rooms affording privacy for male and female firefighters who both work and live in the building.
- Shared training and exercise spaces to help maintain the public safety team's health and enhance their skills.
- Expanded locker rooms providing adequate space for male and female police officers. The rooms include larger lockers to allow officers to store and dry uniforms, isolate potentially contaminated footwear, charge lights/electronics, and secure duty bags.
- Five apparatus bays ensuring that all four assigned fire trucks and ambulances, and other emergency equipment, are immediately available to meet emergency response needs.

The current 49,000-square foot building design is 13% smaller than the first plan. The result is a right-sized building enabling Hingham's first responders to deliver the public safety services the community expects.



# New Elementary School

Formed in 2017, the School Building Committee has held more than 50 public meetings to oversee the feasibility and design process. Members worked with diligence and transparency to ensure a robust design in the most cost-effective manner.

The proposed elementary school is larger than the existing Foster school for two key reasons.

- First, virtually every space in the existing school is too small to meet the requirements of Hingham's educational program. Undersized classrooms, gymnasium, cafeteria, and library do not allow for optimal use by students and teachers at the expense of appropriate curriculum delivery.
- Second, existing school spaces fail to meet state space guidelines and cannot be altered without significant disruption to student learning.
  - The new school design meets MSBA-prescribed space requirements, which far exceed guidelines in place when Foster was first built.
  - Certain design features will achieve the goals of the educational program and meet the increasing needs of Hingham elementary students. These include grade-level common areas that supports group learning and student collaboration and dedicated space for two special education programs not previously offered due to space constraints.
  - In addition, the new school will include space allocated for the expansion of Hingham's popular and revenue-generating integrated pre-Kindergarten and Kids-in-Action programs that will accommodate increased demand for early childhood education and before and after school programming.

The proposed project design includes a building with appropriate and adequately sized spaces to deliver the desired curriculum in an environment that comports with 21st century elementary learning.

