



**TOWN OF
DALTON**

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

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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.

2 Real Estate Options

2.1 History of the Sites

Per the Dalton Select Board, the PSFAC first convened on July 17, 2024, tasked with examining “...all issues regarding the proposal for a new Police Station, including the potential for a fire station...whether and where to lease, buy, or take property, or to use existing Town property, including whether to build a new building ...”

PSFAC members were provided with individual tours of the Dalton Police station by the Police Chief. The PSFAC conducted site visitations to the Williamstown Police station which was completed in 2019. Williamstown’s population approximates Dalton in number and has a comparable police force. The PSFAC conducted a similar tour of the Williamsburg Public Safety Facility which was completed in 2024 and houses both a police station and a fire department.

In August 2024, the PSFAC voted to exclude the “potential” for a new fire station considering the District’s accounting issues/ concerns and the Fire District’s suspension of the fire chief.

Considering the numerous safety and security issues outlined and described in the Civil Citation and Civil Penalty Report and Indoor Air Quality Program Report, the PSFAC voted that the current Police Station was beyond repair and inadequate. Additionally, upon review of a preliminary Space Needs Assessment, the PSFAC determined that aside from the “old Dalton high school” parcel and the Chamberlain Park parcel, no town owned property met the criteria host a new police facility. The Select Board directed us not to pursue looking into the Chamberlain Park parcel.

The PSFAC set out in to locate properties suitable for a new Police facility. In the late Summer and early Fall, through word of mouth. The PSFAC conducted visitations and/or discussion with the property owners. Initial site evaluations included: a map identifying the parcel(s), assessed value, acreage, zoning, and acquisition cost. Consideration was presented regarding description of the parcel’s features, accessibility, site development, neighborhood impact, proximity, expansion for growth, and economic impact. All pertinent information was collected for review and discussion.

Sites Considered for a new Dalton Police Facility:

- 367,377,385 Main St. (Dalton Garage)
- 134,136 East Housatonic St. (Laureyns United, behind Berkshire Bridge and Iron)
- 197 Main St. (Across from Crane & Co. headquarters)
- 134,136 West Housatonic St. (Dalton Depot- 2 parcels)
- 11 Cleveland Rd. (Dead River Co.)
- 339 North St. (Adjacent to the car wash)
- 514 Main St. (Congregational Church Annex)
- 120 First St. (Old Dalton HS.-2 parcels)
- 726,730 Main St. (Across from Cumberland Farms)

Sites where the PSFAC expressed interest but the owner *did not*:

- 258 North St. (Dalton American Legion)
- 366 East Housatonic St. (Property behind the Dalton V.F.W.)

In September 2024, the Dalton Garage property owners indicated that they wished to withdraw their site for consideration. In November 2024, the PSFAC voted to have the Cleveland Rd. and 339 North St. properties not be considered for feasibility.

In November 2024 the PSFAC reviewed the Walker Brook Report describing the condition of the underground culvert running through/adjacent the Town parcels under consideration. While the parcels are not in a designated flood plain, they are in a flood zone.

In December 2024, the PSFAC devised a site criteria and scoring sheet, see Appendix A. Criteria was weighted: Location, Built/Raw, Buy/Lease, Proximity to Current Site, Timeline, and Cost. Four of the 5 PSFAC members submitted their scores. The results, in order of preference:

• 514 Main St	38.50
• 197 Main St	31.25
• 726/730 Main St., Myrtle St	29.00
• Town Property (120 First St. bordering High St)	27.75
• Town Property (120 First St. bordering Glennon Ave.)	26.75
• 11 Cleveland Rd	17.50
• 339 North St	15.25

In January 2025, Jacunski Humes Architects, the Town's feasibility consultant, met with the Police Chief and conducted a site visit of the Police station towards formulating a Space Needs Assessment. Brian Humes, our consultant, presented his draft report through a zoom conference, he reviewed the findings and answered questions.

In February 2025, the PSFAC accepted the Needs Assessment Report with minor amendments. Brian Humes was given the five top sites per the PSFAC's recommendation (in no order of preference): 514 Main St., 197 Main St., 726/730 Main St. and Myrtle St., Town Property at 120 First St. bordering High St., and Town Property at 120 First St bordering Glennon Ave.

On March 3, 2025, Brian Humes presented the Needs Assessment Report to the Selectboard. The Selectboard voted to accept the report. On April 9, 2025, in a joint meeting with the Select Board and the PSFAC, Brian Humes reviewed the five sites recommended by the PSFAC. The ~3 acre Field St. site was his number one choice. On April 30, 2025, in a joint meeting, the PSFAC voted to accept Brian Hume's recommendation of the Field St. site for further feasibility. The Select Board recommended not to accept the First St. site for further feasibility study.

