

# Construction on fire hall and youth and elders centre set to begin this year

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Writer

Six Nations Band Council is moving forward with construction of both the long-awaited youth and elders centre, and much-needed main fire hall.

But money is tight. The fire hall will be built on a bare-bones budget and there is no money set aside for operations and maintenance for the youth and elders centre, council heard last Tuesday.

The youth and elders centre will cost \$4.9 million to build after council agreed to skim \$150,000 from the budget to go to building the fire hall.

The budget for the new fire hall is only \$2.65 million, with \$2 million of that coming from local tobacco giant, Grand River Enterprises.

Construction of the new fire hall is expected to begin this spring. Council still has no money

for operations and maintenance of the youth and elders centre. Construction will begin this spring with completion in February 2016.

Nith Valley Construction, at \$3.9 million, has been awarded the \$3.9 million centre contract.

It will contain a gymnasium, games room and elders room, among other features, and will be located between the community hall and Gaylord Powless Arena.

K.L. Martin and Associates has been awarded the \$297,000 design and administration fees contract. Equipment will cost \$250,000 and a youth and elders coordinator will be hired at \$60,000. The centre's logo and name contest cost \$1,000 and there is a 10 per cent construction contingency fund set aside at \$393,000.

"We have a pretty healthy budget here," said Public

Works Director Mike Montour.

Councillors Helen Miller and Wray Maracle were opposed to taking money out of the youth and elders centre budget and moving it over to the fire hall construction budget.

"This is money that could be used for the first-year of operations and maintenance (youth and elders centre) once it's up and running," said Maracle.

Coun. Terry General asked where the money for long-term operations and maintenance will come from.

But Montour said, "There's never been any plan."

The youth and elders centre budget had a surplus of over \$200,000, he said, and that's why they moved the money to the fire hall construction.

The Six Nations Fire Department has been without a home since summer 2013, after Labour Canada

officials found the building teeming with dangerously high levels of mould, deeming it unfit for human occupation.

The extra \$150,000 is going toward the purchase of furniture for the new fire hall, said Montour. The new hall will be built in the same location as the condemned building in Ohsweken at Fourth Line and Chiefswood Road.

Without the money Montour said they would have had to cut down the size of the building and lose square footage after cutting out 1,000 sq. feet from the original design.

"We're going to be taking out roughly 1,000 sq. feet, so as the fire department grows over the next 20, 30 years, they're going to be restrained by the size of their building. I mean, we have an excess amount of money in one pot and not enough in another pot. It makes perfect sense to go

ahead and share the re-

sources." The new fire hall will have

at least three and a half bays to house pumpers and a rescue boat.