

November 7, 2017 Coordinated Election

**CITY OF MANITOU SPRINGS PUBLIC SAFETY MULTIPURPOSE  
TRAINING AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS FACILITY**

**BALLOT QUESTION**

**FACTUAL SUMMARY**

Historic  
**MANITOU  
SPRINGS**



[CONCEPTUAL RENDERING]

## Manitou Springs Volunteer Fire Department – Serving the community since 1879

### **ABOUT THE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

On July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1876 the Town of Manitou Springs was incorporated, three weeks before Colorado became the 38<sup>th</sup> State On August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1876. On December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1879, Manitou Springs organized its first fire company, Manitou Fire Company No 1. There were 21 original volunteer members.

Today with approximately 40 volunteer members and six paid employees, the Manitou Springs Fire Department continues to provide progressive all hazard emergency response to its citizens, businesses and visitors of the city of Manitou Springs.

The people that make up the Fire Department consist of men and women who dedicate their free time to train for, and respond to, emergency events of all types in and around the City of Manitou Springs. These individuals are professionals, and like their career counterparts hold numerous emergency response related certifications and continually receive and/or seek out innovative training and education that include:

- Firefighter Certification
- Fire Officer Certification
- Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operations Certification
- High Angle Rescue Certification

- Wildland Firefighting Qualifications
- Public Safety Fire Instructor Certification
- Emergency Medical Technician Certification

In addition to emergency response, training, and education, Manitou Springs Fire Department also partners with and serves the community in the following ways:

- Wildfire mitigation threat assessments
- National Wildfire Deployments
- Plan Manitou Committee member
- Hazard Mitigation and Resiliency department partner
- Bi-annual chipper days
- Public Safety Education
- Pre-Incident Planning
- Fire Inspections/Fire Prevention/Plans Review
- MDA Fill the Boot
- Medical stand-by High School Football
- Pikes Peak Marathon Medical Support
- Downs Syndrome Association Buddy Walk Medical Support
- Pikes Peak International Hill Climb Fire and Rescue Support/Race Safety
- Santa at the Town Clock
- Mercy Dinner
- Healthy Partners for a Healthy Choice support
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks

## GENERAL OBLIGATION DEBT AUTHORIZATION QUESTION

SHALL CITY OF MANITOU SPRINGS DEBT BE INCREASED \$3.9 MILLION, WITH A REPAYMENT COST OF UP TO \$7,000,000; AND SHALL CITY TAXES BE INCREASED UP TO \$400,000 ANNUALLY TO PAY SUCH DEBT, WITH THE PROCEEDS TO BE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FIRE PROTECTION IMPROVEMENTS AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS FOR CITY PURPOSES, WHICH MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- CONSTRUCTING AND EQUIPPING A MUNICIPAL PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY TO BE UTILIZED AS A TRAINING AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER FOR THE FIRE AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS, AND FOR USE DURING TIMES OF FLOOD OR OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS TO MAINTAIN CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT, AND AS A STORAGE FACILITY FOR MUNICIPAL PURPOSES;

AND SHALL THE MILL LEVY BE INCREASED IN ANY YEAR WITHOUT LIMITATION AS TO RATE BUT ONLY IN AN AMOUNT SUFFICIENT TO PAY THE PRINCIPAL OF, PREMIUM, IF ANY, AND INTEREST ON SUCH DEBT OR ANY REFUNDING DEBT (OR TO CREATE A RESERVE FOR SUCH PAYMENT); SUCH DEBT TO BE EVIDENCED BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS OR OTHER MULTIPLE FISCAL YEAR FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS; TO BE SOLD IN ONE SERIES OR MORE, FOR A PRICE ABOVE OR BELOW THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF SUCH SERIES, ON TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND WITH SUCH MATURITIES AS PERMITTED BY LAW, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR REDEMPTION OF THE BONDS PRIOR TO MATURITY WITH OR WITHOUT PAYMENT OF THE PREMIUM OF NOT TO EXCEED ONE PERCENT; AND SHALL SUCH TAX REVENUES AND THE EARNINGS FROM THE INVESTMENT OF SUCH BOND PROCEEDS AND TAX REVENUES BE COLLECTED, RETAINED AND SPENT AS A VOTER APPROVED REVENUE CHANGE UNDER ARTICLE X, SECTION 20 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION OR ANY OTHER LAW?



**About General Obligation (GO) Bonds:**

- GO bonds are voter-approved long term debt obligations, repaid by property taxes.
- A mill levy (tax) rate is assessed to all taxable property within City limits for 20 years at which time the debt is repaid in full and the tax rate expires.
- The mill levy rate is determined when dividing the annual principal and interest payments on the GO bonds by the City’s assessed value (AV), or taxable property value within City limits.
- Principal and interest payments – much like a mortgage – are approximately the same every year (or month with a home loan); so, as the City’s AV changes year-to-year, so too will the mill levy. As the AV increases the mill levy will decrease and vice versa.

