

Plans for new fire hall building taking shape

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Visions of Brady's new fire hall are beginning to come into focus.

There is still a long, long way to go and plenty of revisions to be made to initial drawings before any dirt can be turned but excitement is mounting as the village steps closer to a larger, more efficient space to house vehicles, equipment and paperwork for the Brady Volunteer Fire Department.

“It seems like we’ve been working on this forever,” said rural fire district secretary/treasurer Ray Blede.

Three separate entities—the rural fire district, the volunteer department and the village—have been working toward construction of a new fire hall for at least three years, Blede said.

It began with finding a suitable location and has progressed toward floor plans and funding.

The village of Brady purchased land for a new facility adjacent to the existing fire hall at the end of 2012.

Now a committee of firemen and rural board members will work to iron out the details of the building and how it will be funded.

“We’ve got some money in savings,” Blede said, “but we’re committed to spending that taxpayer money for consistent equipment upgrades.”

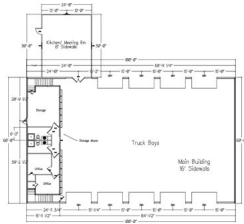
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Cost for mutual aid to battle multiple fires across the state last summer has eaten up some of the available funding but Blede said seed money is available for a new building.

Fireman Todd Roe, who works as a draftsman in his professional life, presented preliminary drawings to department members and the rural fire board last month.



Roe said the proposal is for a building not quite twice the size of the existing hall.

In addition to adequate parking for all seven vehicles, Roe's drawing includes a meeting/training area with kitchen, storage and offices for both the fire chief and rescue captain.

None of those things are available in the current building.

Roe said trucks and ambulances are now parked two deep, with one angled, so everything will fit.

"There's only one way to put them in and one way to get them out," he said. "When we have a meeting, we have to move at least one vehicle outside."

The other drawback to the small building, Roe said, is that there is no storage area for smaller equipment and no lockers for expensive fire gear.

Roe's proposed drawings show four vehicle entrances on the north side of the building and five on the south, allowing for ample parking, as well as a wash bay.

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The 16-foot sidewalls would provide space for an overhead water supply to fill trucks.

Roe said a kickout on the northwest corner of the building with 8-foot sidewalls would be used for the meeting/training room and kitchen.

“It’s not just a shell,” Roe said, “but there’s nothing elaborate about it either.”

Blede acknowledged that the plan includes everything the department could need and includes ideas gleaned from visits to other recently built facilities.

But he also said enough revisions lie ahead that a cost estimate or a construction timeline are not feasible right now.

“We want to have a nice facility,” Blede said, “but we also need it to be affordable. This is only the first draft. I’m sure there will be plenty of changes before we settle on something.”

If constructed similar to Roe’s proposal, the old building will not be needed by the fire department. Roe said it will be given back to the village.

“Our fire department has made due with an outdated facility for a long time,” Roe said. “We’re getting some younger people involved in the fire department and we’ve got lots of training possibilities right now. I think if there ever was a time to do this, it’s now.”

A building committee will continue putting ideas to paper until a compromise of all is reached.

Roe said a new facility would likely take nine months to build.