2.2 197 Main Street Assessment

Location: 197 Main St.

Assessed value: \$377,800

Acquisition cost: 1.3 million

Acreage: -.8/ .8

Zoning: R3/ 12

Description (e.g., utilities, easements, liens, environmental issues, former use, adjacent land uses):

The property abuts Berkshire Money Management and residential properties along Rt. 8. Crane and Co. offices are across the street. The parcel has a building constructed in 1830 with 17 rooms, 4 full baths; 10,324 gross sq.' and 6,319 finished sq.'. It has a gas/steam system. The building is used as a multifamily rental. There are several Right of Ways, one which bisects the parcel mid-way; (See plot plan). A new steel structure (1,620 sq.ft.) was erected several years ago having no utilities. Steel, newly constructed reinforced building: 1,620 sq. ft. 36'x45'x12' with a concrete floor and no utilities.

Accessibility (e.g., roadways, sidewalks, visibility):

The parcel is accessed via car and foot from Rt. 8. It is highly visible given its proximity to Rt. 8, West Housatonic St. and South St.

Site development (e.g., topography, historical impact, existing building/reuse):

The parcel is flat and lightly wooded. The newer structure affords multiple uses. Demolition cost?

Neighborhood impact (e.g., traffic, noise, light):

The parcel(s) abut several residential properties.

Proximity to other government functions & center of town:

The parcel is within 1 mile of town hall, the fire station and the town garage.

Expansion for growth:

Demolition of the existing multi-family home affords multiple uses for the property, including a solar array.

Economic impact:

Loss of 377,800 of assessed property.

2.3 726/730 Main Street and Myrtle Street

Location: 726/730 Main Street. and Myrtle Street.

Assessed value: \$72,000 and \$96,500 (\$168,00 in total)

Acquisition cost: \$975K, offer good until 12/25

Acreage: -.8 and .8 (1.6 in total)

Zoning: R3/ 12

Description (e.g., utilities, easements, liens, environmental issues, former use, adjacent land uses):

Two contiguous parcels; the Main St. property had a residential structure. The Myrtle St. property was once owned by Byron Weston.

Accessibility (e.g., roadways, sidewalks, visibility):

Highly visible and accessible. The latter parcel is at the end of a residential street. The Main St. parcel is adjacent to the intersection of Routes. 8 & 9.

Site development (e.g., topography, historical impact, existing building/reuse):

Flat, lightly treed.

Neighborhood impact (e.g., traffic ,noise, light):

The parcel(s) abut several residential properties.

Proximity to other government functions & center of town:

The parcel(s) are within 1/2 to 1 mile of all government locations.

Expansion for growth:

Generous growth potential, given both parcels.

Economic impact:

Loss of 72- 96 K of property assessment.

