

Summary Info Oswegatchie Fire Station Design

July 22, 2025

General Features

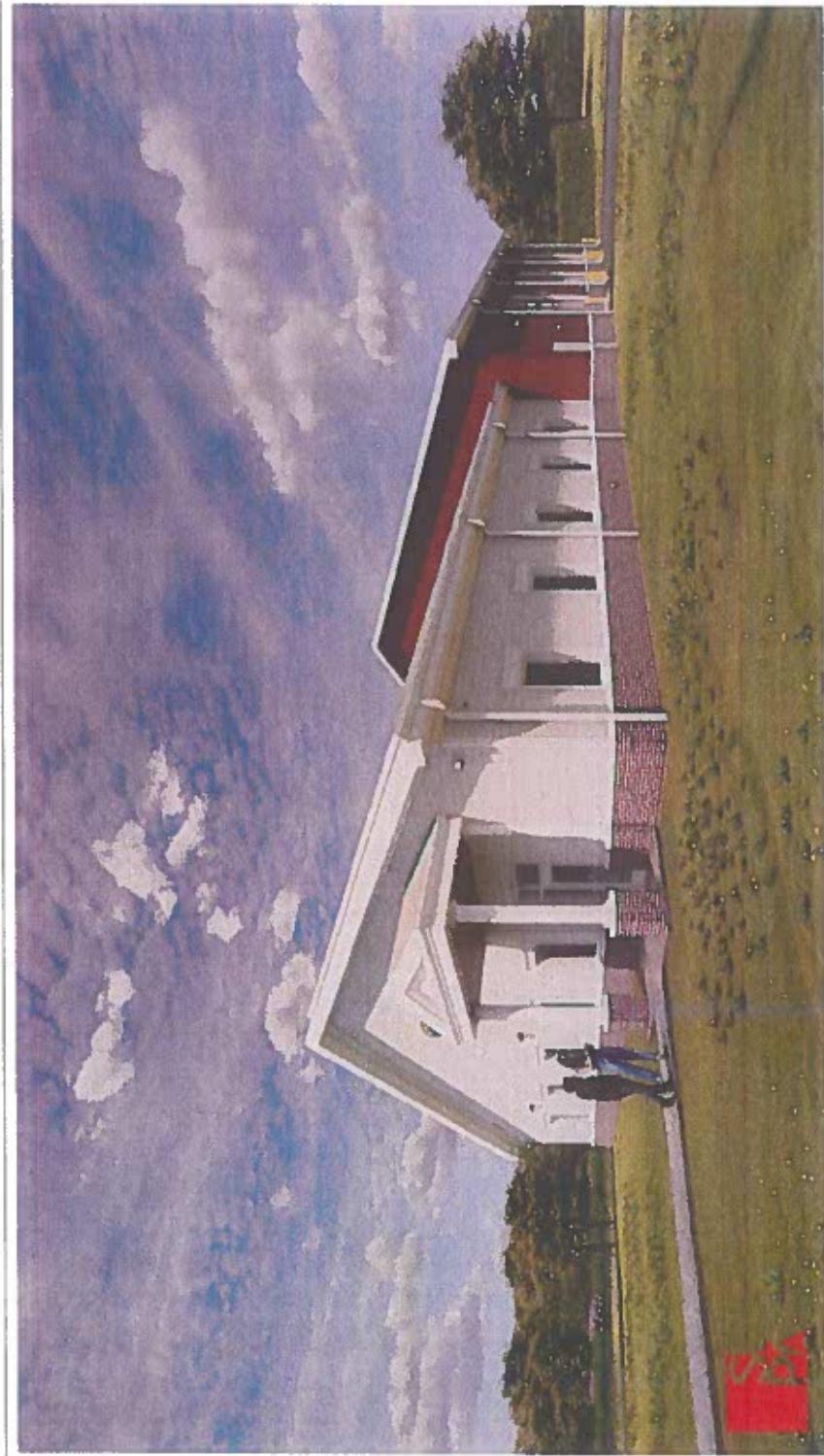
- First Floor
 - Bunk rooms, a day room, a kitchen, training room, offices, exercise room, bathrooms, decon room, gear locker room, and apparatus bays on the first floor
 - Small Mezzanine
 - Mechanical room and storage
- Basis of Construction
 - Steel framing on concrete foundation
 - Fiber cement siding, with brick veneer and a cast stone accent band
 - Architectural asphalt shingles, solar ready
 - Floors-epoxy coated concrete, tile, and carpet covered
 - Electric System-lighting, power, P/A system, fire alarm, security system, site lighting, and a back-up generator
 - HVAC is primarily VRF (variable refrigerant flow) with radiant floors in the bays

