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Selectmen weigh options for Bow community center

By Melissa Proulx

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BOW — Bow Fire Chief Mitch Harrington met with the Board of Selectmen to talk about the next steps with the community center off Bow Center Road.

The 60-year-old building is in need of some serious improvements and upgrades.

In 2013, the State Fire Marshal's Office inspected the building and sent the town a violation letter, saying it had three years to bring the building up to compliance.

Along with community events and clubs, the building also housed the town's fire trucks and equipment.

The fire marshal also gave the town a required schedule of when improvements should be made, saying that the building would need to be in compliance by Sept. 15, 2016, to continue to be used.

Though some recreation events are still held in the building — like Zumba and other exercise classes — the town's fire department has since relocated across the street to the new safety center on Knox Road.

One of Harrington's main concerns has to do with the storage situation at the facility.

"The problem with continuing where we're at is the lack of fire separation," he said.

Should a fire break out in the storage areas, there's nothing keeping it at bay from the assembly areas, like the gym, he said.

Harrington said he's not so much concerned about metal items that are being stored there but pieces like old furniture that could add fuel to a fire should one occur there.



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The Bow Center Road building used to house the town's fire department. (Melissa Proulx)

Selectmen decided on Tuesday to have the mezzanine storage area cleared out and to not allow any additional items to be kept there for now.

The town-owned property will be sorted through and either given to municipal departments or sold.

The other groups, like the Boy Scouts and Young at Heart Club, will have the next two months to get all of their material out of the building. They can also present a plan to selectmen to keep the items there in some sort of fire-proof container, but would need to do that within the next month.

With Town Meeting approaching as well, Town Manager David Stack will also be looking to get a definitive cost for making the minimum repairs and upgrades needed to bring the building up to code, and to install a fire alarm system.

But if residents say they aren't in favor of making any changes to the building, Selectman Chris Nicolopoulos said the town might have look into closing it down.