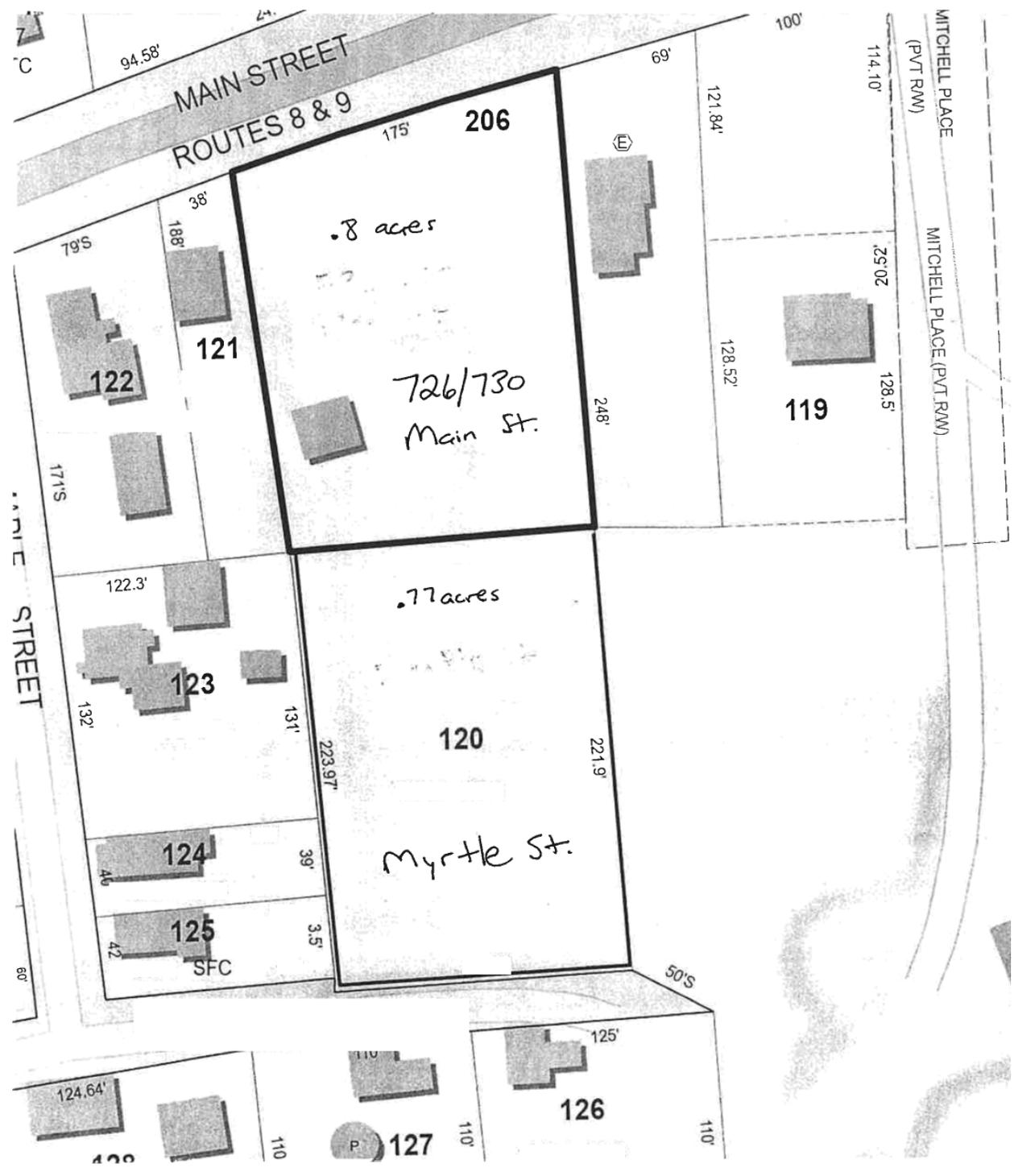


Figure 2 – 726 and 730 Main Street and Myrtle Street, Dalton, MA

2.4 514 Main St.

Location: 514 Main St. (Congregational School Building)

Assessed value: -\$435,000

Acquisition cost: -3-4 million

Acreage: -1.5 acres

Zoning: R3

Description (e.g., utilities, easements, liens, environmental issues, former use, adjacent land uses):

School building conjoined to the church. Two story, 40'x80' block building, cement floored, constructed in the 1960's? Stone facade. Two-1/2 baths located on the lower level; with a pump station to the ground level floor. 12' ceilings. Utilities are conjoined to the church. Entry at each level. Parking lot and two car garage at the upper level.

Accessibility (e.g., roadways, sidewalks, visibility):

Centrally located, highly visible and accessible on Main St.. Separate street entry to the building. Walking distance to town hall, fire station, and Senior Center. One quarter mile to the transfer station.

Site development (e.g., topography, historical impact, existing building/reuse):

Two story building in excellent condition. The building was constructed to accommodate a third floor. Paved parking lot with - 20 spaces. Interior space may be optimally reconfigured.

Neighborhood impact {e.g., traffic ,noise, light):

The parcel is adjacent to a dentist's office. The rear property line abuts the Housatonic River. A catholic church is across Main Street.

Proximity to other government functions & center of town:

Walking distance to the town hall, fire station, and Senior Center. It is - one quarter mile from the transfer station.

Expansion for growth:

Additional space may be added onto the rear and side of the building.

Economic impact.

Loss of upwards of \$200,000 of assessed value.

2.5 120 First St.

Location: 120 First St. (bordering High St.)

Assessed value: NA

Acquisition cost: NA

Acreage: .95

Zoning: R-3

Description (e.g., utilities, easements, liens, environmental issues, former use, adjacent land uses):

Town owned property. Walker Brook bisects the parcel from High St. to Glennon Ave.. Flat, largely non-treed. A storage shed is located along the north perimeter. Former school playground.

Accessibility (e.g., roadways, sidewalks, visibility):

Easily accessible and visible.

Site development (e.g., topography, historical impact, existing building/reuse):

Flat, non-treed. Potential flood area.

Neighborhood impact {e.g., traffic ,noise, light):

The parcel is in a heavily populated residential area. Traffic is through a populated residential area; and a trafficked road artery.

Proximity to other government functions & center of town:

Location is adjacent to the Senior Center and within 1/2 mile of town hall. the fire station and the transfer station.

Expansion for growth:

Size and shape of property limits growth and expansion.

Economic impact:

No loss of assessed property because the land is town owned.

