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**Information and Frequently Asked Questions about the Decision to Relocate
Framingham Health Department to the Callahan Center**

Framingham, MA- There has been a great deal of discussion about the decision to relocate the Framingham Health Department, including several inaccuracies. The purpose of this communication is to provide the factual details of the decision to move Public Health Department to the Callahan Center.

How did this challenge start?

The Health Department is being dislocated due to the Fuller School building construction project starting this summer. The lack of viable options for a new location is a result of decades of decisions the town did not make regarding investment in our public buildings. Over the many years, Framingham conducted study after study to look at what needs to be done to maintain our buildings but took very little action. Under our new city form of government, we can no longer kick this can down the road; we must make decisions about our facilities now, otherwise we will be in the same situation in the future.

The condition of the buildings from which we operate have a direct impact on our ability as a municipality to efficiently and effectively deliver the services our residents and businesses expect and pay for with their tax dollars. We have included funding in the FY2020 Capital Plan to put a comprehensive strategy together to deal with this issue, and we look for the City Council's support to approve this funding.

Unfortunately, the Fuller School Building project has forced our hand to find an interim solution for a new location for our Health Department before we could put together a much more comprehensive plan for all of our facilities. We have been working since the vote of the Fuller School project in December 2018 to determine the best options to relocate the Health Department. We worked through a number of these options and none of them were good or desirable. The decision of where to relocate our Health Department has been portrayed as rash when, we have exhausted every option. In fact, many of the options we evaluated were just not financially or logistically viable.

What did we consider?

The City's professional staff looked at a number of options for relocation of the Health Department. There were numerous meetings, discussions and research to determine viable options. Following were the significant sites considered and why they were determined to not be viable:

- **Perini Building**

The Perini building was one of the first options that was looked at. There are 3,000 square feet available and the price was \$19 per square feet or \$57,000 per year just for the use of the building. That's \$57,000 on top of the expense of making the move, estimated at \$65,000-\$75,000 (one time) for construction costs, movers, and office furniture and technology equipment. The building is not handicap accessible and has access restrictions due to other occupants' use of the building. For these reasons, the Perini Building was determined to not be a viable option for the Health Department.

- **City Hall Memorial Building**

There is already a lack of useable space for the current divisions and departments operating in the Memorial Building. The only way to move the Health Department into the Memorial Building would be to move another division or department out. In addition, improvements would have to be made to provide for the health clinic, and electrical rewiring would have to be done to put the Health Department's medical supplies onto a circuit that is connected to the building's generator. Currently, the City Hall generator can only handle a few critical circuits that are necessary in emergency situations. A new location and accommodations would have to be found and additional expenses incurred to relocate the other division or department to be moved. This arrangement was determined to be achievable but more expensive and more disruptive than the Callahan option.

- **Danforth Building**

The Danforth Building was vacated three years ago due to its deteriorated condition. It would be cost prohibitive to address the environmental cleanup costs to make even a portion of the building useable. The Danforth Building was determined to not be a viable option for the Health Department.

- **Old McAuliffe Library Building**

The building was gutted to remove asbestos and repair damage from a significant water leak. It is currently a shell and is used as the Capital Projects and Facilities Division workshop and storage facility. Further, the building is not large enough for 16 staff members and has just four parking spaces. It is also used as our IT server backup. The cost to renovate the old McAuliffe building would be more than the cost of moving to the Callahan Center. The Health Department staff would have to work alongside the Facilities construction crew that would be working to completely remodel the building. The timeline needed to make the old McAuliffe Library building suitable to house the Health Department is far longer than the time we have to make the move and far too expensive. The old McAuliffe Library Building was determined to not be a viable option for the Health Department.

- **Hollis Street Fire Station (former fire station, currently Amazing Things Art Center)**

The Hollis Street Fire Station is currently used by Amazing Things Art Center that is working diligently to provide cultural programs for Framingham. Amazing Things has a lease that entitle it to use the Hollis Street Fire Station subject to limited exceptions. Even assuming Amazing

Things could be asked to leave consistent with the lease, such a move would require removing Amazing Things from the building and jeopardizing their programs. Even assuming it is legally permissible to terminate or modify the lease and it is a good policy goal to do so, the Hollis Street Fire Station would require a significant build out and substantial cost just to bring the City's internet services to the building. The City wants to avoid shutting down a cultural program for a building that is not well suited or cost effective to turn into a municipal office and clinical space. The Hollis Street Fire Station was determined to not be a viable option for the Health Department.

