

## Communications shelter for Turkey Hill

By Carol Britton Meyer

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HINGHAM - A proposed telecommunications support shelter on Turkey Hill would not only enhance public safety but would also save the town money,

That's the word from Fire Chief Mark Duff when presenting the plan to the selectmen.

This week the board approved an agreement with Aquarion Water Company for the town to construct such a building at the water tank site located at the end of Turkey Hill Lane in Hingham. This two-million-gallon water storage tank is located on the Hingham/Cohasset line.

"This agreement if enacted will result in a substantial savings to the town while at the same time providing increased public safety communications and interoperability," Duff said.

Currently the police department's primary radio transmitter is located at a privately owned site on Turkey Hill in Cohasset. A yearly \$4,000 fee is paid.

As part of a plan to upgrade the fire department communications equipment, it would be necessary to install its primary radio transmitter at the same location and pay at least a \$4,000 fee. These charges are normally increased on an annual basis.

As an alternative, the agreement with the water company would allow a telecommunications support building that would house both the fire and police department radio equipment to be built on Aquarion property, with room for future expansion. There would be no annual fees.

The responsibility of the town would be limited to proper maintenance of the shelter in addition to paying all electrical costs.

"Having our own communications building will allow us better control of our equipment and will result in a long-term cost savings," Duff said. The estimated price tag for the shelter, which is included in an appropriation approved at last April's Town Meeting, is \$35,000.

Some grant money may be available, but nothing is definite along those lines.

Also included in that appropriation are funds for a fire department radio upgrade.

Duff recalled that several years ago Aquarion asked to meet with the fire department concerning water issues in

the community. "You can imagine how important water is to the fire department operation," he said.

During those discussions, Duff broached the possibility of building a communications building at that site, which met with a favorable response from Aquarion.

"I've been asking for this for many years, and now we're good to go," Duff said. "We're very excited about it. This is a tremendous opportunity for the town to provide a better, safer, and more secure shelter for our equipment. This site could also accommodate two to four more antennas in the future."

A site plan review by the zoning board of appeals is required before the project could move forward. If all goes as planned, construction could begin as early as July.

"This is quite a service Aquarion would provide to the town," said selectman Laura Burns.

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/hingham/news/x1489201978/Communications-shelter-for-Turkey-Hill>