

October 6, 2025

To: Moderator, Waterford RTM

Subject: Correspondence Regarding Proposed Funding for Oswegatchie Fire Station

Dear Moderator,

I am writing to share my concerns regarding the resolution before the RTM to act upon the recommendation of the Board of Finance that an appropriation not to exceed \$12.6 million be approved for the construction of a new Oswegatchie fire station. I want to begin by stating clearly that I fully support the need for an improved and modern fire station. Our firefighters and emergency personnel deserve a safe, functional, and comfortable facility that allows them to perform their critical duties effectively. However, I have significant concerns about the process and the cost associated with the proposal currently before us.

The projected cost of \$12.6 million appears unusually high, particularly given that we have not been presented with any alternative options or less expensive designs for comparison. I am especially troubled by the fact that the same company responsible for this cost estimate is also managing a new fire station project in Bristol, CT, a station that is approximately 2,000 square feet larger than ours and is reportedly costing \$6.5 million. That is roughly half of what we are being told our station will cost. I believe it is fair and necessary to ask why there is such a large discrepancy between the two projects.

In addition, we were provided with an estimate suggesting that renovating the existing Oswegatchie station to a "like-new" condition would cost approximately \$8 million. While that figure is still substantial, it represents a savings of about \$4 million compared to the proposed new construction. I do not understand why this option was not seriously evaluated or presented to the RTM as a viable alternative. Even if the conclusion was ultimately that a new building was the best path forward, I believe it is our responsibility as representatives to explore and understand all potential options before committing to a project of this magnitude.

This issue is not just about the fire station itself; it's about the process, transparency, and fiscal responsibility. We have a duty to both our first responders and the taxpayers of Waterford. Providing a safe, efficient, and modern facility for our firefighters should not preclude us from also ensuring that we are making a financially prudent decision. It is my belief that we owe the public a more thorough and comparative evaluation of costs and alternatives before proceeding.

I want this correspondence to reflect that I have reservations about how we arrived at this point and that I do not feel all options were adequately explored. While I remain supportive

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of providing our firefighters with the resources and facilities they need, I believe we should also be holding ourselves to the highest standard of due diligence and fiscal accountability.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to share these concerns and to have them entered into the record.

Respectfully,

Erica Casper

Representative, Waterford RTM District 1