City officially acquires Northfield complex
$8.1M deal the largest building purchase in City’s history

SPRING HILL, Tenn. – The City of Spring Hill on Wednesday officially closed on the $8.18 million purchase of the Workforce Development & Conference Center at Northfield, the City’s largest building purchase ever. The move allows for major expansion of City of Spring Hill building spaces while saving taxpayers millions of dollars.
The City of Spring Hill closed Dec. 21 on the $13.18 million loan needed to finance the building and related renovations through the Tennessee Municipal Bond Fund, and on Wednesday signed the sale closing documents to officially purchase the 38-acre property from the South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance. The annexation of the property into city limits is expected to be considered in January by the Planning Commission, and in February by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BOMA).

With exponential growth over the past decade, the City of Spring Hill has long outgrown its current municipal building spaces and has been preparing for expansion in recent years by budgeting for new building projects.

The BOMA in October approved a resolution to purchase the Workforce Development & Conference Center at Northfield with an offer of $8,180,000. The two-story, 355,000-square-foot office building at 5000 Northfield Lane is about a mile southwest of City Hall, off Saturn Parkway and U.S. 31. The seven connected buildings that make up Northfield currently serves a wide range of lease tenants, including the office of the South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance, satellite locations of college and technical school programs, two call centers, the Spring Hill Chamber of Commerce, among other offices, with extensive unfilled office space. These leases will remain, helping to cover the City’s cost of operating and maintaining the building.

Until September, the City’s original plans were to expand the Spring Hill Public Library from its current 17,000 square feet to 41,000 square feet, and to build a new Police Headquarters up to 39,000 square feet on the vacant, City-owned lot adjacent to City Hall at an estimated $9 million each. The SHPD headquarters currently functions out of leased office space in south Spring Hill.

“What a huge step this is for the City. Northfield is being purchased for less than half the combined $18 million cost of constructing new library and police buildings, and we will be getting over five times the space at Northfield as we would from those two building projects,” Mayor Rick Graham. “You could almost consider this cost-neutral due to the income already coming in from the existing lease-space tenants in the building. This is going to give the City of Spring Hill a whole new campus. It is very much a win-win-win for everyone. This is a great day for Spring Hill.”

The building also presents an opportunity to save additional funds on the $2 million anticipated for the future expansion of City Hall, and on the $400,000 currently budgeted to purchase land 30 miles south of Spring Hill for a Spring Hill Police training facility. That money could be saved by building the training facility on the Northfield property.

The BOMA will later determine which City facilities will be relocated to Northfield, along with the future use of the existing City Hall and library. Northfield will require renovations, which will be funded from the $5 million remaining from the total $13.18 million bond issue, but at a much lower cost than new construction.

Northfield, which includes a 100-seat auditorium and a 200-seat conference center, was originally the Saturn automotive headquarters when the automaker located to Spring Hill over 30 years ago. It was used to train Saturn auto mechanics and sales representatives for dealerships, and hold corporate meetings. The building was sold after Saturn’s
headquarters moved to Detroit in 2007, and a few years later GM halted production of Saturn and discontinued the Saturn brand in 2010.

The South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance (SCTWA), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to workforce development and economic development in an eight-county region of South Central Tennessee, later purchased the building, transforming it into thriving lease space for local businesses and nonprofits.

“The South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance is thrilled; this is a one-of-a kind public-private partnership project,” said SCTWA Executive Director Jan McKeel. “I have no doubt that building would not exist today if we had not been the caretakers of it, and I know the City is going to do a beautiful job with it.”