

Bellefonte borough aims to buy, upgrade historic Armory to house police department

centredaily.com/news/local/community/bellefonte/article265136836.html

By Halie Kines

August 31, 2022



Bellefonte Borough has entered into an agreement of sale for the original Armory building at 301 N. Spring Street. Abby Drey adrey@centredaily.com

The Bellefonte Police Department is getting a new home.

The Borough of Bellefonte entered into a sales agreement Tuesday for the original Armory building at 301 N. Spring St., Bellefonte, with the intention of renovating it for the police department, according to a press release from the borough.

The police department's current space within the borough building on West Lamb Street has "inadequate spacing" and the borough's strategic management plan previously recommended the facility be updated. The Bellefonte Borough Council toured the police department's space and agreed that the "facility overhaul was long overdue," the release states.

Issues with the current space included building security, safety issues, lack of space and modernization, employee morale and an unprofessional appearance.

To upgrade the existing space, the borough was awarded a \$1.8 million grant through the state Department of Community and Economic Development, with the help of Senate President Pro Tempore Jake Corman, R-Benner Township. The grant does not require any local match, the release states.

Around the same time, purchasing the former Armory building and relocating the department became an option. The asking price was “extremely attractive,” the release states. Some upgrades, such as ADA access, elevator installation and a sprinkler system, are needed. Those upgrades and the purchase price amount to \$1.8 million or less, the release states.

“Spending \$1.8 million to purchase and renovate the 26,000 square foot historic Armory over renovating the 2,000 square foot police department space will benefit the Armory, the entire borough staff and residents,” said Borough Council President Randy Brachbill.

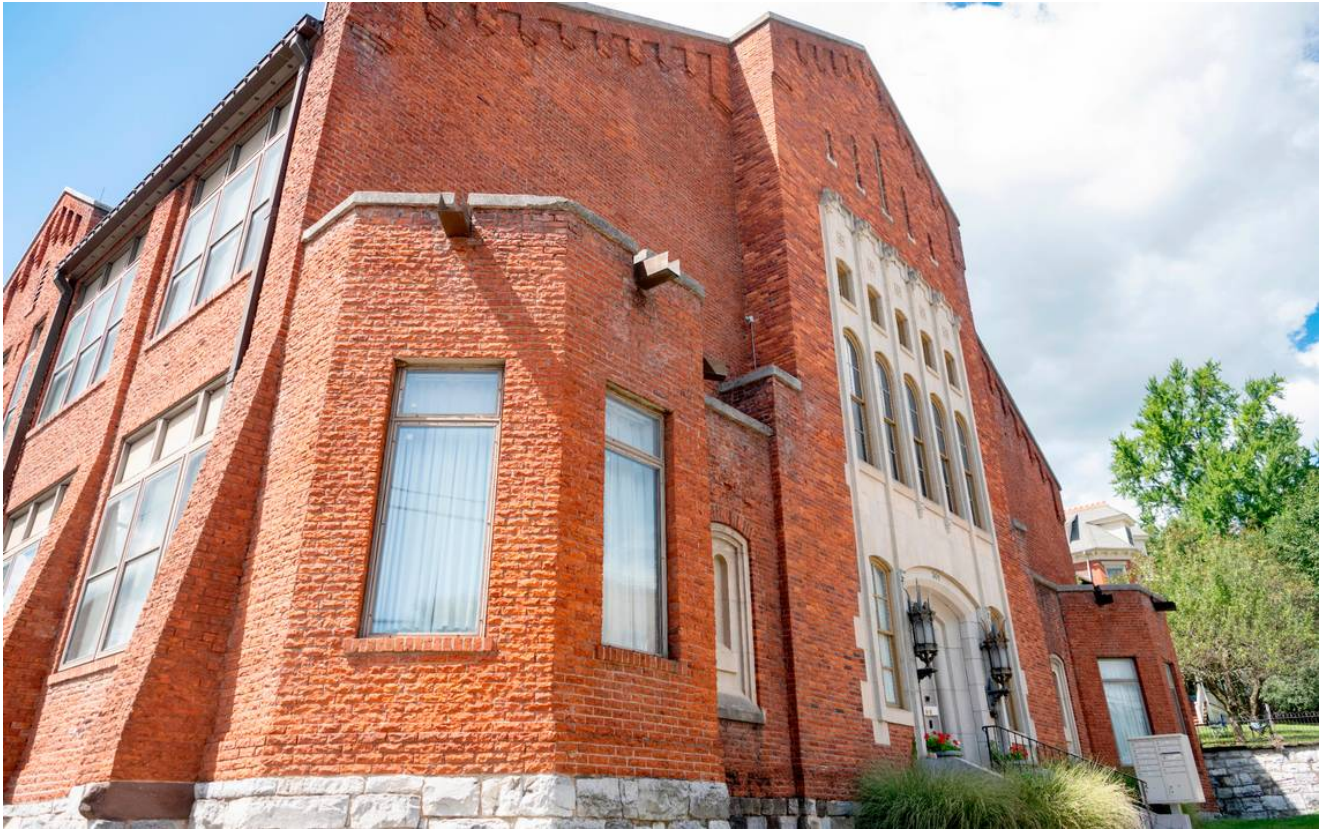
The borough hopes to close on the property at the end of September. The police department relocation will take place sometime in 2023, after upgrades have been completed.

Bellefonte Police Chief Shawn Weaver said the Armory will address all of the issues that the police department has been dealing with for decades.

“The department is looking forward to seeing firsthand the benefits of working in a facility that provides for all of the needs of the department. This facility upgrade will greatly alleviate many tangible and non-tangible obstacles that our officers and staff face on a daily basis,” Weaver said.

Because the Armory space is larger than what the police department needs, the borough is considering relocating the borough office and related departments, as well as storage of borough records, according to the release.

“The relocation will provide a large meeting room for council meetings as well as smaller conference rooms for department meetings and training,” the release states. “The current municipal building would continue to be the public works operations center and may have leasable space to support additional entities, yet to be determined.”



This story was originally published August 31, 2022 1:53 PM.