**Residential and Commercial Tax Impact**

Assuming issuance of the entire \$3.9 million GO bonds with a 20-year term at current interest rates, the mill levy is expected to be 4.43/1,000 or 0.00443.

Current Residential Assessment Rate 7.20% | Current Commercial Assessment Rate 29%

- Residential Market Property Value of \$300,000/\$21,600 Assessed Value ( $\$300,000 \times 7.20\%$ )  
 $\$21,600 \times 0.00443 = \$95.69$  annually or **\$7.97 per month.**
- Commercial Market Property Value of \$300,000/\$87,000 Assessed Value ( $\$300,000 \times 29\%$ )  
 $\$87,000 \times 0.00443 = \$385.41$  annually or  $\$32.12$  per month]

Note: Pay as you go financing with current financial resources was considered, but the useful life of the improvements – much like a home – justifies consideration of long term financing while interest rates remain historically low.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q.** Are there any other funding opportunities being investigated to fund this project?

**A.** If the ballot question is approved, the City is exploring a grant opportunity through the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), which could reduce by as much as \$1,000,000 the amount of general obligation bonds (explained earlier) that would be issued, which in turn would reduce the annual tax impact to a \$300,000 residential home by \$23.98.

- Residential Market Property Value of \$300,000/\$21,600 Assessed Value ( $\$300,000 \times 7.20\%$ )  
 $\$21,600 \times 0.00332 = \$71.71$  annually or **\$5.98 per month**.
- Commercial Market Property Value of \$300,000/\$87,000 Assessed Value ( $\$300,000 \times 29\%$ )  
 $\$87,000 \times 0.00332 = \$288.84$  annually or \$24.07 per month]

**Q.** What drives the need for a *Municipal Public Safety Facility*?

**A.** The concept for the *Municipal Public Safety Facility* was originally based on the training needs of the Manitou Springs Fire Department. The Fire Department currently conducts all of its business out of the fire station located at 620 Manitou Avenue. The fire station was originally built in 1965 and remains suitable given the size of new generation fire apparatus. Currently, there is no desire to move daily operations and emergent response from its downtown location. The fire station's age has been addressed through proper maintenance, thoughtful additions and use of space. Additional storage needs have been managed using off-site facilities. Yet, time and growth of the community have made it difficult for this location to continue to support the global needs of the fire department, particularly training. With the importance of continued and varied training activities, this limited space both in and around the fire station restricts the ability to meet the department's training needs.

**Q.** What are the fire training needs that are resolved with a Municipal Public Safety Training Facility?

**A.** Because of the difficult and dangerous nature of firefighting, a firefighter must undergo intense training before they may begin working. At least 19 disciplines must be learned and practiced, including *live fire training*. This initial training must then be reinforced over and over throughout an individual's career. In addition to basic firefighting, firefighters learn how to deal with situations involving hazardous materials, vehicle and machinery extrication, high angle rescue, medical emergencies and more. These types of training activities require one or a combination of large controlled spaces, special structures, special props, and classroom settings.

Firefighters have attempted to use areas around the fire station for training, but these areas remain limited in space, and due to the noise, many training exercises are no longer permitted during business hours because the training activities disrupt our neighbor's ability to conduct business.

Areas such as parking lots have become limited too due to the parking pressures in the City. Manitou Springs school properties are limited by the presence of students and parents for much of the year while they attend school, sports and other activities.

Perhaps of greater concern, firefighters are currently leaving the city to find necessary facilities in Colorado Springs, or at one of our local military bases to train. When firefighters leave the city for these types of trainings, it reduces the effective force needed to mitigate and control emergency incidents such as a structure fire. Additionally, apparatus that carry hose and other response equipment are also taken out of town, leaving firefighters with limited equipment to effectively perform needed tactical operations.

Finally, having to rely on neighboring partners limits the opportunities for firefighters to properly and consistently train. Especially when considering the varying schedules of a volunteer organization. Continual reinforcement of skills is important for the firefighter to build “muscle memory” to efficiently perform their duties and react appropriately given the severity of the situation.

**Q.** What are the police training needs that are resolved with a Municipal Public Safety Training Facility?

**A.** The Police Department has an immediate need for large space to conduct scenario based training without interruption. Current space has to be reserved from other partners such as the school district. Much like the issues encountered by the fire department, opportunities are limited due to those spaces having other primary functions. The nature of our police training includes:

- Classroom instruction
- Short duration “roll call” team trainings and scenarios
- New recruit mini-skills (initial POST skill validation)
- Arrest control and defensive skills
- Webinars and video based trainings

The Police Department is also a very active member in the regional training consortium. A training environment will offer many new opportunities to coordinate with other agencies and reduce the need for officers to travel to other jurisdictions for training.

