

Cd'A council mulls public safety bond, police substation

A multi-million dollar public safety bond and establishment of a police substation on East Sherman Avenue received strong support from the Coeur d'Alene City Council this week during a 2014-15 budget strategy session.

The city is considering going to voters in May 2015 to seek support for a General Obligation Bond that would fund capital needs for the police and fire departments for the next 10 years. The measure would replace a \$7 million public safety bond approved by voters in 2005.

Officials have not determined the amount of the proposed 2015 bond, but it will be less than the previous measure, said city finance director Troy Tymeson.

If approved, it is intended to use a bulk of the funding for fire and police vehicles, minimizing the financial impact on the city's general fund, Tymeson told the council. It would also fund construction of a much-needed joint use storage building on city-owned property near Fire Station 2 at Ramsey Road and Kathleen Avenue.

Fire Chief Kenny Gabriel said the bond would allow for the purchase of three fire engines and a ladder truck, as well as replacement of the rest of his department's aging fleet. Interim police Chief Ron Clark said his department plans to purchase patrol cars, freeing up funds to hire new officers.

The police substation would be located at a former motel on the 1500 block of Sherman Avenue. The building is currently being leased by St. Vincent DePaul. Under a partnership agreement with the agency, the city would not pay rent. However remodel of the building and extension of necessary fiber optic cable would cost an estimated \$30,000.

City officials have been fielding a growing number of complaints about vagrants who frequent that area and are causing problems. Increasing visibility, Chief Clark said, would help to deter those activities.