

**MELROSE FIRE DISTRICT
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
PO BOX 34
MELROSE, NY 12121
Telephone: (518) 235-9860
Fax: (518) 237-9860**

Chairman
Kenneth Fleming

Commissioners
David Beaudoin
Paul Messick, Jr.
Melvin Miller
Heidi Renaud

Secretary
Patrina Beaudoin

Treasurer
Michael Ouimet, CPA
(518) 207-5851
mouimet@yahoo.com

PRESS RELEASE

November 5, 2025

The Melrose Fire District (District) is presenting a \$6.95 million firehouse replacement project for consideration by a vote of eligible District residents on Tuesday, December 9, 2025 from 12:00 pm to 9:00 pm at the Melrose Firehouse, 784 NY Route 40, Melrose, NY 12121. The firehouse vote will be held together with the Annual Fire District election, the date of which is established by NYS Town Law.

The project will provide a modern 10,276 sq ft firehouse that is operationally effective, energy efficient, safety focused, structurally sound and ADA compliant. This project will resolve significant issues that have arisen on the existing building site and throughout the current firehouse, a structure which is actually the product of four separate construction projects including the original firehouse built in 1953 and three additions built in 1970, 1991 and the last in 1999.

The Board of Fire Commissioners (Commissioners), recognizing these deteriorating facility conditions, engaged an architectural and engineering firm to perform a comprehensive Building Condition Survey (BCS). The BCS was designed to evaluate facility conditions, identify any deficiencies and evaluate potential future needs. The BCS report cited several negative findings related to structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, septic system and building code/ADA compliance matters, all issues consistent with the lifecycle stage of the various firehouse building sections.

Most notably, two extremely critical life-safety concerns emphasized in the BCS report are the significant settling of the south bay floor slab and the separation of the concrete masonry unit (CMU) pilasters in that bay from their CMU anchor walls. Specifically, decaying fill material under the apparatus bay slab is causing settling and separating in the south bay slab from the other

building slab sections, resulting in a significant trip hazard that will continue to worsen. Even more concerning, this settling has created underground voids below the bay slab, causing the CMU pilasters that support the structural roof beam to separate from the CMU wall. Continued movement or a complete collapse of the CMU pilaster will create a dangerous safety condition by weakening the roof support beam system.

Following the BCS, a site assessment was performed by the environmental engineering firm CT Male. The site assessment identified a leaking underground fuel oil storage tank, causing below grade soil contamination. The fuel oil leak was deemed to be reportable as a spill incident to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), necessitating a remediation plan that has to date, resulted in removal of the leaking tank and excavation of some contaminated soil. NYSDEC has authorized a plan to remove the remaining contaminated soil as a component of this project, since at this time, further excavating the soil abutting and under the building's foundation may lead to destabilizing the existing firehouse.

To appropriately resolve these serious building and site issues using the most economical and long-lasting approach, the Commissioners systematically reviewed multiple options provided by their architectural firm, Balzer & Tuck Architecture. These options ranged from staging repairs to the existing building over multiple years using operating budget funds, to a partial facility renovation or replacement, to a complete demolition and reconstruction of a new firehouse facility. After thorough consideration, the Commissioners determined in the most cost effective and best long-term solution to correct these conditions is to fully remove the existing facility and to reconstruct a new firehouse on the same site.

In October 2021, the Commissioners presented a firehouse replacement plan for public vote, receiving overwhelming community approval to proceed with the plan at that time. However, the construction budget and financing cost projections for the new firehouse, which had been developed prior to the COVID pandemic, did not provide sufficient funding to complete the project. Skyrocketing pandemic related construction costs and rapidly increasing interest rates resulted in the decision to delay the project until costs stabilized and interest rates declined, in order mitigate the project's overall costs.

The Commissioners have determined that present construction pricing and the decreasing interest rate environment now make proceeding with the new firehouse financially viable. Furthermore, the District's coverage area grew in 2025 by adding 72 new properties, over 19 square miles in the Tomhannock Spillway region in the Town of Pittstown, making a new firehouse facility even more crucial at this time to support the increased call volume from this expansion. The \$6.95 million firehouse project budget includes existing facility demolition, temporary firehouse relocation and reoccupation, project design, site development, building construction, project management, administrative services and project contingency planning.

The District is proposing to borrow up to \$5.75 million and to utilize \$1.2 million of Building Reserve funds to finance this project. The Commissioners have determined that an additional budget amount of \$84,500, spread over the 2027, 2028 and 2029 budgets is needed to support the project debt payment. Full implementation of this multiyear budget plan will result in a tax

increase of \$1.73 per \$1,000 of assessed value for District properties in the Town of Schaghticoke and \$.25 per \$1,000 of assessed value for District properties in the Town of Pittstown.

The table below illustrates the projected annual tax increase for Schaghticoke properties with assessed values above and below the average assessed value.

Town of Schaghticoke		
<u>Taxable Assessed Value</u>	<u>Full Value**</u>	<u>Projected Tax Increase</u>
\$30,000	\$197,628	\$51.90
\$42,565*	\$280,402	\$73.64
\$75,000	\$494,071	\$129.75

* \$42,565 is the average assessed value for Schaghticoke properties in the District.

** Schaghticoke assesses property at 15.18% of full value.

The table below illustrates the projected annual tax increase for Pittstown properties with assessed values above and below the average assessed value.

Town of Pittstown		
<u>Taxable Assessed Value</u>	<u>Full Value**</u>	<u>Projected Tax Increase</u>
\$200,000	\$200,000	\$50.00
\$308,062*	\$308,062	\$77.02
\$500,000	\$500,000	\$125.00

* \$308,062 is the average assessed value for Pittstown properties in the District.

** Pittstown assesses property at 100% of full value.

The Commissioners also intend on applying for a \$1 million grant from the NYS Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, *2025-26 Volunteer Fire Service Infrastructure Grants* to offset our community’s share of the project cost. This \$1 million grant, if awarded, will permit the District to reduce the borrowing amount to \$4.75 million, resulting in the project having no budget impact and no additional tax increase.

This new firehouse will facilitate dedicated and compassionate fire & rescue service delivery to current and future generations of District residents and will provide a functional and safe work space for the community’s volunteers. At a time when many volunteer fire companies are experiencing declining numbers, the Commissioners believe a new firehouse will be a powerful recruiting tool, fostering a professional environment, that contributes to firefighter wellness, improves training capabilities, and enhances firefighter retention.

The Commissioners will be holding a public informational meeting and open house at the firehouse, 784 NY 40, Melrose, NY 12121 on November 18, 2025 at 7:00 pm. For more information on this project please visit www.melrosefireco.org or contact the District’s Treasurer, Michael J. Ouimet, CPA at mouimet@yahoo.com.