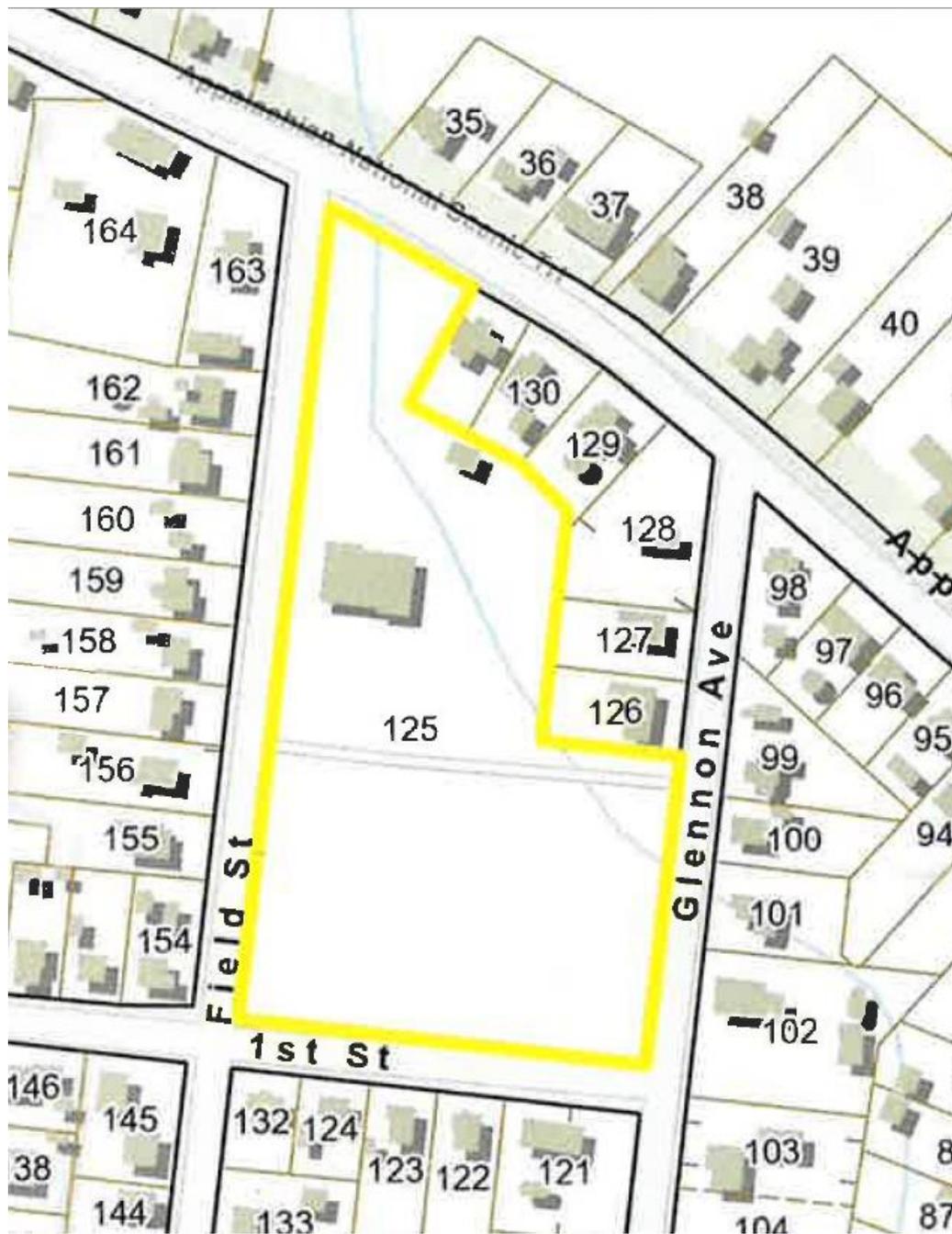


Figure 4 – 120 First Street, Dalton, MA

3 FUNDING SOURCES

3.1 Introduction

The ARPA grant has enabled the PSFAC to contract Lisa Frisch for specialized research services. Her expertise is being leveraged to identify and pursue additional funding opportunities for enhancing the Safety building. This research encompasses a thorough examination of grants at both state and federal levels, as well as an analysis of bonds and federal appropriations. Furthermore, Frisch is assessing the viability of public-private partnerships, with the Dalton Police Department providing valuable collaborative input.

3.2 Funding Landscape

The current funding environment is characterized by volatility and a marked increase in competition for limited resources. Achieving a successful funding outcome necessitates a concerted effort in grant writing, the formulation of detailed financial plans, and potentially, strategic advocacy at state and federal levels. Funding sources may offer added benefits, such as provisions for communal facilities, but may also impose specific restrictions on expenditures. The strategy is to selectively accept restrictions that align with the initial project plan or offer a financial advantage.

