

## **Summary**

The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals for the creative / adaptive reuse of the City – owned Second Street Fire Station (2SFS) at 124 Second Street in Hallowell. This building formerly served as Hallowell Town Hall, and was most recently used as the Hallowell Fire Station, until a new fire station was constructed and went into active service in 2018. The 2SFS has been maintained by the City since that time, and space in the building is being used by the Hallowell Food Bank and a local artist working on an historical mural / public art project. The City has conducted working groups and other discussions to receive public input and discussion about options for either investing in or divesting from the building. At its regular meeting on March 9, 2020 the Hallowell City Council voted to direct the City Manager to prepare a RFP with minimal covenants and restrictions, with the goal that the City develop divestment alternatives for the 2SFS that recognize its prominence in the downtown district and put its central location to good use in supporting Hallowell’s downtown economy, while also recognizing Hallowell’s contributions to Maine and US history, and its significance as an arts and cultural hub for central Maine. City Council also seeks a reuse for the building that protects its status as a contributing building to Hallowell’s historic downtown district, and ensures the use of the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for historic buildings. Both lease and purchase proposals will be considered, and proposals will be evaluated based on the capacity of the proposers to realize the vision of their proposals, and based on the strength of the proposal in meeting the aforementioned goals.

## **History of Project**

The 2SFS was conveyed to the City in 1828 and served as town hall until July 10, 1899 when the City Council accepted the new City Hall and ordered that City offices be moved to the new City Hall built on the corner of Winthrop Street and Second Street. On November 9, 1899 the Council ordered that alterations be made to the old City Hall, and on February 12, 1900 it ordered that the Fire Department move to the new Fire Station. At that time the 2SFS became the City’s fire station, and remained in active use until 2018 when the new fire station was built on the Stevens Commons campus, on the corner of Winthrop Street and Coos Lane. Over time the 2SFS floors were replaced and reinforced to sustain the weight of modern fire equipment. An apartment that was earlier installed on the second floor was renovated around 2012.

The wooden section added to the building included a hose tower for the fire department. On November 17, 1932 there was a fire in the wooden section, and on November 18, 1932 the City Council found that the Street Commissioner inadvertently caused the fire “due to a misunderstanding of the material that was being heated in an open container on a stove in said building.” The Council ordered repairs be made as soon as the insurance adjustment was accepted. This section was rehabilitated in 2018 by E. J. Perry following plans drafted by Coffin Engineering. The rehabilitation included removal of old fill under the structure, replacement with new fill, installing a new foundation, and correction of a tilting that was starting to occur between the wooden and brick sections of the building. During the construction other amenities to help with future ADA access to the building were added. There was also structural work done on the hose tower, which was twisting out of alignment, and the floor system, which had previously been damaged by fire. This work was paid for by \$220,000 in bond funds provided by the City, and an additional \$12,500 provided by the City Council from funds donated by the Hallowell Citizens Initiative Committee for maintenance of the 2SFS.

## **City Council Resolution**

In February, 2013 the Hallowell City Council signed Resolution 02-13-R, which states in part: “it is in the best interest of the City of Hallowell and its current and future residents to take steps to ensure that the Fire Station building is maintained and preserved for the future, that any uses of the building are consistent with its historic value, and that it remains under the care and supervision of the City of Hallowell in accordance with principles widely shared by the people of Hallowell.” There is a small but vocal citizen dissent to the City divesting from the 2SFS, including some members of the Hallowell Citizens’ Initiative Committee.

## **Fire Station Working Group Report**

After the Hallowell Fire Department vacated the 2SFS in 2018, the City began to engage discussions about the future of the building and its ownership by the City. The ongoing maintenance and utility costs of owning a building that was not serving a clear public purpose was part of the discussion, and Hallowell Mayor Mark L. Walker appointed a working group to discuss the building’s current status, possible uses, and cultural / historic significance. After several meetings this group produced a report to the Hallowell City Council.

