

Eagle Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
Eagle Fire and Rescue Department - 705 S 1st Street
May 29, 2025 - 7:00 PM

The May 29, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Chairman, Terry Caddy. The Chairman made the announcement that the Open Meetings Act is posted on the east wall of the Fire Hall meeting room and that the meeting announcement and agenda were posted at the Eagle Park, Village of Eagle Office, and the Eagle Fire Department.

Roll call of Planning Commission members present included: Terry Caddy, Travis Moore, Willa DiCostanzo, Ashley Moyer, Randy Todd, and Terry Skokan. Austyn Beck was not present.

Discuss/possible action: Approval/recommendation of a new Fire & Rescue Station.

Caddy: I'll give you a little history on #. Luke, correct me if I'm a little off somewhere so about a year and a half to two years ago there was discussion about expanding the current fire department. I've got a record of three different meetings over the last year to year and a half on what to do about the location of the fire department. For those that don't know, the Village owns this entire facility and the ground and building has been here 40 plus years with the fire department adding on to a part of the building. Factors to consider:

1. Finding a location where a community center could be added,
2. Finding a location where just the fire station could be built,
3. Finding a location for just a community center,
4. What to do with the building the fire department currently occupies after they move into a new building.
5. What to do about parking if the Village keeps the building where the fire department moves from.
6. What business would want this property with minimal parking?
7. Where can the fire department go where there is minimal infrastructure costs to keep the budget low but to increase space and capacity

And the conversation continued to evolve from these starting points which is why we have the plans laying out in front of us tonight. So, why are we having this meeting, well state statute says to the Planning Commission on any construction development impacting community growth and development receiving loans or bonds and I don't know what the dollar amount is but it but a large dollar amount needs to look at the future planning of the community and this is inclusive of that not on repair projects such as replacing a sewer line or street repair etc. This project is on expanded capital outlay

funds and this definitely qualifies. Why are we having this meeting before the final plans are developed before Eagle Facilities & Grounds Association (a 501-c-3 non-profit that has a board that purchased the land that the municipal office is on), or before we have approval from the USDA loan agency that it's okay to build on the property? Well, though there is a lot we don't know, someone has to make the first move to keep the project rolling and that is why this meeting is happening tonight. During this meeting tonight we may or may not make a recommendation it just depends if we feel we have enough the members have enough information I know what we've talked about I don't think anyone else on the Planning Commission has OK since I'm part of the steering committee was involved. So, instead of kicking the can down the road we're starting out with the planning commission. I'm going to have Luke Renken explain the Fire Department's prospective.

As for the Village board, they are going to need to consider:

1. Size of the building
2. Moving forward on the bond
3. Leasing the ground or are we going to sell it to them.
4. What the Village of Eagle can currently afford to support the fire department.
5. .5% sales tax to raise funding to pay for costs associated to the fire department and new community center.
6. The recommendation from the planning commission.

Luke: good evening my name is Luke Renken vice president of the rural fire district and also the fire captain. I moved out here about 10 years ago and I'm also on the rural fire board for about 6 1/2 years. When this first original building was constructed the rural fire district passed the bond and then the Village paid for it that's how all that works so we are to a point where we are outgrowing our needs. We just don't have the space for anything so like Terry said about a year ago I started looking for land to build. Fortunately, in the past couple years the Village got the ambulance replaced the rural fire district got the main fire trucks that actually served the Village of Eagle let alone the rural district was replaced. Aaron wrote us a few grants we got our SBA replaced so a lot of the big capital items that really pushed down the rural fire district have been taken care of so as right now the rural fire district sits at a point where we have the lowest tax rate in three counties which is great but to a certain point is we need to get to a point where we need to expand the building. The Village has been kicking in their part they're buying the ambulances but we still need additional space. I can't keep all truck parked at this station. They have to move trucks around. I've been doing construction for over 25 years. I worked for a big general contractor out of Lincoln and that has nothing to do with what we have going on here I could care less and my company builds this