The Town of Dalton is facing significant financial challenges, including rising costs and reduced state aid, which strain its ability to fund long-term capital projects. Given this fiscally constrained environment, planning for a new police station requires a careful strategy. To be successful, the town must seek external funding through grant applications and strategic advocacy.

3.3 Regionalization

State incentives are currently promoting the regionalization of public safety services, which opens up access to a dedicated funding program. While securing commitments from neighboring municipalities falls outside the remit of this sub-committee, we do identify viable opportunities and stipulations associated with these funds. The degree of regional cooperation and associated funding requirements vary, and while collaboration from other towns has not been within our purview, it remains a potential funding source for the Safety building. The existing town hall has been recognized as a Massachusetts historical building and is in process of being added to the National Register of historic districts, this may allow for separate funding streams if it is to be updated.

Table 1 Potential External Funding Sources

	Grant Name, Source, & Link	Grant Objective	Eligibility	Max Budget	Due Dates
Federal	<p>USDA</p> <p>Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program</p> <p>https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program-0</p> <p>Fact Sheet:</p> <p>https://www.rd.usda.gov/media/file/download/usda-rhs-cp-fs-cf-loan-guarantees-02102025.pdf</p>	<p>Rural areas including cities, villages, townships and towns including Federally Recognized Tribal Lands with no more than 20,000 residents according to the latest U.S. Census Data are eligible for this program.</p> <p>Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and / or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment and pay related project expenses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public safety services such as fire departments, police stations, prisons, police vehicles, fire trucks, public works vehicles or equipment 	<p>Public bodies</p> <p>Community-based non-profit corps</p>	<p>Low Interest Direct Loans and Grants</p> <p>A combo of the two above, as well as a loan guarantee program.</p> <p>Max Budget not specified</p>	OPEN

	Grant Name, Source, & Link	Grant Objective	Eligibility	Max Budget	Due Dates
	Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Project Funding Grant (CPF)	CPF is congressionally directed funding that provides investment in economic and community development projects. Potential grantees need to inquire with their congressional representatives. Members of Congress select the grantees through a congressionally directed application process, not through HUD. Public facilities are one of the things that have been funded through this. Fact Sheet: https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/CPD/documents/FAQ-Update-March-2023.pdf	Public Entity	Grant Program No max budget specified	Dates Not Specified—under direction of Congress and budget dates 8 Year Grant Term
Federal	Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants State Program https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/cdbg-state/state-cdbg-program-eligibility-	Grant objectives can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of real property • Relocation and demolition • Rehabilitation of residential and non-residential structures • Construction of public facilities and 	States award grants to smaller units of general local gov. Annually each State develops funding priorities and criteria for selecting	Budget depends on state Consolidated Plan and the funds allotted to this	Submitted online through CDBG Application link. Deadline for applications is 4/14/25 at 3:00 pm.

	Grant Name, Source, & Link	Grant Objective	Eligibility	Max Budget	Due Dates
	<p>requirements/</p> <p>MA Specific Links:</p> <p>https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-development-block-grant-cdbg</p>	<p>improvements, such as water and sewer facilities, streets, neighborhood centers, and the conversion of school buildings for eligible purposes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public services, within certain limits • Activities relating to energy conservation and renewable energy resources • Provision of assistance to nonprofit and profit-motivated businesses to carry out economic development and job creation/retention activities <p>*This could be an obstacle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition, construction, or reconstruction of buildings for the general conduct of government are <u>not</u> eligible 	<p>projects.</p> <p>Non-entitlement areas are cities with populations of less than 50,000</p> <p>Over a 1, 2, or 3-year period, as selected by the grantee, not less than 70 percent of CDBG funds must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons.</p>		

	Grant Name, Source, & Link	Grant Objective	Eligibility	Max Budget	Due Dates
State	Massachusetts Rural Development Fund https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rural-development-fund	Support projects for rural communities. Focus is on infrastructure, economic development, community development, housing, transportation, and priorities identified by the Commonwealth's Rural Policy Advisory Commission. The following categories considered for RFD funding: Planning & Zoning, Site Preparation, Building, and Infrastructure Eligible Projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and Zoning Category • Site Preparation Category • Buildings • Infrastructure 	Applicant must be a public entity from a rural MA town as defined by US Census (500 or fewer persons per square mile) and/or a Small Town (7,000 or fewer population)	Planning & Zoning Projects: No more than \$100,000 per application All other categories: Maximum of \$500,000 Stated Award Range: \$50,000-\$500,000	Submit Through Community One-Stop For Growth https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-one-stop-for-growth Due Date for Full Prop. 6/4/25
State	Executive Office of Public Safety and Security Byrne Jag Municipal Law Enforcement	To assist eligible local police departments in their efforts to address unmet public safety needs	Police Dept from	\$50,000	FY 24 is latest RFP (was due 8/23)

