

MELROSE FIRE DISTRICT

Firehouse Project Facts #4

November 17, 2025

NEW FIREHOUSE RATIONALE I

Fire Commissioners – Duties To Their Employees

New York fire districts are established under Article 11 of the NYS Town Law which outlines their formation, powers, and the roles of fire district commissioners. Fire districts are governed by a board of five elected unpaid fire commissioners.

The Melrose Fire District (District) is a separate public corporation (municipal governmental entity) that contracts with the Melrose Fire Co., Inc. (Company), a nonprofit 501c3 organization, to provide fire and rescue services in District's geographic area which covers 36 sq miles in the Town of Schaghticoke and 19 sq miles in the Town of Pittstown.

Within the District's geographic area there are:

- About 4,900 residents
- 1,143 properties, comprised of residential, commercial and agricultural properties.
- Liquid and gas chlorine storage facilities used for processing 22-24 million gallons of water per day at the City of Troy's, Municipal Water Chlorination Station.
- 4,500 passenger and commercial vehicles traveling the District's section of NY Route 40 daily.
- Sections of the Tomhannock Reservoir, Hudson and Hoosic Rivers and 2 miles of Norfolk Southern Railroad track.

Key Distinction: It is crucial to understand that the District is a governmental entity while the Company is the service provider. The fire district commissioners hold the legal and financial responsibility for providing the community with effective fire service and they act as an **"Employer"** of the Company's volunteers as their **"Employees"**, who carry out the operational duties of fire suppression and emergency response under the District's oversight.

MELROSE FIRE DISTRICT FACTS

The District has a legal and moral duty to the Company's volunteer firefighters, as their employer, via the District's contract with the Company to provide fire protection services. The District provides employee oversight by adopting rules and regulations for the Company. The District is responsible for Company management and funding, along with ensuring compliance with safety procedures by the volunteers.

The District has a **legal duty** as an employer to their employees, the Company's volunteers.

New York employers, among their many responsibilities to their employees, must comply with:

- State and federal laws regarding wages
 1. Company is all Volunteer, no wages
- Maintain workers' compensation coverage
 1. Rensselaer County Workers' Compensation Insurance pool is the District's provider
- Create a safe work environment
 1. Provide a workplace free from known hazards and ensure it is safe for employees.
 2. Give employees necessary personal protective equipment and not require them to work in unsafe conditions.
 3. Follow safety regulations, including those from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA/PESH).

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The District also has a **moral duty** as an employer to their employees, the Company's volunteers.

Creating a safe working environment is not merely about meeting legal obligations; it goes far beyond that. A safe and comfortable working environment can be defined as a sanctuary where employees perform their tasks free from potential hazards, risks, or threats to their physical and psychological well-being.

It involves diligently implementing preventive measures, comprehensive safety policies, and meticulous procedures designed to minimize workplace accidents, injuries, and illnesses. Within this sanctuary, employees can execute their duties with unwavering confidence, knowing their health and safety are uncompromised.

But the essence of a safe working environment extends further. It's about fostering a culture of care where employers take an active stance in ensuring the protection and well-being of their workforce. It's an environment where safety isn't just a checklist item but a shared commitment, a reflection of an organization's genuine concern for its most valuable asset—its people.

Such an environment not only complies with legal regulations but also fosters a culture of care where employers prioritize and actively ensure the protection and well-being of their workforce. A safe environment serves as the bedrock of employee well-being and operational efficiency, with far-reaching impacts on individuals and organizations. Safety in the workplace is a non-negotiable priority. Culture Monkey, 9/2025

The proposed new firehouse substantially contributes to District meeting its legal and moral responsibility to employee safety and health through the following improvements:

Proper Firematic Design:

- I. Apparatus Bay Design
 - o Safe operation
 - Proper clearances around vehicles
 - Vehicle exhaust extraction system
 - Elimination of trip hazards
 - Correct floor drainage and adds snow/ice remediation
 - ADA/Code compliance
- II. Breathing apparatus sanitary storage, maintenance, and repair
- III. Proper storage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- IV. Adequate light for safety and fine motor tasks
- V. Robust data technology
- VI. Proper pathways and distance to apparatus for response

Firefighter Health and Safety:

- I. Decontamination of firefighters; PPE & personal clothing
- II. Hot showers
- III. Durability & cleanability of building surfaces and materials
- IV. NFPA 1500 Hot Zone/Cold Zone Compliance
 - o Air locks
 - o Air Sealing
 - o Ventilation
 - o Hot/cold separation of mechanical system
 - o System pressure differential between hot and cold zones

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Training:

- I. Integration of instructive & practical training (interior and exterior)
- II. Instructional area improvements; added space, presentation systems and environmental enhancements

Departmental Cohesion

- I. Proper area for volunteers to gather for fitness, respite and fellowship.