## **Public Meeting January 27, 2020**

The Hallowell City Council hosted a public meeting at City Hall on January 27, 2020, to discuss investment and divestment options for the 2SFS.

## **Council Vote**

At its regular meeting on March 9, 2020 the Hallowell City Council voted to direct the City Manager to City Manager to prepare a RFP with minimal covenants and restrictions, with the goal that the City develop divestment alternatives for the 2SFS that recognize its prominence in the downtown district and put its central location to good use in supporting Hallowell’s downtown economy, while also recognizing Hallowell’s contributions to Maine and US history, and its significance as an arts and cultural hub for central Maine.

## **Site Information**

**Attached** is a 2019 appraisal report from Maine Valuation Company that includes site information, interior and exterior pictures, and market analysis.

## **Zoning**

The 2SFS is in the Downtown (DT) district. The 2SFS abuts the Residential 1 District, which includes lots to the west, on the opposite side of Second St., and to the north, on the opposite side of Perley’s Ln., towards Union St. The building is also in the Historic District and the Arts District.

GIS maps can be found at this link: <https://www.axisgis.com/hallowellme/>

The zoning and allowed / conditional uses for the property can be found in the City Ordinances under Chapter 9 Subchapter 3 which is **included as an attachment** and is also available at this link: <https://hallowell.govoffice.com/vertical/sites/%7B9B342949-3E79-4064-B52A->

### **Utilities**

The 2SFS is supplied by Hallowell Water District water, Greater Augusta Utilities District sewer, and is served by natural gas (Summit), electric (CMP), and cable (Spectrum). Fiber-optic Internet is also available in the downtown district but may not be currently available at the building.

### **TIF District**

The 2SFS is located within the Hallowell Downtown & Arts District Omnibus Municipal Development Tax Increment Financing District, a 30-year TIF district that was enacted on July 1, 2014.

### **Perley's Lane Public Parking Lot**

The parking lot behind the building, adjacent to Perley's Lane, is a City-owned and highly used community asset. Although the appraisal report shows that the property line behind the building extends into the parking lot, it should not be assumed that this land / any parking spaces will be conveyed with the transfer of the building. It is unlikely that the City will allow for any private use of the parking lot unless there is a compelling use that provides minimal or no conflict with the parking lot's public use.

### **Historic District / Historic Tax Credits**

According to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, the 2SFS is not individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, but it is a contributing resource in the National Register-listed Hallowell Historic District. By virtue of its contributing status, it is considered to be listed in the National Register. The Second Street Fire Station is, therefore, eligible to receive federal preservation/restoration grants (available to non-profit organizations and municipalities) through MHPC, and it can be qualified as a certified historic property for the purposes of the rehabilitation tax credit program upon submittal and approval of a Part 1 application (a separate National Register nomination would not have to be prepared).

### **Expressed Interest / Suggested Uses:**

The following suggested uses have been proposed for the 2SFS in Council meetings, working groups, and public meetings, but this list should not be considered as restricting or definitive:

- Police Station
- Hubbard Free Library extension
- Art Center project led by Hallowell Clay Works and other parties
- Art Center project led by Harlow Gallery and other parties
- Museum and other publicly used meeting spaces

### **Hallowell Food Bank**

The Hallowell Food Bank is a non-profit organization that has been operating out of the 2SFS since the 1990s. The City would prefer for the proposers to work with the HFB to stay in the space under some mutually agreeable arrangement.

### **Hose Tower / Hallowell History Museum / HCIC**

The Hallowell Citizens Initiative Committee has worked to champion the maintenance and improvement of the 2SFS, and has raised money to pay for repairs to the hose tower, among other projects. The City would prefer for the proposers to work with the HCIC and its desire for a space in the building to serve as a Hallowell history museum, and to provide a space for viewing the hose tower, which is one of the only remaining of its kind in New England.

Appendix: Documents, Council Meeting Minutes