- **Other offsite commercial leased space**

The cost of paying for leased space and the added expenses of extending municipal network services to a new commercial space would be too cost prohibitive. There were no commercial lease space options that were viable.

- **Fuller Middle School**

We considered the option of allowing the construction crew that is building the new middle school to work out of pods and not move the Health Department from its current location. This was not a viable option because the entrance and area around where the Health Department is located will become a staging site for construction and will be unsafe for staff members and the public to access on a daily basis.

Is the City legally able to use the Callahan Center to house the Health Department on an interim basis?

The Callahan Center building is one of the newer City buildings, having been purchased in 2004 when Framingham was still a town. Neither the Purchase and Sale Agreement nor the deed transferring ownership from the prior owner to the (then) Town contain any restrictions or limitations on how the Callahan Center should be used. Prior to the sale, discussions occurred about a potential covenant that would limit the uses for the Callahan Senior Center. However, the covenant was never executed and is not in the chain of title.

A 2004 Special Town Meeting vote requires that the Callahan Center be primarily used as a Senior Center for 25 years unless there was a vote by the Board of Selectmen and a 2/3rds vote of Town Meeting to change the property's purpose. There was specific discussion at the Board of Selectmen's meeting considering this action to allow the Town to reserve its rights to allow other services, so long as the primary use remained for senior services. The Town Meeting vote will be fully complied with even after the Health Department is moved into the Callahan Center. Neither the Senior Center operations nor the Council of Aging will be moved out of Callahan and approximately 89% of the usable square footage of Callahan will remain dedicated to senior center operations after the Health Department moves in. Legal investigation continues but no impediments to this move have been discovered to date.

What are the positive impacts this move could have?

Currently, the Health Department offers several programs and services for older adults in the City. They provide vaccinations including flu, pneumonia, and shingles. They also collect unwanted medications and sharps from residents suffering from diabetes. For the past year the Health Department staff has

included a Health Aging Program Coordinator, who works closely with the Callahan Center to coordinate the Framingham Age and Dementia Friendly Coalition. Together they are gathering feedback from older adults about their needs and interests, providing dementia awareness information sessions, and will soon begin offering the Honoring Choices program, which supports end of life planning.

Moving forward, the two departments can explore additional opportunities that will benefit participants of the Callahan Center. These may include fall prevention programs and services, chronic disease self-management programs, healthy eating programs and senior-specific nursing clinics as needed. The Health Department is also an active member of the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative and works closely with Framingham's AARP liaison. They monitor both of these networks for funding opportunities that will bring more resources to Framingham's older adults.

Vision for the City's Health Department colocation at the Callahan Center:

- **SPACE:** The total area of the Callahan center is 23,000 square feet. It has been reported that the Health Department will occupy one-third of the Callahan Center or even the entire second floor. These reports are inaccurate. The total square footage being allocated for the Health Department is 2,595 square feet, or about 11% of the building.

The Health Department is locating in the front north corner of the building and will have its own separate handicapped-accessible entrance. Further, we are renovating inside to segregate the space from the Center's programs. We will use roughly 509 square-feet of space now used for programs and the remaining space will be taken from storage areas. While we are taking some space for programs, the events and programs at the Center will be minimally impacted.

- **PARKING:** There are 98 parking spaces available at the Callahan center. (A note of comparison: City Hall has 44 parking spaces). We've examined the utilization of the parking area by seniors and the timing of their programs when the parking lot is full.

The parking plan for the Health Department employees is for the inspectors to arrive before activities begin and depart to conduct their inspections while most activities are happening. Historically, most programs at the Center run 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Inspectors will return to the Center when activities are complete to end their work days. Most other Health Department staff will park their vehicles at the Bowditch Field. With these approaches, we don't see the Health Department employees adding any significant impact to current parking demand at the Callahan Center.

- **CLINIC:** Clinic hours will be 2:30-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday to avoid conflict with activities and programs.
- **COSTS:** Callahan Center: \$65,000-\$75,000 (one time) – construction costs, movers, office furniture and technology equipment.

The Callahan Center building is supported by a generator when there is a loss of power. The generator can produce enough power to maintain proper temperatures of the medicines and immunizations, which is a requirement for the Health Department. All other spaces we considered do not have generators, proper wiring or the correct kind of generators to meet the Health Department's needs.

Relocating to the Callahan Center proved is the most fiscally responsible decision for the City.

- **When:**
The move would happen by mid-June.

Why has there been no communications on this until now?