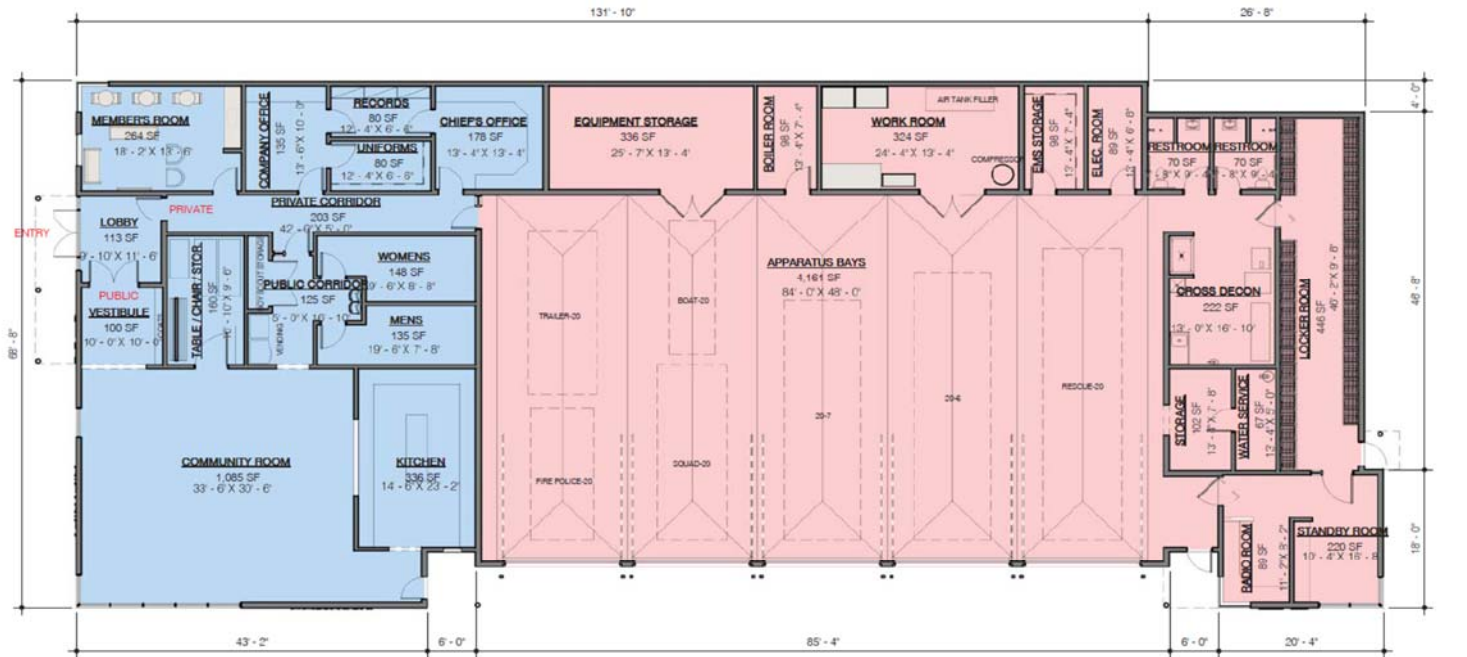
Building Envelope

- I. Low/no maintenance materials
- II. Adequate daylighting
- III. Energy efficient envelope (better than code)

Site

- I. Adequate apron depth
- II. Proper line of site exiting onto street
- III. Safe & efficient on-site circulation
- IV. Adequate parking and the logical separation of apparatus and cars
- V. Space for training

A new firehouse will promote a safe workplace that advances higher employee morale and performance, leading to increased productivity and improved recruitment and retention. Employers have a legal obligation under the law and a moral duty to provide a safe environment for their employees.



REVISED FLOOR PLAN DATED AUGUST 27, 2020
 10,276 SF

ZONE DESIGNATION	FIRST FLOOR PLAN
<div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ADD8E6; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></div> COLD ZONE	TOTAL GROSS SQUARE FEET: 10,276 SF
<div style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFB6C1; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></div> HOT ZONE	

The new firehouse is proposed by the Commissioners to reinforce their commitment to these principles. For more information on the Board's firehouse plan, please see Firehouse Project Facts #5, November 19, 2025, New Firehouse Rationale II.