

# Discussion of new fire station ends following Princeton's vote

By Alyssa Paulsen

A new station for the Princeton Fire District is a "dead issue" according to the municipalities that represent the District.

The twelve District representatives of the four communities of the City of Princeton, Town of Princeton, Town of Mecan, and Town of St. Marie met on Wednesday, December 2 to talk

about fire station options following the City of Princeton's Common Council meeting on Tuesday, November 24 when the City voted against the resolution to build a new station.

In order to proceed with building, the District needed a "yes" vote from all four municipalities. Individual meetings of the three town boards resulted in all three townships being in favor of the project.

The City's solo decision was based somewhat on comments by City residents, who, according to aldermen, indicated the public should have input and opinion on the matter via advisory referendum. While the Council briefly discussed further talking about a possible referendum, those conversations have not been approved.

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## Fire Station

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It is estimated the District has spent approximately between \$50,000 and \$60,000 on attorney fees, engineering fees, and other preliminary components of the potential project.

Due to this large amount already invested in the projected \$1.5 million project, the three townships were disappointed in the decision to scrap the project for the time being.

In an attempt to find a solution to the issues of outgrowing the current station and hopefully still be able to build new, the Townships began discussing other options during Wednesday's meeting.

Several of the options involved the townships separating from the City and building the station on their own, but several representatives were concerned about who would pick up the 10% of the loan the City would originally be responsible for according to the equalized value formula the District uses.

Fire Chief Ernie Pulvermacher explained another option would be a reversal in roles. Instead of the current arrangement of the City owning the station and the townships paying rent, the townships would own the new station and the City would pay rent.

"The District would ratify the bylaws to go on without the City, but the City would still have voting rights. The City would need to be ready to pay money," said Pulvermacher, who went on to indicate this option would have implications that would "affect the taxpayers even more."

After a few more minutes of discussion, the District determined the new station project to no longer be a viable option for the District at this time.

It is unknown if conversations in regards to a new station will continue in the future. Nor is it known what the make-up of the District municipalities will look like in the future.

The Princeton Fire District will meet next for its regular quarterly meeting on Wednesday, March 2 at 7 p.m.