Frankly, we were in the middle of finalizing the plan and intended to brief the Council on Aging and Callahan Center staff before announcing the decision publicly when incomplete information was released and inaccurately portrayed by those not involved in the process. We don't regret the decision, but we do regret that people experienced worry that resulted from inaccurate information.

Frequently Asked Questions we are hearing from residents:

1. Will older adults be exposed to unvaccinated children?

The risk of exposure will be no greater than going to the grocery store. The clinic will have its own entrance separate from the one used by those attending the senior center and clinic hours (Monday-Friday 2:30-4:30) will be set for times after most senior activities are finished.

2. I understand non-English speakers will be taking over the Callahan Center. Is that true?

Framingham is made up of people from all over the world, and they don't always speak English. It's part of the reason our community is incredibly rich and diverse. Many people using the clinic are new immigrants, and do not speak English. Yes, you will see some new faces and possibly hear different languages, but the Callahan Center already is working to cater to the diverse audience of Framingham by translating communications in more than one language. For example, they employ multi-lingual staff, offer an ongoing social group for Spanish speaking older adults (Grupo Latino Americano) and translate written materials into more than one language.

3. How many Callahan Staff will lose their jobs because of this change?

No one working for the Callahan Center will lose his or her job because the Department of Health is co-locating there.

4. Will the Health Department be co-located at the Callahan Center permanently?

This would not be a permanent move. The City is conducting a comprehensive analysis of the municipal buildings, their conditions and strategy to deal with maintaining our buildings, making them cost efficient while delivering services to the residents and businesses of Framingham. The City is working to find a more suitable, permanent location for the Health Department. This is a bigger issue than having to co-locate two organizations. This issue was built over decades of



inaction. We are not going to be able to fix it overnight, but we are taking action to rectify the situation.

5. When do programs run at the Callahan Center?

Most of the activities that draw a large number of participants run between 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

6. I heard that 1/3 of the Callahan Center or even the entire top floor will be taken over by the Health Department. Is this true?

These reports are inaccurate. The total square footage being allocated for the Health Department in the 23,000 square-foot Callahan Center is 2,595 square feet, or about 11% of the building.

7. How many programs will be cancelled because of this move?

We are working with the Callahan Center to minimize the number of programs that may be disrupted, and no programs will be cancelled.

8. What is the busiest time for the Health Department?

The highest use of the Health Department staff for their office space is before 10 a.m. and after 2:30 p.m., which coordinates well with most of the senior center activities that are mostly between 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

9. When will the clinic operate?

The clinic will operate Monday-Friday 2:30-4:30 p.m. after most Callahan Center programming is complete.

10. Will the Health Department inspectors take up too much parking at the Callahan Center?

Inspectors will leave their personal vehicles during the day at the Pearl Street garage when they pick up their city vehicles, which will be parked overnight there. They will not be taking up many of the 98 parking spaces at the center. Most other Health Department staff will park their vehicles at the Bowditch Field.

11. What about people coming to the clinic. Won't they take up parking spaces?

The clinic will operate Monday-Friday 2:30-4:30 p.m. after most Callahan Center programming is complete. While some people who go to the clinic will take some of the 98 parking spaces, many travel to the clinic via the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority bus. Between the strategic timing of the clinic hours, which will occur after most programs are complete and the use of public transportation by those who use the clinic, there should be little impact on available parking.

12. I keep hearing about how this is a "win-win." What benefits do Framingham's older adults get with this change?

The Health Department is committed to working closely with staff from the Callahan Center to support the needs and interests of their participants. By sharing a location, the two can better coordinate existing programs and services (health education programs, sharps and medication



dispensaries, flu clinics), and can work together to secure additional resources that will benefit older adults. Other communities have seen beneficial synergies from the collocation of city departments such as health and senior services.

13. The Mayor seems to just care about the young people, thinking only about the Fuller Middle School. What about Framingham's older adults?

The Mayor cares about all the people of Framingham. Building a better, healthier and more vibrant community means making decisions that require making changes. For some, changes are at first look concerning or even upsetting. However, done with some thought and ingenuity, those decisions can result in better results for everyone. A good portion of the Health Department's activities are in support of older adults. Though the Health Department move out of the Fuller School Building was a necessity, moving to the Callahan Center is an opportunity to expand health services to the older adults of Framingham. The employees of the senior center and the health department are all dedicated to helping the residents of Framingham. By working more closely together during the interim time that they are collocated they will create a stronger working relationship and better health programs for older adults.