Written by CAROL POMEDAY
Wednesday, 06 February 2013 19:01

Options under consideration include sharing new building with village or renting its vacated offices

Town of Belgium officials appear ready to acknowledge the Town Hall at 814 Main St. in Belgium has outlived its usefulness.

The wood-frame structure has no running water, makeshift heating and air-conditioning systems that are so loud it's difficult to hold meetings and is not handicapped accessible.

Town residents vote in the Belgium Fire Department hall.

Village of Belgium President Richard Howells has offered an office to the town in the new Village Hall that will be built for free by Ansay Associates in the New Luxembourg Village Square that will be developed west of the Luxembourg American Cultural Center.

Howells told the Town Board Monday it is OK with Mike and John Ansay for the town to have an office in the building. Howells said he's working with Mike Ansay's daughter to design the interior of the structure.

"Within two weeks we should have a couple of proposals to look at," Howells said.

The Ansays want to have a groundbreaking in spring or summer with the building completed by fall 2014, Howells said.

"We figured you would need an office for Ginger (Murphy, town clerk) and a vault (for town records)," Howells said.

"We're not looking for 50-50 on utilities and maintenance. You would basically pay for electricity, gas and water for the office. Town voting would perhaps stay at the fire department because the (new) Village Hall would not be big enough."

The town could also move into the offices that will be vacated by the village, Howells said.

Town Chairman Tom Winker found that idea intriguing, saying they could rent the entire space and have two offices, one for Murphy and the other for Treasurer Janet Coeur.

The Belgium Fire Department currently rents 78% of the building for its office and to house its fire trucks and equipment. The town pays 60% of the fire department's budget and the village 40%.

Whether the town moves to the new building or takes over the village's current offices, Winker said there will be costs for rent and utilities that the town doesn't pay now.

Supr. Bill Janeshek said the issue should be placed on the March agenda "so we can have a

meaningful discussion."

Fire Chief Dan Birenbaum said he's not sure if the fire department would want to move into a portion or all of the space that would be vacated by the village.

"I will have to discuss that with my officers and board of directors," he said. "If the town wants to move in, that would be fine also."

Plans for the new structure must go to the village Plan Commission for a recommendation to the Village Board.