**Q.** Was consideration given to other city needs or departments?

**A.** Through collaboration and consideration of other possible uses that aligned with the facilities design, other additional features were included to make it multipurpose/multi-departmental. While primarily designed as a training environment, the facility offers opportunities to help relieve other needs throughout the organization with little or no additional costs. Some of these other uses include:

- Space defined specifically for use by the City Clerk’s office to store historical records and documents as well as those documents that must be held to meet legal requirements. Currently these documents are stored in several locations throughout the city.
- Both City Hall and the Fire Department fall within an area at risk to floodwaters. The design of this facility provides an environment where employees can relocate to, to continue to conduct normal business during times when City Hall needs to be evacuated for Flood Warnings or other natural disasters.
- During large or complex emergency incidents, such as the Waldo Fire, or recent flood events, Fire and Police can make use of space located in and around this facility as an Emergency Operations Center and Staging Area.
- In the event that City Hall or any other city facility should become unusable for any reason, this facility will serve as a location for Continuity of Government Operations. Meaning, employees will have an

environment and technology necessary at this facility to stand up temporary operations to continue to conduct the necessary business needs of the city.

The resulting storage space provided by this facility for the Fire Department and City Clerk's office, will create opportunity for other uses of space currently being used for storage in City Hall, Public Works and Mansions Park Pavilion.

**Q.** Was consideration given to needs identified in the *Plan Manitou* goals and policies?

**A.** Plan Manitou is the City's roadmap: it defines community goals and objectives across all topics, and establishes an Action Plan to achieve them. (The entire plan can be viewed at <http://planmanitou.com> )

The facilities purpose and design aligns with several Plan Manitou Goals and Policies. Some found in the Infrastructure and Public Services Element section are identified below:

- Goal IP-1: Provide outstanding service to the community and work collaboratively with residents and businesses to address issues and resolve problems.
  - Policy IP-1.1 Public Safety Services
  - Policy IP-1.3 Staff Training and Education
- Goal IP-2: Support continued investment in and ongoing maintenance of the City's infrastructure to ensure efficient and equitable provision of effective services and improve resilience to nature hazards.
  - Policy IP-2.4 Impacts of Operations and Maintenance
  - Policy IP-2.6 High Hazard Areas
- Goal IP-5: Provide essential public services during disasters and emergencies.
  - Policy IP-5.2 Critical Facilities and Infrastructure
  - Policy IP-5.3 Emergency Management Plans
  - Policy IP-5.4 Emergency Response Training

**Q.** Are economical or environmental concerns addressed regarding the facilities design and use?

**A.** To design the facility, the city partnered with the Department of Local Affairs on two occasions to get a shovel ready design for public consideration; first DOLA provided matching funds to help define a conceptual design. This design was created by students from the University of Colorado, Denver, College of Architecture and Planning, in the Colorado Center for Community Development. Second, DOLA provided matching funds to develop the architectural design and construction costs by James W. Nakai & Associates, P.C. These efforts have already provided over \$200,000 in services.

The facility is divided into areas of conditioned (classrooms) and non-conditioned space (storage), to reduce the impacts of heating areas that do not normally require consistent, comfortable, room temperature. Additionally, all lighting is of low voltage LED type.

Environmentally, the burn module, (where firefighters experience the types of environments that they are expected to work in), operates on natural gas, so no materials such as wood or other Class A fuels will be used with create environmentally harmful smoke emissions.

### **Argument AGAINST Ballot Question**

Taxes are already high enough. Recent property value assessments have generally increased the amount of property taxes owners have to pay. Property owners can't afford another increase. The City of Manitou Springs should defer the proposed facility until other sources of funding can be identified or make use of existing revenues that have continued to rise because of increased visitor spending and retail marijuana sales. Bigger issues such as street improvements, beautification, and parking need to be addressed. The Fire Department can go elsewhere to train in similar facilities located in Colorado Springs or at the local military facilities.

### **Argument FOR Ballot Question**

There are no local areas large enough or that provide the needed facilities for fire department personnel to consistently or adequately train in environments similar to those required to perform their duties as emergency responders. Firefighters, along with fire apparatus and other equipment will no longer have to leave the city to find a proper environment for training. This facility will not only meet the current and ongoing training needs of fire department, but will also provide a training environment for the city's police officers as well. In addition, both fire and police departments will have the space to maintain proper training areas. Fire Department storage needs will be addressed and other areas now used by the fire department and City Clerk's Office will be opened up for other city needs. The city will have an identified facility to conduct emergency operations from, as well as a place for Continuity of Government (COG) identified in the Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The citizens, businesses, and visitors of Manitou Springs enjoy some of the high levels of emergency response services from its fire and police responders. The firefighters are volunteers and neighbors that perform these services at no cost to the taxpayer.

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#### **ELECTION TIMELINE**

Ballots Mailed beginning: October 16  
Ballot Return Deadline: 7PM November 7  
Drop Off Location: 606 Manitou Avenue

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Go to: <http://www.msvfd.com>  
Call: 719.685.1444  
Email: [msfdbq@comsgov.com](mailto:msfdbq@comsgov.com)