	Grant Name, Source, & Link	Grant Objective	Eligibility	Max Budget	Due Dates
	<p>Opportunity</p> <p>https://www.mass.gov/doc/fy24-byrne-jag-municipal-law-enforcement-funding-opportunity-agf-updated/download</p>	<p>in the community they serve. All proposals must have a law enforcement, criminal justice nexus and be structured with a primary focus on impacting a specific public safety need to be considered for funding. Technology Upgrades, Investigative Tools, and Protective Gear could be an eligible project.</p>	MA		*Orig. Fed Funds so may not be released
State	<p>Community Compact Cabinet</p> <p>https://www.mass.gov/orgs/community-compact-cabinet</p> <p>Efficiency & Regionalization grant program</p> <p>https://www.mass.gov/info-details/efficiency-and-regionalization-grant-program-faq#what-is-the-efficiency-and-regionalization-program?</p>	<p>To provide financial support for governmental entities interested in implementing regionalization and other efficiency initiatives that allow for long-term sustainability. These grants provided funds for one-time or transition costs for municipalities, regional school districts, school districts considering forming a regional school district or regionalizing services, regional planning agencies and councils of governments interested in such projects. If an applicant seeks to initiate a new program with an E&R Program grant, the applicant should be able to show how the new program will be self-sustaining within one year.</p>	<p>The E&R Grant Program is open to:</p> <p>municipalities and councils of govt.</p>	<p>Grant requests from a single government entity of up to \$100,000 will be considered</p> <p>Grant requests from multi-jurisdictional applications of up to \$200,000 will be considered</p>	<p>FY25 was due 12/24</p> <p>Projects must be complete within 18 months of contract</p>

	Grant Name, Source, & Link	Grant Objective	Eligibility	Max Budget	Due Dates
State	Mass Development https://www.massdevelopment.com/products-and-services/services-by-industry/municipalities/		Public Infrastructure projects	Tax-exempt bonds are usually the lowest interest rate option for real estate projects. Infrastructure Financing	n/a
Foundation	The Klarman Family Foundation The Community Capital Fund https://www.klarmanfoundation.org/expanding-access/ccf/	The Foundation believes that investments in physical assets help create a permanence that benefits the broader community. The Community Capital Fund (CCF) provides funding to support the development, improvement, or ownership of physical assets. This new funding initiative aims to counter historic disparities in access to funding and prioritizes organizations operating within communities of color in	Community-Based Organizations (could be esp. helpful if space co-located with other 501 c3 community services). Currently priority focus is	\$500,000-\$10 million	6/13/25

	Grant Name, Source, & Link	Grant Objective	Eligibility	Max Budget	Due Dates
		<p>Massachusetts.</p> <p>The Community Capital Fund supports facilities or land acquisition; construction; renovation; repair; preservation and major equipment. In some cases, funding will also support technical assistance to help organizations develop or assess the feasibility of a project or engage expertise necessary to execute the project successfully.</p>	<p>Boston area but other MA communities may be eligible</p>		

3.4 Analysis

Based on the types of funds that are available the cost associated with the construction of a new Dalton safety building could be significantly reduced. The Federal and State grants, bonds and loans all seek to help defray the costs associated with the process of building new public infrastructure. The award of multiple sources of external funding is going to be needed to construct the new public safety building. The careful selection of grants and bonds to support all stages of the design, acquisition, and construction is key to the success of this endeavor.

3.5 Trends and projections

The funds that are available show that the federal and state governments recognize that the need to support the local communities as they need to modernize their infrastructure. The funding sources will likely continue going forward, but the amounts may change as more communities begin to apply for the same funding sources. There is a need to try and assess our needs quickly so that we can have as much funding available.

4 Risks

This report outlines the operational and financial risks associated with losing use of the Police Department facility due to building code violations or structural deficiencies. Recent closures in Massachusetts and surrounding states, including the West Stockbridge Police Department, demonstrate that sudden facility shutdowns are a growing regional issue.

