ELLENVILLE FIRE DISTRICT

Proposed Central Firehouse Facility — Comprehensive Taxpayer Fact Sheet



VOTE REFERENDUM INFORMATION

- **Bond Vote Date & Time:** Tuesday, December 8, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
- **Polling Location:** Greenfield Park Station, 7025 NY-52 (Route 52 West).
- **Public Open House:** Sunday, November 29, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Scoresby Station (Maple Ave, Ellenville).
- **Proposed Bond Amount:** Not to exceed $19,997,000 repaid over 30 years (based on Nov 3, 2026 competitive low bid).
- **Project Location:** Consolidated Central Firehouse at 203 S. Main Street (Route 209), Ellenville, NY.

1. Executive Overview & Proposal Summary

On Tuesday, December 8, 2026, residents of the Ellenville Fire District will vote on a capital bond proposal not to exceed **$19,997,000** to finance the construction of a modern, consolidated central firehouse at 203 S. Main Street (Route 209). The proposal consolidates central operations currently operating out of two outdated, non-District-owned leased facilities, while preserving full operational reach at the Route 52 western substation.

The decision addresses severe operational, physical, and life-safety limitations that have accumulated over 150 years of adaptation. The project represents a deliberate, purpose-built investment in firefighter decontamination, apparatus fit, structural resilience, and long-term taxpayer stewardship—delivering a facility engineered to serve the community for 40 years or more without funding luxury amenities or paid-staff living quarters.

Key Project Specifications at a Glance

Parameter	Project Specification / Financial Fact
Facility Location & Size	203 S. Main Street (Route 209); 28,115 gross square feet
Apparatus Capabilities	6 full-sized bays with 14-ft door clearances, radiant floor heat, & trench drains

Parameter	Project Specification / Financial Fact
Firefighter Health & Safety	3-zone decontamination system (Hot/Transition/Clean) + 76 new gear lockers
Facility Resilience	350 kW standby generator & 1,200A service (24/7 emergency shelter ready)
Total Bond Financing Limit	Not to exceed $19,997,000 over 30 years (Low base bid: $19,397,000 / $690 per SF)

2. Ellenville Volunteer Fire Service & Operational Scale

Fire protection across the Ellenville Fire District is provided 100% by trained volunteer firefighters who respond 24 hours a day, 365 days a year from within the community. Three historic volunteer companies form the foundation of the department:

- **Pioneer Engine Company No. 1:** Founded in 1856, serving the community for 170 years.
- **Scoresby Hose Company No. 1:** Founded in 1872, serving for 154 years.
- **Kimble Hose Company No. 1:** Founded in 1889, serving for 137 years.

Together, these volunteer firefighters protect a geographical footprint of **53 square miles** and respond to over 450 emergency calls annually (including 468 incidents in 2024 and 400 incidents in 2025).

Economic Value of the All-Volunteer Model

Maintaining an all-volunteer model generates substantial recurring tax savings for property owners. The District's 2026 operational budget is $1.14M (and $1.36M for 2027). A 2023 statewide economic study by FASNY and Resolution Economics demonstrated the financial impact of volunteer service:

- **Career System Conversion Cost:** Replacing Ellenville's volunteer system with a paid career department would add an estimated $1.0M to $1.3M annually in operational payroll and benefit expenses, plus requiring the construction of dedicated paid-staff living quarters.
- **Tax Levy Impact:** In Ulster County volunteer response areas, converting to an all-career system would trigger an estimated 45.1% increase in the general property tax levy (compared to 28.4% or $4.7B annually statewide).

Providing a safe, modern facility is essential to supporting the recruitment, retention, and operational readiness of the volunteer firefighters who deliver this immense economic value to local taxpayers.

3. Current Operating Footprint & Physical Limitations

The District currently operates from three separate locations: two central/east stations (Canal Street and Scoresby Station) and one western substation on Route 52. These facilities suffer from severe physical and operational deficiencies that hinder modern emergency response:

- **Facility Ownership & Lease Constraints:** The District does not own its central facilities. The Canal Street station is leased, and the 1910s Scoresby building is owned by the Scoresby Hose Company and rented by the District. Because the District does not own these properties, it cannot legally or structurally expand, renovate, or consolidate operations on these sites.

- **Apparatus Fit & Clearance Limits:** Existing truck bays were built for early 20th-century vehicles. Modern fire apparatus are significantly taller and wider. The department's 55-foot aerial ladder truck requires a 14-foot overhead clearance door and adequate turn-around radius—space the 1910s buildings cannot provide. In current bays, clearances around apparatus are measured in inches, creating collision hazards and restricting vehicle choices.
- **Hazardous Contamination & Decontamination Deficiencies:** Current stations lack dedicated decontamination zones or clean/dirty separation. After responding to structural fires, turnout gear carries hazardous soot, smoke particulates, and toxic chemicals. Federal safety guidelines from NIOSH emphasize that carcinogens transfer from gear to skin, equipment, and living areas. Currently, firefighters wash and dry gear in improvised closets or hang contaminated gear on porch railings, exposing members and visitors to toxins.
- **Infrastructure Degradation & Utility Patchwork:** The central facilities rely on outdated fuse-based electrical panels incapable of supporting modern digital communications or emergency power loads. Heating is maintained through a patchwork of heavy oil tanks, cast-iron radiators, wood/pellet stoves, and drafty doors sealed with plastic sheeting. Improvised indoor work often forces hose washing and equipment drills onto outdoor parking aprons in winter weather.

4. Proposed Central Firehouse Facility Specifications

The proposed project at 203 S. Main Street (Route 209) establishes a purpose-built, 28,115-square-foot central station engineered to solve every operational shortcoming identified in the current footprint while maintaining the Route 52 substation for western district coverage.