Energy Efficient Features

- The VRF HVAC system- high efficiency, 10-50% less energy
- Hot water system uses temperature maintenance cable in lieu of hot water return
- Low flow plumbing fixtures
- Radiant floor in the bays
- Energy efficient windows-thermally broken
- Insulation in the walls is “continuous”, no breaks. Limits heat transfer. Moves dew point outside, moisture less likely to have an effect on the overall building
- Solar capable roof in the even that the Town wants to explore in the future
- Occupancy sensors and dimmer lighting controls throughout to modulate the use of electricity
- LED Lighting

Size and Shape

- Total Size of the Fire Station-9,988 sq.ft.
- Estimated Cost (Downes Construction) Based upon construction drawings- \$10,323,413
 - Estimated Soft Costs- \$2,228,980 (including \$500K, traffic light)
 - **Total Estimated Costs to Build and Outfit-\$12,552,393**
- Estimated Cost to Renovate as New-\$11,092,735 (including soft costs and contingencies)
- Undetermined Cost- Traffic Light
 - Under need may not be required pending trimming trees adjacent to the property and follow-on discussion between the Director of Fire Services and Director of Traffic



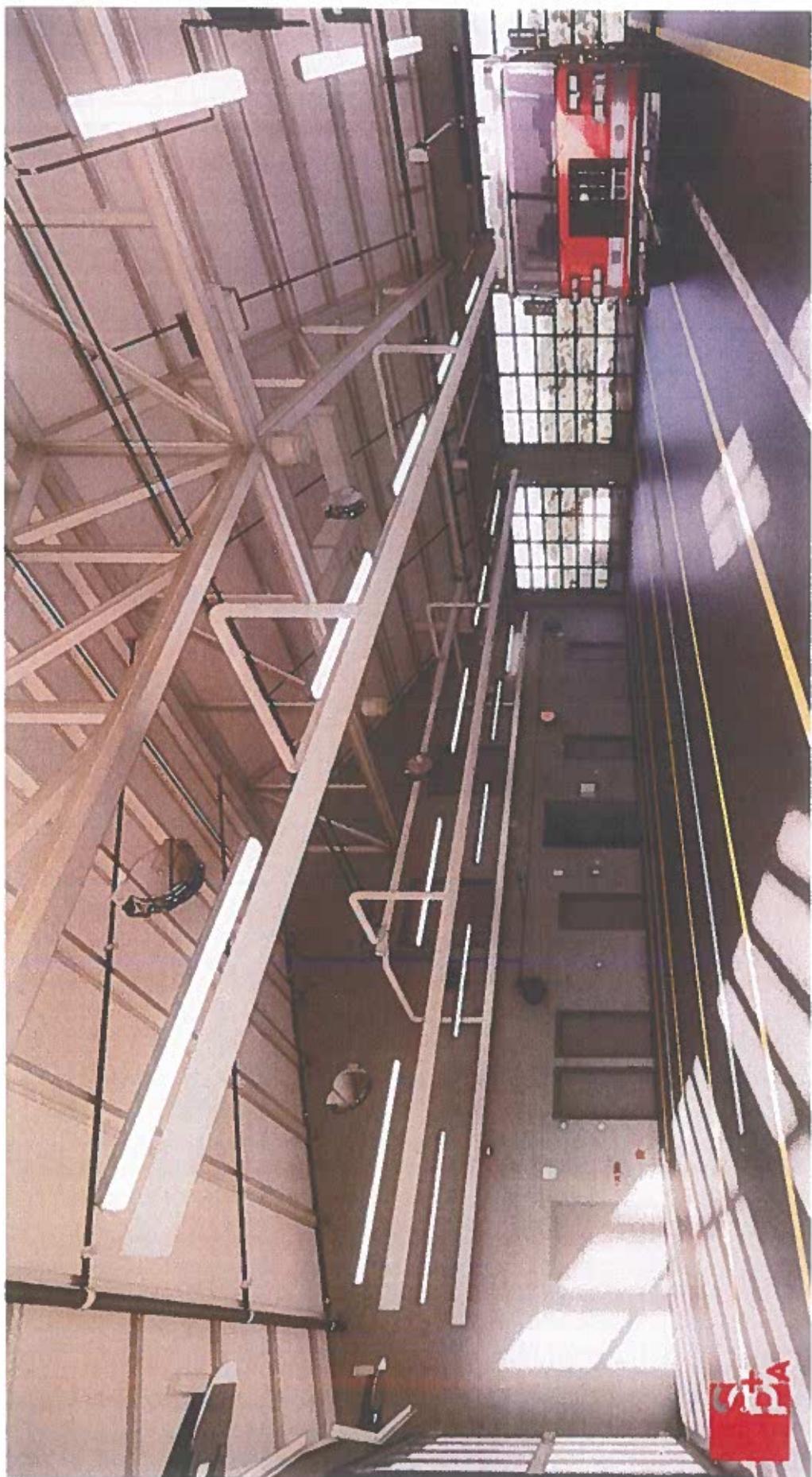
NEW CONSTRUCTION
OSWEGATCHIE FIRE STATION
44 BOSTON POST RD
MILFORD, CT 06460

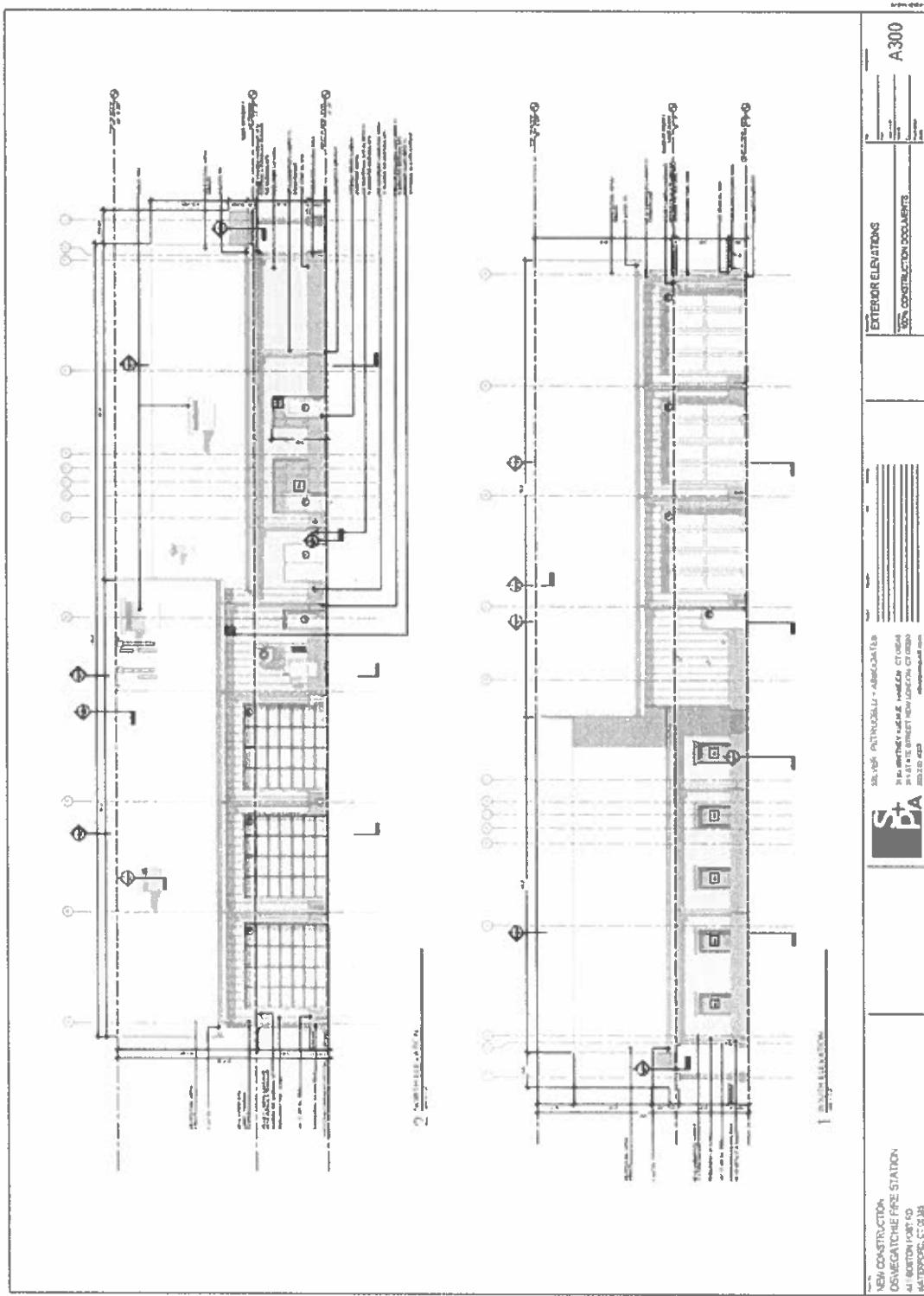
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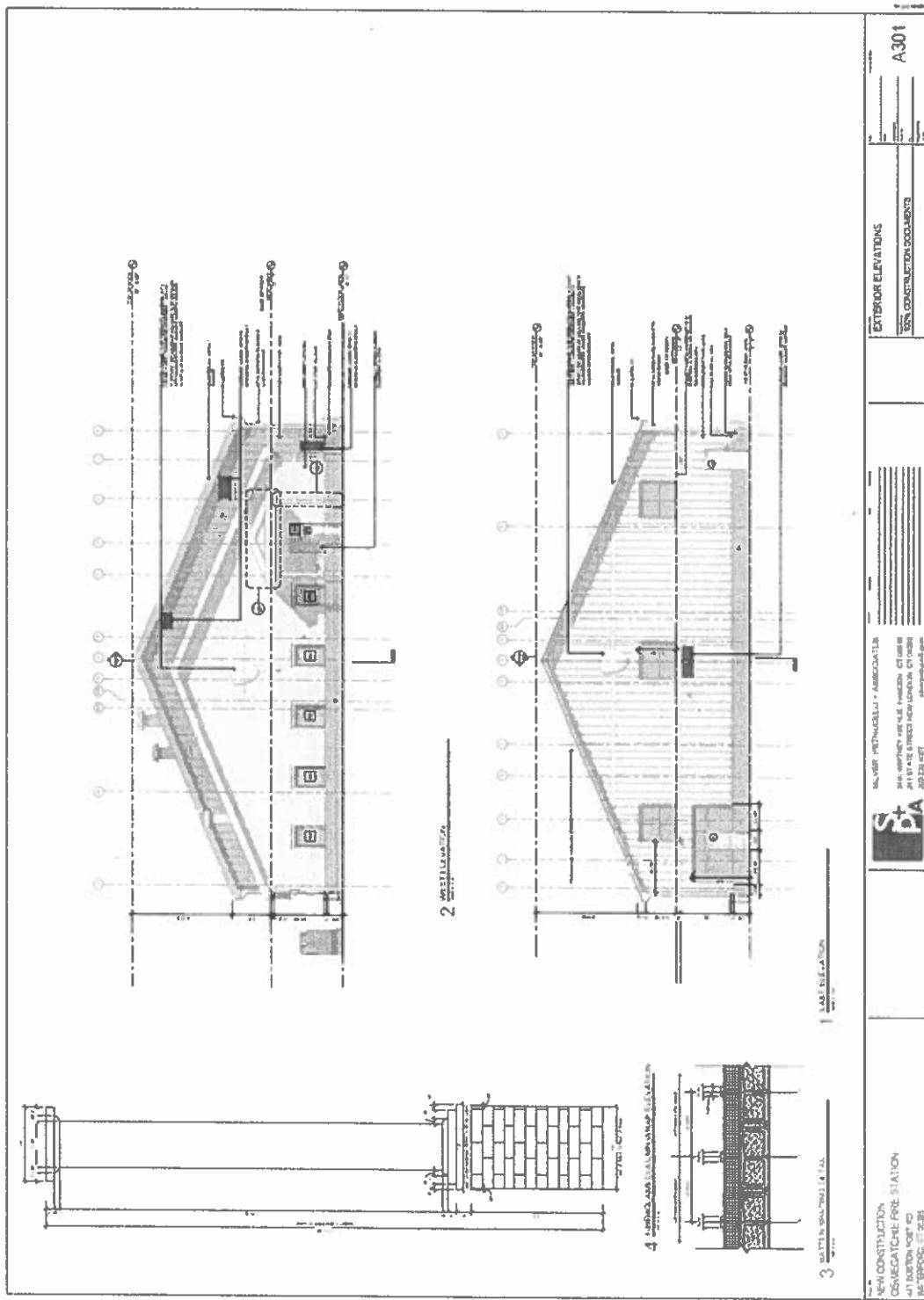