Police departments across New England have experienced forced closures due to unsafe conditions. In Massachusetts, West Stockbridge police department faced full closure due to structural and code compliance failures, while Athol police department underwent an emergency shutdown after water and electrical damage. Southbridge police department experienced a partial closure from mold and HVAC failure. Connecticut saw multiple closures of New Haven police department substations due to mold and structural deterioration, and Bridgeport police department relocations caused by asbestos and water intrusion. In New York, NYPD Precincts faced evacuations due to ceiling collapses, electrical failures, and mold, while upstate police departments experienced temporary closures from heating failures and structural issues. Vermont's Brattleboro police department relocated due to mold and air quality hazards, and Bennington police department nearly closed from structural and water damage concerns. In New Hampshire, Claremont police department evacuated due to mold and structural instability, while Durham police department temporarily closed from heating and air quality failures.

The risk analysis indicates a moderate to high likelihood based on building age, deferred maintenance, and regional precedent, with high severity due to impacts on emergency response, evidence storage, and public access. Key factors include aging infrastructure, outdated systems, environmental hazards, and increased regulatory scrutiny.

Operational impacts include disrupted emergency response and increased travel time, loss of secure detention and processing areas, risks to evidence integrity and chain of custody, reduced public access to services, and technology and communications disruptions during relocation. Financial impacts encompass emergency relocation costs, remediation and construction expenses, overtime and staffing inefficiencies, and potential liability if hazards were previously known.

5 Conclusion

The Town of Dalton is currently navigating a precarious fiscal landscape, marked by significant financial constraints that call into question the long-term capital planning initiatives. A primary challenge stems from the fact that the growth of fixed costs—most notably for health care, contractual wages, and school district assessments—is rapidly outpacing the town's ability to generate revenue under the limitations of Proposition 2½. This internal pressure is compounded by external factors, including a decline in state aid, which further limits available funds.

Within this challenging environment, the town faces a backlog of major deferred capital needs across essential services like water, sewer, roads, stormwater management, and ADA compliance. The project to construct a new police station is therefore competing for scarce resources amidst these other pressing priorities.

Recommendations include prioritizing immediate remediation of life safety issues, securing capital funding for repairs or replacement, increasing preventive maintenance and documentation, and coordinating with regional partners for temporary facility support.

The Town of Dalton has several potential pathways to address the long-standing space, safety, and operational deficiencies of the current Police Department. Each option carries distinct advantages and challenges. Options 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 require further research and due diligence to fully understand cost, feasibility, zoning implications, long-term operational impacts, and public acceptance. These options remain viable but need deeper analysis before the Town can responsibly advance any of them.

1. Build a New Police Department on an Undeveloped Piece of Land Using Town Funds

Pros: A new site offers complete design freedom and the ability to create a modern, efficient, secure police headquarters with ideal circulation, parking, and expansion capacity. The Town can choose a location that avoids residential conflicts and meets the recommended minimum buildable area of 1.65–2.0 acres. No constraints from existing structures, demolition, or retrofitting.

Cons: This is the most expensive option because the Town must purchase land and fully develop the site. Finding suitable undeveloped land in Dalton is difficult. The timeline is long due to land negotiations, permitting, design, and construction. Public support may be harder to secure for a high-cost, high-impact project.

2. Build a Police Department Adjacent to the Senior Center (120 First Street)

Pros: The Town already owns the land, eliminating acquisition costs. The parcel is large (5.1 acres), flat, and accessible from multiple streets. The site can accommodate the full program, secure parking, and future expansion. It is centrally located but not on Main Street, reducing traffic conflicts. FEMA maps show no floodplain restrictions, and the Town already has engineering studies for culvert mitigation.

Cons: The site has known flooding issues tied to the undersized Walker Brook culvert, requiring mitigation planning and added cost. The area is surrounded by residential neighborhoods, which may raise concerns about lighting, noise, and traffic. Senior Center operations must continue during construction. Soil conditions include fill material that may require engineered foundations.

3. Secure an Existing Building That Can Be Renovated and Expanded (Congregational Church, Dalton Garage, 197 Main)

Pros: Renovating an existing building may cost less than new construction and can shorten the project timeline if the structure is sound. Some buildings, such as 197 Main or the Congregational Church, have strong visibility on Main Street. This option preserves historic structures and may be more acceptable to some residents.

Cons: Most available buildings are in residential zones (R1 or R3), creating zoning challenges. The 197 Main mansion is historic, expensive to retrofit, and poorly suited for police operations as well as existing easements and Rights of Ways. The Congregational Church parcel has limited usable acreage and must remain partially in use by the congregation. The funeral home and Dalton Garage have unknown structural and environmental conditions.

4. Renovate the Existing Police Department Within Its Current Space

Pros: This option has the lowest initial cost and avoids land acquisition. The Police Department remains in its current central location. Some improvements can be made without major structural changes.

