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Bethlehem will use grant money to put addition on its firehouse

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BETHLEHEM After more than 10 years of trying, volunteer firefighters will soon get an addition built onto their station.

Town officials agreed Wednesday night to find a contractor to add a 2,000 square-foot addition on the 6,000 square-foot building.

A \$211,000 grant from the state's Small Town Economic Assistance Program will pay for the project.

The grant was approved two years ago.

Construction must start by fall or the town risks losing the grant.

Harry Traver, first selectman, said the kinds of bids the town receives will determine when the work begins.

"This is something that has been a capital request for many years," Traver said. "It's something that's always on our list of things to do."

Architect Milton Gregory Grew, of Grew Design Inc. in Woodbury, drafted a plan that will make room for office and storage space on the east side of the building.

Fire Chief Mike Molzon said the department has received equipment from the state and federal government in recent years to help in case of a terrorist attack.

He said he is running out of space to store it all.

"We have had a lot of things thrust upon us in the last few years, which really made an addition necessary," he said.

The department has seven bays to hold six fire trucks and one ambulance.

Molzon said the ambulance association will also benefit from the addition because they, too, will have additional storage room.

The fire chief said he has 42 volunteers, which makes for cramped meetings.

"The addition," he said, "is really going to help make things easier."