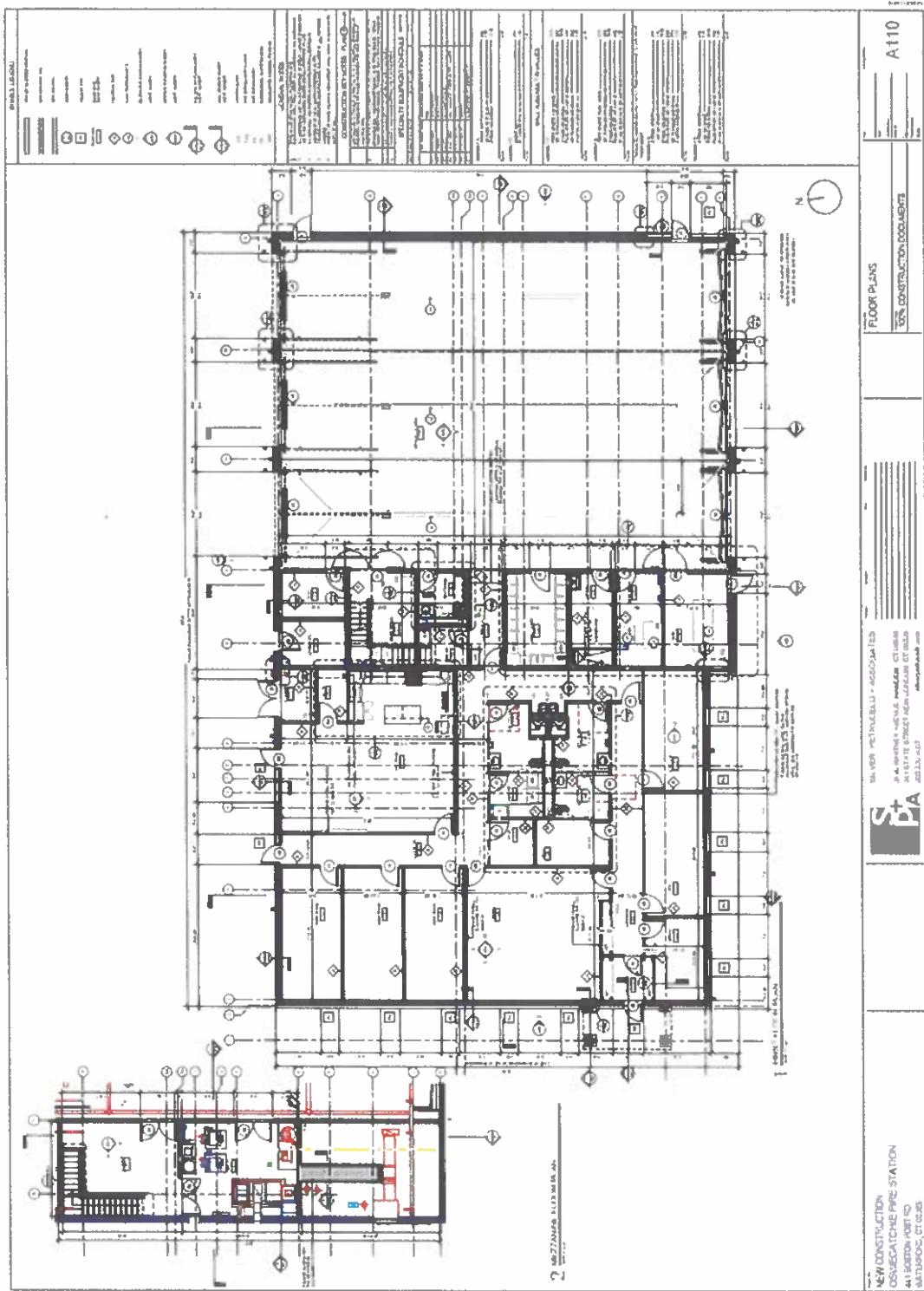
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6.0 Five Fire Stations - History and Structure of Waterford's Fire Stations

Waterford has a long-standing tradition of volunteer fire service, dating back to the early 20th century. The Town's five volunteer fire stations emerged as a direct response to growing local needs, with each station strategically located in areas experiencing population development. Notably, all five stations were constructed by volunteers, using funds they independently raised.