building or not this is for the community so here's my connections I got these prints drawn up for a preliminary view for \$0.00 to help move this project along. I put a lot of time and effort in it the guy from Davis Design lives right outside here in my neighborhood South Meadows and he put the drawing on a piece of paper for me so here we are looking at the proposal rural fire has put together of a two-two and a half million dollar building. Rural could pick up 2/3 of the tab of the new fire station and the village pick up 1/3 so being that said right now with the bond rates they are the rural would bond the whole building and then the Village would make yearly payments would be two payments it'd be one for interest and it'd be a payment for the principal so the rural would throw out about 135,000 a year and the village would throw out 66,000 to do this it'd be a 20 year bond but 4.67% bond rate that's what we're looking at. The Village would pay half so basically everything would be split down the middle then after it was done. I'm valuing that land at about \$800,000. Other places we have looked at we would have \$1,000,000 just in infrastructure alone. So selecting this location was the best option and then maybe we can actually turn the old fire station into a Community Center for the next 10 years and if you get your sales tax passed that way there's something that goes on in this community now that people that move into this community. Other small towns have nice community centers like Sterling, Nebraska but we still don't have one of a town of 1,100 people. I want to get this ball rolling but have some key decisions to make get made in the next couple weeks because if we're a bond we have to get that in by August/September of what we're going to spend because I have get it on October's tax rolls when we start collecting money on that bond from rural. The building does have 2 levels the reason why that 2 levels is going necessarily need it right now probably not but if I'm building a 50 year building and for some reason if we ever need full time EMS or something like that guess what we put dorm rooms up there we're covered we're done you know what I mean it's about 7 bays right now. We will likely have a bay or two open but as village gets bigger we are going to need to add a truck. Bays are cheap to add so we need to put them in now. The way I understood it with Nick and talking there's enough money to make that \$68,000 a year payment in your taxes now so we don't need that the half cent sales tax basically. But, it becomes a ballot measure, it could go towards this building you get yourself a Community Center and get a place where people together while benefitting from the schools parking lot. The bond will raise money on the rural side we will raise our taxes about 50% but it will get the building paid off in 20 years. That's why it's a 20 year bond because that brand new fire truck that I bought a couple years ago is already four years old that truck needs to get replaced every 25 years that one test right now those trucks are 1.1 million so I have to make a purchase as soon as this station's paid off the new station so I guess I'll open up the floor if anybody's got a question. Right now, construction companies are hungry they

are there is nothing out there I get probably 4 calls a week on this what's going on with this I mean it's bad when I have bond companies chasing me down there's competition for bond

Tammy Moyer: If this passes when would it get built?

Luke: I would say if I can get it going in October we will be moving I would say Midsummer of next year. The building will look nice, it will have handicapped parking, the old fire department would serve the community well for an evacuation center for the school kids instead of the church and the bank, it would be a nice place for heating or cooling events, etc. We aren't going to be able to get additional funding to build this if those building in our community build with SID's it will take too long to pay off to get the property taxes from them. But we will still have houses to serve. This is an opportunity to prepare for increased community members at a low cost.

Travis Moore: Have you talked to rural members about this potential increase.

Luke: Yes, I've talked to a few of them, they know that they're looking at their taxes getting raised but the general feedback they have no problem. Their biggest problem originally was if I had the Community Center attached to it they're like we're paying a lot for the Village that was there that was the thing now what's that got cut they're like we fully understand. Their thing is at the end of the day I need about four or five grass fire trucks ready to fight a fire.

Travis: So I think for me right now the biggest concern I have is that we have a lot of unknowns a lot of questions things that are not even being addressed tonight feel like we're getting the powerful orders so we know for sure what we can and cannot do with that land which is not owned by the Village. It seems unnecessary to spend time talking about all these plans and ideas when we don't even know if we're going to be able to move forward on the project. We have a whole different group that owns that property that has not been a part of the conversation that board has not met to even see if they would allow that because if that board says no then we're all sitting here wasting our breath wasting our time and I feel like the Village also needed to do its part by holding a public forum because they have not actually held open public meetings where like the only item on the agenda is to come and talk about this with the fire department people here talk through ideas to get input because right now we have 9 people in the room several of which don't live in town and so I think it's hard to start talking about business a good thing to move forward without more feedback. Without more information we would have the Planning Commission we would never approve a project or a proposal without awaiting more information before us so I feel like we're just kind of being pressured. I get it we want to move we want to see things happen but without more information I think the

Planning Commission can't really take action or thoroughly consider what's being presented tonight without more direction from the village board.

Luke: I'm going to just argue to a certain point Travis. I've talked to four or five members, who are on that committee and they are waiting for this to hit one hurdle so we can pass the next hurdle but I have to start somewhere. If we don't, the can gets kicked down the road and every time this happens here and I get so fed up with it because there was a certain point I wanted to build my station out in the rural they don't have to kick they don't have to kick cans but this is what makes me mad as we find excuses not to do something make it up to that board you do it you until we actually hear back from the USDA that board could be all in favor of it.

Travis: I sit on that board and I have not had a conversation with you and I've talked to other people who've been who are on that board has not been talked to but without that conversation with the USDA we can't make a decision.