Cons: The existing police facility is undersized, providing only 6,042 square feet, which is less than half of the 12,500 square feet recommended in the Space Needs Assessment. The issue is further compounded by large, unusable portions of the lower level and the fact that the building is shared with the Town Hall and Public Library, creating security and operational conflicts. Jacunski Humes' report concluded the space is substandard, failing to meet code, accessibility, or public health standards, with critical deficiencies such as a 35-square-foot female locker room and undersized detention cells. Jacunski Humes determined that renovation is not a viable option, as the costs and logistical difficulty of temporarily relocating operations would exceed that of new construction.

5. Renovate the Current PD and Provide Additional Space Within Town Hall

Pros: This option increases available space without acquiring land. It keeps the Police Department in a known location and could be phased to reduce disruption. Some Town Hall functions could be reorganized to improve efficiency.

Cons: Expanding the police facility within the existing Town Hall building is not a viable option due to significant structural limitations, parking constraints, and the needs of other municipal departments. A 1922 renovation created a floor system that cannot support the loading requirements for an occupied police space without adding mid-span support columns, which is not feasible. The Jacunski Humes' report concludes that even if other departments were displaced, the building cannot meet the spatial, structural, or security needs of a modern police facility, making expansion within Town Hall an impossible solution for long-term operational requirements.

6. Renovate the Entire Town Hall, Adjust Departments, and Acquire Properties for Parking

Pros: This is a comprehensive solution that addresses multiple municipal space issues at once. It allows modernization of Town Hall, improved ADA compliance, and better departmental workflow. A civic campus feel could be created if adjacent properties are acquired.

Cons: Jacunski Humes has concluded that there is no viable solution at the 462 Main Street location, even with a comprehensive renovation and expansion. The findings indicate that the existing building structure cannot support the required police loading, and the site is severely constrained by limited parking and minimal available land. While acquiring adjacent properties could be an option, it may not be feasible and would significantly increase project costs. Such a project would also cause major disruptions to all Town Hall, Library, and Police operations. Ultimately, despite the scale of investment, the building would still fail to meet the space, security, and operational needs of a modern police department.

7. Build a Smaller Version of a New Police Department Now with a Plan to Expand Later

Pros: Lower initial cost and the ability to phase overtime. A smaller footprint can be built on a smaller site if expansion land is reserved. This option aligns with population projections showing potential decline.

Cons: Requires a site with guaranteed expansion room, which was not possible at several evaluated parcels. Future expansion costs may be higher due to inflation or code changes. There is a risk that future boards may not fund Phase 2. The Police Department may still face operational limitations until expansion occurs.

8. Short-Term Plans to Resolve Police Department Code Violations

Pros: Fastest and least expensive option. Improves safety and compliance while buying time for long-term planning. Can minimize disruption to operations depending on the level of repairs and upgrades.

Cons: Does not address space shortages or long-term operational deficiencies. Money spent on temporary repairs does not contribute to a permanent solution. Some violations may require temporary relocation during repairs.

9. Bank Building

Retrofit the bank building on South Carson to include a Sally Port and detention cells.

Pros: This plan would solve some of the prisoner access issues that the existing police station experiences. It would solve some of the compliance issues.

Cons: Increases the manning issues in the Police Department with staffing of multiple locations. Does not solve issues relating to interviewing of people, resolution of the heating, plumbing, records retention, locker rooms, or any other Police Department issues. Acquisition of the property does involve procurement through people who work for the town.

10. Lease-to-Own Build-to-Suit Police Department (e.g., 726–730 Main Street + Myrtle Street)

Pros: This is the fastest path to a modern, purpose-built police facility. The Town avoids large upfront capital costs because the developer finances construction. Annual lease payments are predictable, and the Town can purchase the building at the end of the lease. The developer carries construction and financial risk. The offered parcels total 1.61 acres, which is within the recommended minimum buildable area. The site has strong visibility on Main Street and is already assembled.

Cons: The total long-term cost is higher than direct municipal bonding because developer profit and financing costs are built into the lease. The Town does not own the building during the lease period. The 1.61-acre site is workable but tight for secure parking, circulation, and future expansion. Zoning changes or special permits may be required. Long-term lease obligations reduce future budget flexibility.

6 Appendices

Appendix A – Site Criteria and Scoring

Appendix B – Space needs assessment

Appendix C – Apdx C - Town Hall Assessment and Floor Plans

Appendix D – 01/30/2023 Revised Dalton ADA Transition Plan

Appendix E – Department of Labor Citation

Appendix F – DPD Air Quality Assessment June 2024

Appendix G - DPD Air Quality Assessment September 2025

Appendix H - DPD Bathroom Asbestos EGC Report

Appendix I – DPD Cell Report 11/23/2022

Appendix J - DPD Cell Report 12/31/2024

Appendix K - DPD Cell Report 09/23/2025

Appendix L – Dalton Mitigation Plan