

# Joint Station Site Recommended

North Wilkesboro Town Manager Larry South has recommended building a joint police and fire station on Second Street from among public safety facility options.

South made the recommendation when the matter was briefly discussed during a town board work session Thursday night in preparation for the board's Oct. 4 regular meeting.

Jim Powell of ADW Architects presented several options to the board in August.

South estimated the total cost of the Second Street option at \$7.2 million, which included buying 19.5 acres for about \$500,000. The land belongs to several heirs.

North Wilkesboro Fire Chief Jimmy Martin said he would like to keep the current fire station at 709 Ninth Street maintained for downtown use, including keeping the aerial truck there.

Mayor Robert Johnson agreed with Martin about the value of keeping a satellite station near downtown.

Commissioner Debbie Ferguson said it would be prudent to acquire an option on the Second Street property as soon as possible.

Commissioner Bart Hayes said the Second Street site was very attractive.

Hayes said he could also envision a fine municipal structure on the site of the former Elk's Lodge at the intersection of Second Street and Finley Avenue, which the town recently purchased.

Hayes said the option of building facilities for the fire and police stations on the Elk's Lodge property wasn't practical because it lacked room for growth.

Another option presented was renovating and expanding the former Wilkes County Women's Detention Center on Boston Avenue for use as the primary fire station and renovating the current police station in the former town hall on Main Street, North Wilkesboro.

A discussion of the public safety facility was added to the Oct. 4 meeting.