



**TOWN OF
DALTON**

Dalton Public Safety Facility
Advisory Committee
Final Report
February 23, 2026

1 Introduction

1.1 Executive Summary

The Public Safety Facility Advisory Committee (PSFAC), established on July 17, 2024, has been diligently working to address the pressing need for a new police station in Dalton. The committee's comprehensive approach has included a thorough assessment of the current facility, evaluation of space requirements, and exploration of potential sites for the new structure. The existing police station, located in the Town Hall basement, has been deemed inadequate due to numerous issues, including non-compliance with ADA standards, structural deficiencies, and severe space limitations. Architect Brian Humes, following a detailed needs assessment, has recommended a 13,350-square-foot, single-story building to meet the town's requirements. Through a rigorous site evaluation process, the committee has identified 120 First Street as the most promising location, although this selection is contingent upon voter approval for land repurposing.

The PSFAC has initiated extensive public engagement efforts, including informational sessions, facility tours, and community surveys, to ensure transparency and gather valuable input from residents. Concurrently, the committee has been exploring various funding sources, such as USDA Rural Development Loans and state infrastructure grants, to optimize the project's financial structure.

The committee has also conducted a thorough risk assessment, highlighting potential operational and financial vulnerabilities associated with the continued use of the current police facility. This analysis underscores the urgency of the project, considering recent closures of police departments in neighboring communities due to similar infrastructural issues.

The Town of Dalton is facing significant financial constraints that complicate its efforts to address the long-standing deficiencies of its current police department. Rising fixed costs, limited revenue growth, and declining state aid create a challenging fiscal environment where a new police station must compete with other deferred capital needs. Several options have been evaluated, each with distinct advantages and disadvantages. These range from constructing a new, purpose-built facility on various sites, to renovating existing buildings, which presents zoning and suitability issues. The town must weigh the high costs, feasibility, and public acceptance of each path to determine the most responsible way forward.

1.2 PSFAC Activities

In July 17, 2024, the PSFAC officially organized, electing Don Davis and Craig Wilbur as co-chairs. The committee began its work by reviewing its charge from the Select Board, which included assessing the current police station, evaluating space needs, and exploring potential sites for a new facility. The inadequacies of the existing police station, located in the Town Hall basement, were immediately apparent, with issues including ADA non-compliance, structural deficiencies, and space constraints. The committee also began planning site visits to other public safety facilities to gather insights on best practices.

By August, the committee had conducted site visits to the Williamstown police station and Williamsburg's public safety complex. These visits provided valuable insights into modern public safety facility design and operational requirements. Concurrently, the PSFAC identified potential sites within Dalton, including town-owned and privately-owned properties, for further evaluation. Discussions emphasized the urgent need to address the inadequacies of the current police station, which posed safety and operational challenges.

In September, the committee requested \$100,000 from the Select Board to fund a feasibility study for evaluating potential sites. This request was approved, and the committee began drafting a milestone schedule to guide its work. Several properties were identified for evaluation, including the Dalton Garage, 120 First Street (near the Senior Center), and several privately-owned parcels. The Select Board was briefed on the committee's progress, and plans were made to present the feasibility study request at the October Town Meeting.

October marked the beginning of the feasibility study process, with architect Brian Humes engaged to assess potential sites. The committee evaluated properties based on criteria such as size, zoning, accessibility, and potential costs. Among the top-ranked properties was the town-owned parcel at 120 First Street, which showed significant potential but raised concerns about flood risks due to its proximity to Walker Brook. The committee continued to refine its site evaluation process and engaged in discussions about public outreach and funding options.

In November, the PSFAC held pre-bid meetings with architects for the feasibility study and finalized its site evaluation criteria. Several properties were removed from consideration due to zoning restrictions, environmental concerns, or high acquisition costs. The committee also began exploring potential funding sources, including state and federal grants, to support the project.

By December, the committee had ranked its top four sites, with 120 First Street emerging as the highest-rated location due to its accessibility, size, and town ownership. However, the site's designation for housing required voter approval to repurpose the land. The PSFAC commissioned a feasibility study to further assess the viability of the top-ranked sites and began drafting its final report for submission to the Select Board.

In January of 2025, architect Brian Humes conducted a detailed needs assessment, determining that a 13,350-square-foot, one-story building would meet the town's requirements. The committee prepared for public outreach to address community concerns and gather input on the selected sites. Discussions about zoning and the need for voter approval to repurpose 120 First Street were discussed.

February saw the Select Board request three site options (high-end, mid-range, and low-cost) for the committee's final recommendation. The PSFAC began planning public engagement activities, including tours of the current police station and informational meetings. Grant writer Lisa Frisch identified several funding opportunities, such as USDA Rural Development Loans and state infrastructure grants, to support the project.

In March, the committee launched its public outreach efforts, including a video tour of the current police station and community meetings to educate residents about the project. Updates to the feasibility study and site evaluations were ongoing, with plans to present findings to the public in June.

In April, Brian Humes presented his site assessments to a joint meeting of the Select Board and PSFAC. The 120 First Street site received the highest score (85/100) due to its accessibility, size, and development potential, but concerns about flood risks and voter approval persisted. The committee intensified its public engagement efforts, creating surveys, holding informational sessions, and developing outreach materials to understand and address community concerns.

The PSFAC paused property evaluations in May to focus on public engagement and education. A working group was formed to develop outreach materials, including brochures, social media posts, and informational videos. Preparations began for a public presentation in June to share the committee's findings and recommendations.

June was dedicated to public engagement activities, including community meetings, surveys, and tours of the current police station. The committee refined its site evaluations and cost estimates, emphasizing transparency and addressing public concerns. Preparations for the final report to the Select Board and public presentation were ongoing, with the goal of building community support for the project.

Throughout the summer, the PSFAC continued its public engagement efforts, gathering feedback from surveys and community meetings. The committee revisited alternate sites, including privately-owned parcels and the potential High Street location, while exploring additional grant opportunities and funding strategies. Plans for renderings and cost estimates were developed to provide the public with a clearer vision of the proposed facility.

In October, the committee focused on rendering designs and cost estimates for potential sites to inform the public and the Select Board. Public outreach was temporarily paused until renderings and detailed cost projections were available for review. The PSFAC prepared to finalize its recommendations and submit its report by the end of the year.