Randy Todd: I don't think we've got any more people here if you would have had an open house just like the one we had at the church you probably wouldn't have this many people. I say we could make a decision right now to say we can place this at the USDA is OK with it and then we jump to the next board hurdle but I can't sit here and jump to this board or they haven't made a decision to jump to this board.

Travis: I think the Village made a wrong decision to have this meeting I think the Village needs to do its due diligence and figure out the information before they even scheduled.

Luke: The point is people in this Village are worried about cats and they are worried about chickens you know what I mean so when do we stop kicking the can down the road and start driving this community like what should have happened a couple years ago but all we do is kick it down the road for someone else to take care of it.

Travis: I don't disagree with that I just think the process has been flawed and I think that we need way more information to make good decisions we're in the Planning Commission we have little to no information other than your drawing.

Bill Stickney: I've lived here 45 years and I'd like to start out with thanks to every one of these fire department guys for their service. I mean I'm going to start out with that nobody ever gives them their praise that they deserve. I know what it's like, I had 40 years sitting on BNSF I've gotten called out 24/7 it wasn't fun these guys we've got a lot more going on than that I appreciate it I respect you guys for doing. I really do we're kicking the can down the road these guys are making a start I think it's wonderful. Also, every town around here has had a Community Center for years and years and years. The old community center on Main Street is a near death disaster.

Larry Peters and his wife Betty: we live on 176 lived there for 40 years right on the MoPac Trail and so I'm very grateful for the fire department and we heard about this and thought we should show up so I heard about at the at the soup supper yeah we heard about these plans and thought we should come to the meeting. I think the location sounds great from my perspective. I've spent 40 years in residential construction so my experience is not what yours is but I'd be really happy with supporting this right now thank you.

Marcus Hochstein: I'm not particularly a huge fan of the location but with that being said it's our only option right now.

Terry: We aren't going to have all the facts tonight but we need to start somewhere to get the ball rolling. Until someone makes a move, the attorneys can't talk, the engineers can't start the process and the next "hoops" can't be jumped through. At one point they spent \$70,000 on engineering for a building that they were going to get 500,000 in federal funding on and it all fell apart because it was only for a storm shelter and the Village had to build the top of it. The Village felt at the time they couldn't afford it so the whole thing went away they actually watched \$70,000 of their own money go down the drain. 12 years ago we had a feasibility study done with what the community wanted out of a Community Center. The concept plans identified it was going to be 2.3 or 2.9 million dollars. We do not have all the facts but transparency is the reason for this meeting and to get input and consideration. Does it seem to make sense to put it where they're asking; to put it does the size seem to make sense; do the plans make sense; does the dollar amount make sense. If it seems acceptable we need to make a recommendation to the village board as such.

Willa: Question about switching bay towards north for turn radius.

Luke: Curb and fence will be gone.

Willa: My other comment is thank you for all that you do and I do like the location of it I think it makes a lot of sense I think it makes more sense than any of the other conceptual locations that we had talked about beforehand. It's not but a stone's throw away from where your location has been so there shouldn't be much more concern, I would imagine, from the community knowing that this will be built to a larger capacity. It is important for me because sitting on this committee we are seeing the SID request coming in; we're seeing the growth requests coming in and it is nerve wracking if we can't serve them with Fire and Rescue which is one of the big things that we look at any time we're looking at building plans.

Terry S: Just a couple of quick questions about the bay structure and the bidding process.

Luke: Yes we will do the bidding and we choose an architecture firm and then we would build it out and have 12 general contractors bidding on it. It's not going to be an open checkbook. There will be a bid process.

Todd motioned to approve the recommendation of a new Fire & Rescue Station. Moyer seconded. Voting:

DiCostanzo – yes

Caddy – yes

Moore – no

Moyer – yes

Todd – yes

Skokan – yes

5-1 motion carried.

Discuss/possible action: Approval/recommendation of the conversion of the existing Fire & Rescue Station into a Community Center.

Terry Caddy: Again, we do not have numbers – but does it make sense and is it a decent location, a decent building, can we spend some decent money on it, and does it make sense. I've tried to look at all the options so the worst thing about having a community center here is parking.

Willa: I would make a comment to anybody that is here just to continue to support this so that it's doesn't fail. It would be nice to have your voice spread the word and have more people come to a village board meeting and for the .5% sales tax measure.

Discussion about it would be a bad decision to lease or sell the “old” fire department property.

Moyer motioned to approve the recommendation of converting the existing Fire & Rescue Station into a Community Center. DiCostanzo seconded. Voting:

DiCostanzo – yes

Caddy – yes

Moore – yes

Moyer – yes

Todd – yes

Skokan – yes

6-0 motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30