To formalize and distribute responsibilities, a series of fire districts were created, providing an organized framework for managing the growing fire services system.

Since 1942, Waterford has maintained five fire stations, all incorporated within a span of 19 years. These five stations remain operational today.

Waterford's population continues to grow steadily, and the current infrastructure of fire stations remains largely supportive of existing development patterns. According to the most recent census, Waterford's population stands at 19,554.

While census projections suggest the population may stabilize or even decline slightly in the future, recent development activity—as illustrated in Table 2—indicates the potential for continued population growth, which could influence future demand for fire services.

Waterford's proud tradition of volunteer fire service has evolved over decades to meet the needs of a growing and changing community. Originally founded around local volunteer efforts, the Town's five fire stations—established through a historic agreement (Appendix E)—provided critical coverage and protection. This agreement, whereby volunteers deliver fire protection services in exchange for maintaining stations, equipment, and training, remains foundational today, granting Waterford access to a network of five strategically located stations.

As Waterford grows, the Town has a unique opportunity to honor its rich legacy while thoughtfully planning the next generation of emergency services—services designed not only for today's challenges but for tomorrow's vision.

While census projections suggest that Waterford's overall population (currently 19,554) may remain stable or decline slightly, other trends paint a more dynamic picture:

- **Growth in the Senior Population:**
An increasing proportion of older residents will drive greater demand for emergency medical services.
- **Recent Development Activity (Table 2):**
Despite broader forecasts, recent residential and commercial building activity suggests a blossoming population.

- **Town Size and Diversity:**
Spanning 37 square miles, Waterford features a mix of rural, suburban, and commercial properties, each requiring thoughtful, responsive fire and emergency service coverage.

Several factors are shaping the evolving mission of Waterford's Fire Services:

- **Significant Commercial Entities:**
 - Dominion Energy's Nuclear Power facility
 - The proposed Data Center
 - The Crystal Mall complex

These assets represent critical infrastructure requiring specialized response capabilities.
- **Changing Building Patterns:**
Newer construction often features:
 - Higher population densities
 - Multi-story structures
 - Fire-resistant materials

These improvements enhance safety but also introduce new challenges, such as greater exposure to hazardous synthetic materials in fires.
- **Expanded Scope of Emergency Responses:**
Today, structural fires represent a small fraction of calls. Firefighters are now routinely responding to:
 - Hazardous material incidents
 - Severe weather events
 - Service calls
 - Medical emergencies
 - False alarms
- **Distribution of Service:**
Analysis of call data indicates that emergency call volume is distributed across the Town, reinforcing the critical value of maintaining all five fire stations.

6.1 Why Five Stations Matter

Maintaining a five-station model continues to provide tangible, town-wide benefits:

1. Response Times

The current station locations enable fast, reliable service delivery in alignment with National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards.

2. Volunteer Retention

Reducing or closing stations could diminish volunteer participation and necessitate more career staff, increasing costs.

3. Strategic Coverage

Stations are located near high-density neighborhoods and key assets such as the Crystal Mall, Dominion Nuclear Power Station, Interstate 95, Interstate 395, Route 85 and Waterford's schools, Town Hall, Community Center, Beaches, Niantic River, and Thames River all spread over 37 square miles.

4. Insurance Rates and ISO Ratings

Maintaining five stations helps preserve Waterford's favorable Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating, protecting residents from higher insurance premiums.

5. Resiliency and Emergency Sheltering

Each station provides a critical location for resident sheltering during townwide emergencies and supports Waterford's integrated Task Force emergency management approach.

6. Infrastructure Readiness

Except for Oswegatchie (which requires replacement), the other stations are maintainable through repair.

7. Emergency Operations

As Waterford's Fire Services evolve into a broader Emergency Services Organization, each station will play a key role in housing resources, personnel, and shelter facilities across the community.

8. A Proven, Successful Model

The five-station approach has effectively served Waterford for over 100 years—providing life-saving protection, community reassurance, and continuity.

Looking Forward: Waterford's Vision for Emergency Services

As Waterford embraces the future, its fire services must continue to evolve and potentially into a modern Emergency Services and First Responder Organization, ready to address a broader range of public safety needs. As noted earlier, such a change may warrant a charter update. A suitable name could be Waterford Fire and Rescue.

