

Cyndie Martel

From: Stephanie DiMarco <stephaniegdimarco@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 6, 2025 8:53 AM
To: CouncilAll
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ross Firehouse

Dear Council Members,

I'm writing to share the chronology of events that led to the launch of the ballot initiative to maintain a firehouse in Ross.

Back in March, when Council reviewed the decision to move forward with a Master Plan without a firehouse, residents packed the chambers—standing room only—to urge consideration of alternatives. Council received many letters, and former mayor Charlie Goodman volunteered to form a group to fund a review of other options. Despite this groundswell, Council voted 3–2 against even exploring whether there was an alternative to permanently closing the door on Ross having a Firehouse in Town.

That decision left many residents frustrated about this critical issue of public safety. Ross is safer with a local Firehouse staffed by EMT's and paramedics. Shortly afterward, I met with Julie McMillan and Bill Kircher and offered that a group of residents—real estate experts and business leaders—were eager to collaborate and personally fund a review of alternative plans. The offer was declined. Soon after, Bob Herbst and Ed Dong made a similar generous proposal. That, too, was rejected by Julie McMillan and Bill Kircher.

With no willingness from Town leadership to collaborate and no path forward, residents formed Friends of Ross Firehouse. The mission: to independently evaluate alternatives and give Ross voters—not just three members of a divided Council—the opportunity to vote on whether Ross would ever have a local Firehouse again.

The community response has been overwhelming. In fewer than 45 days, with minimal effort, 330 residents signed a petition to put this on the ballot. Many more have expressed their support and commitment to restoring historic emergency response times in Ross. Signed petitions were delivered to the Town last week. Even then, Bob Herbst reached out one more time to offer collaboration with Council. Again, there was no response.

Instead of engaging residents, the Town has called a Special Meeting with just two days' notice—not to collaborate, but to authorize \$85,000 for consultants to evaluate the impact of the initiative. With no new Town information since the Council vote in March 2021, it seems the proposed \$85,000 for consultant reviews would produce no new conclusions - but would be a waste of taxpayer money to defend a project that has already consumed hundreds of thousands of dollars in consulting fees.

I struggle to understand this posture. Why won't Town leadership engage sincerely with residents who are donating their time, energy, and personal resources to find alternatives to a basic question of public safety? Why continue spending taxpayer money to defend a plan that has little chance of earning the two-thirds voter approval it requires? Why the strenuous opposition to looking at alternatives? Especially as the alternatives are being researched by expert residents donating their own time and resources? Why is the Town fighting with the residents, - don't we all have the same goals?

Problems are solved creatively when people are open to looking at different alternatives and perspectives. I would hope our Town Council would be approaching this important project with an open mindset.

Sincerely,

Stephanie DiMarco

Cyndie Martel

From: Stephanie DiMarco <stephaniegdimarco@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 6, 2025 8:47 AM
To: Cyndie Martel; town council@townofross.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Firehouse issue

Dear Council Members,

I'm writing to share the chronology of events that led to the launch of the initiative to maintain a firehouse in Ross.

Back in March, when Council reviewed the decision to move forward with a Master Plan without a firehouse, residents packed the chambers—standing room only—to urge consideration of alternatives. Council received many letters, and former mayor Charlie Goodman volunteered to form a group to fund a review of other options. Despite this groundswell, Council voted 3–2 against even exploring whether there was an alternative to permanently closing the door on Ross having a Firehouse in Town.

That decision left many residents frustrated about this critical issue of public safety. Ross is safer with a local Firehouse staffed by EMT's and paramedics. Shortly afterward, I met with Julie McMillan and Bill Kircher and offered that a group of residents—real estate experts and business leaders—were eager to collaborate and personally fund a review of alternative plans. The offer was declined. Soon after, Bob Herbst and Ed Dong made a similar generous proposal. That, too, was rejected by Julie McMillan and Bill Kircher.

With no willingness from Town leadership to collaborate and no path forward, residents formed Friends of Ross Firehouse. The mission: to independently evaluate alternatives and give Ross voters—not just three members of a divided Council—the opportunity to vote on whether Ross would ever have a local Firehouse again.

The community response has been overwhelming. In fewer than 45 days, with minimal effort, 330 residents signed a petition to put this on the ballot. Many more have expressed their support and commitment to restoring historic emergency response times in Ross. Signed petitions were delivered to the Town last week. Even then, Bob Herbst reached out one more time to offer collaboration with Council. Again, there was no response.

Instead of engaging residents, the Town has called a Special Meeting with just two days' notice—not to collaborate, but to authorize \$85,000 for consultants to evaluate the impact of the initiative. With no new Town information since the Council vote in March 2021, it seems the proposed \$85,000 for consultant reviews would produce no new conclusions - but would be a waste of taxpayer money to defend a project that has already consumed hundreds of thousands of dollars in consulting fees.

I struggle to understand this posture. Why won't Town leadership engage sincerely with residents who are donating their time, energy, and personal resources to find alternatives to a basic question of public safety? Why continue spending taxpayer money to defend a plan that has little chance of earning the two-thirds voter approval it requires? Why the strenuous opposition to looking at alternatives? Especially as the alternatives are being researched by expert residents donating their own time and resources? Why is the Town fighting with the residents, - don't we all have the same goals?

Problems are solved creatively when people are open to looking at different alternatives and perspectives. I would hope our Town Council would be approaching this important project with an open mindset. Up until now, unfortunately it's been quite the opposite approach.

Sincerely,

Stephanie DiMarco