

Lackawanna County expects to sell current HQ in 2018; one developer eyes it for apartments

JEFF HORVATH, STAFF WRITER / PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 4, 2017

At least one of the two developers interested in buying Lackawanna County's Administration Building would convert the space into apartments, he said.

After purchasing the former Globe Store in downtown Scranton for \$1.3 million and authorizing a \$17 million loan last year to convert the Wyoming Avenue landmark into the future home of government, the county received proposals in July from two parties — Scranton-based DFM Properties and Allentown-based Jefferson-Werner LLC — interested in buying the current Administration Building at 200 Adams Ave.

While it's unknown what the building will ultimately sell for, county officials have included a \$1.3 million line item, titled "Sale of Assets," as revenue in the tentative 2018 budget commissioners are expected to approve this month. The asset in question is the Administration Building, county Chief of Staff Andy Wallace confirmed.

The six-story structure now houses numerous county government departments,

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Family Court and the commissioners' offices, but may eventually serve as living space if sold to Jefferson-Werner LLC.

"I'm planning on putting apartments in there," said developer Charles Jefferson of Jefferson-Werner, who noted the building's configuration is conducive to a residential conversion. "I think I can get 50 or 60 (apartments) in there. ... There's a real interest in people wanting to be downtown, and I think that building is right at the center of it."

DFM Properties opted not to reveal its intended use of the building since the property has not yet been sold.

The two proposals are currently being reviewed, and the county hopes to make a decision on the sale of the building in early 2018, Wallace wrote in an email, adding that both Jefferson-Werner and DFM are "reputable and established developers who have done work in downtown Scranton."

Wallace also wrote that the county's goal is to receive the most money it can from the sale of the building and that a key condition of the county's request for proposals is that the building must be returned to the tax rolls.

County officials hope to be moved into the Globe — the future Lackawanna County Government Center — by December 2018. The county won't vacate its current administration building until the government center is ready to house operations, Wallace said.

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