Key elements of this future vision should include:

- Investing smartly in facility upgrades, apparatus modernization, and training.
- Expanding partnerships with local and regional agencies.
- Applying for grants (such as SAFER grants) to enhance staffing and resilience.
- Adapting tactics to meet the challenges of changing construction patterns, population shifts, and evolving threats.

By recognizing the value of its current infrastructure and proactively planning for the future, Waterford is charting an exciting and responsible course—one that builds on its proud past while preparing for a bright, resilient future.

The future of Waterford's fire services is not about standing still. It's about growing, adapting, and leading—and the Town is ready.

6.2 The Case for a New Oswegatchie Fire Station

In January 2023, the Ad Hoc Fire Services Committee released an interim report recommending the replacement of the Oswegatchie Fire Station due to extensive structural and mechanical deficiencies. At the same time, the Committee strongly reaffirmed the Town's five-station fire service delivery model as the most effective and strategic approach for meeting Waterford's emergency response needs.

In addition to the broader reasons supporting the five-station model, the following specific points highlight why replacing the Oswegatchie Fire Station is critical to Waterford's future:

1. Strengthens Public Safety

- Ensures continued fire and emergency support for the Oswegatchie Elementary School and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Provides a modern, safe, and secure facility for housing part of the Town's paid firefighter workforce.
- Creates an ideal location for a future command center for Waterford's growing team of career firefighters.

2. Supports the Town's Vision for a Combination Fire Department

- Advances Waterford's transition toward a combination fire services model, blending career firefighters and volunteer support—consistent with national best practices and Waterford's evolving needs.
- Positions the Town for a stronger, more resilient fire service well into the 21st century.

3. Enhances Recruitment and Retention

- A new, state-of-the-art station will boost the recruitment and retention of both career and volunteer firefighters.
- A modern facility focused on firefighter safety, training, and well-being demonstrates the Town's serious commitment to public safety services.

4. Protects Waterford's Long-Term Financial Interests

- Repairing and renovating the existing station is not cost-effective according to the Town's architect and construction project manager. The construction program manager provided an estimate of \$11.3 million to renovate the building as new, while a new building could cost \$10.4 million.
- Delaying construction would significantly escalate costs—potentially requiring \$15–20 million within 7–10 years for new construction and interim repairs.
- Building the new station now is the fiscally responsible choice for taxpayers.

5. Continues a Century-Long Success Story

- Oswegatchie Fire Company has served Waterford from its current location for over 94 years.
- Maintaining a station at this location honors a proven, historic model that effectively covers all 37 square miles of the Town.
- Every major study and both recent Directors of Fire Services have strongly supported the five-station model for Waterford.

6. Enhances Townwide Emergency Preparedness

- Provides a local shelter for residents during emergencies.
- Maintains a strategic outpost for the staging of apparatus and personnel for rapid, effective responses to any emergency.

7. Aligns with Town Plans and Community Values

- Building a new station at Oswegatchie is consistent with both the existing and proposed draft Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).
- Reflects the Town's values of community investment, public safety, and smart growth.

8. Reinforces Waterford's Commitment to Public Safety

- Waterford protects a community of 19,554 residents and a \$4.4 billion grand list of residential, commercial, and industrial property.
- A new, centrally located fire station will significantly strengthen life and property protection across the Town.

9. Demonstrates Strong Community Leadership

- In February 2022, the Representative Town Meeting (RTM) took decisive action:
 - Established a Building Committee charged with constructing a new Oswegatchie Fire Station.
 - Committed to maintaining the old station only as necessary until a replacement is built.

The preservation and modernization of Waterford's five-station fire services model is critical to meeting current and future community needs.

Building a new Oswegatchie Fire Station is more than a construction project—it is a clear investment in:

- Public safety
- Community resilience
- Long-term financial responsibility
- Waterford's future growth and success

Waterford's vision is bold, responsible, and clear: continuing to invest in the systems that protect its people, its property, and its proud tradition of excellence.

7.0 A Strategic Vision

Evolution of Waterford's Fire Services

Like many small towns, Waterford's fire services have evolved over time—shifting from a fully volunteer model to today's combination fire department and moving steadily toward greater professionalization.

In the early 1900s, fire protection was provided by a network of privately owned, independently operated stations. Over time, these private companies were managed collectively by a Board of Fire Commissioners. Today, Waterford benefits from a centralized management model, led by a Director of Fire Services, ensuring professional oversight and strategic coordination.