Core Facility Components

Six Modern Apparatus Bays: Designed with 14-foot door clearances, drive-through capability, radiant floor heating, and integrated trench drainage to accommodate the current fleet and future apparatus.

Three-Zone Health Decontamination System: Establishes strict environmental separation between dirty response areas and clean living/training spaces:

- **Hot Zone (Return):** Gross decontamination area where firefighters remove, wash, and bag contaminated turnout gear immediately upon returning from a call.
- **Transition Zone:** Equipped with commercial gear washer-extractors (e.g., Smart-Wash 40), Smart-Dry cabinets, and decontamination showers.
- **Clean Zone (Ready):** Houses 76 new gear lockers, administrative offices, and training rooms kept 100% free of hazardous toxins.

350 kW Emergency Standby Power & Resilience: Features a 350 kW standby generator and 1,200-amp electrical service, ensuring that radio communications, lighting, bay doors, and emergency shelter operations remain fully functional during grid power outages and severe storms.

Community & Operational Functionality: Provides dedicated firefighter training space, administrative record storage, radio rooms, and a community assembly space designed to serve as a 24/7 public emergency shelter with food preparation capabilities during major disasters.

Design Philosophy: 'The F-150 XLT' of Firehouses

The District has adopted a practical design standard often described as the **'F-150 XLT trim'** of municipal buildings: providing all essential tools required for the job without spending taxpayer money on luxury features. The facility includes robust operating systems (six bays, decon workflow, generator, crew spaces), but explicitly excludes glass showpiece architecture, premium ornamental finishes, bunk rooms, or living quarters for paid staff.

5. Financial Breakdown & Taxpayer Impact Analysis

Financial specifications for the project are grounded in competitive, single-prime trade bids opened publicly on **November 3, 2026**, providing transparent, verified construction costs prior to the bond vote.

Competitive Bid Tabulation & Financial Structure

Financial Metric	Verified Amount & Terms
Public Low Base Bid (Nov 3, 2026)	$19,397,000 (Single-prime construction base bid)
Decided Scope (with heating conversion)	$19,411,000 (Base bid + heating system adjustment)
Maximum Authorized Bond Principal	Not to exceed $19,997,000 over 30 years ($711/SF max unit cost)
Pre-Funded District Investments	~$1,200,000 already paid in full from capital reserves (Land & Design)
Secured State Construction Grant	$55,000 state grant awarded (Future grants will pay down principal)

Estimated Household Tax Impact

Based on a conservative rate assumption of **4.79% over 30 years** (reflecting benchmark 25-year AA municipal yields from Nov 4, 2026), annual debt service is estimated at approximately $1.27M per year. The estimated tax impact for a typical homeowner is structured as follows:

Tax Breakdown for a $150,000 Assessed Home

Tax Component	Daily Cost	Monthly Cost	Annual Cost
New Bond Proposal Cost	$1.21 / day	$37.00 / month	$441.00 / year
Current District Operations Tax	$1.08 / day	$32.90 / month	$395.00 / year
Total District Tax (with Bond)	$2.29 / day	$69.90 / month	$836.00 / year

Note on Grants & Financing: The calculations above assume no grant offsets. The District is actively pursuing state and federal funding (including FEMA grants). Any grant funds secured will directly pay down the bond principal, reducing the final annual debt service and lowering taxpayer costs.

6. Analysis of Alternatives & Economic Risk of Delay

Before presenting the bond proposal, the District thoroughly evaluated alternative options, including facility renovation and project deferral.

Why Renovation Is Not a Viable Alternative

Renovating existing central facilities was rejected due to insurmountable legal, structural, and financial obstacles:

- **Lack of Building Ownership:** Two of the three central sites are leased or rented. The District cannot invest millions in public capital improvements on properties it does not own.
- **Physical & Structural Geometry:** Existing 1910s masonry structures cannot be expanded to accommodate 14-foot overhead apparatus doors, aerial maneuvering room, or 3-zone decon workflows.
- **Poor Economics:** Architectural estimates indicate that gut-renovating old facilities would cost 60% to 85% of new construction per square foot without achieving operational consolidation or long-term efficiency.

The High Cost of Project Delay

If the bond vote does not pass, the competitive bids received on November 3, 2026 must be legally rejected, and the project stopped. Delaying construction creates severe financial compounding:

- **Annual Construction Cost Escalation:** With construction inflation averaging 3.5% annually, a one-year delay adds approximately $679,000 to project costs (compounding to roughly $1.4 million over two years).
- **Continued Leased-Space Rent:** The District will continue wasting approximately $80,000 per year in budgeted rental fees for non-owned central space (excluding heat and electric).
- **Unresolved Life-Safety Exposure:** Firefighters will remain exposed to contaminated gear hazards and cramped apparatus conditions in 116-year-old structures.

7. Taxpayer FAQ & Referendum Voting Guide

Q: Will residents in the western portion of the District lose fire coverage?

A: No. Consolidated central operations will replace the two central leased buildings, but the Route 52 substation will remain fully operational to preserve western coverage.

Q: Does the $19,997,000 bond represent an estimated cost?

A: No. The bond figure is based on competitive public bids opened on November 3, 2026. Design fees and land acquisition (~$1.2M) have already been funded in full by the District.

Q: Are paid firefighter staff or bunk rooms included in this project?

A: No. The project is designed strictly for Ellenville's 100% volunteer fire service. It includes training, apparatus, and decontamination space, but no bunk rooms or living quarters for paid staff.

Q: Where and when do I vote on the bond proposal?

A: Voting takes place on Tuesday, December 8, 2026, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Greenfield Park Station (7025 NY-52). An Open House will be held on Sunday, November 29, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Scoresby Station.