

Board of Fire Commissioners
February 10, 2020
Municipal Office Complex
Meeting Room 1
Special Meeting

Commissioners present: Jennifer Spencer, Bruce Dutch, Howie Bogue
Visitors: First Selectman Rob Smith, Finance Director Cindy Varricchio

1. Call to order at 5:31pm.
2. 2020-2021 Budget Workshop
 - A. First Selectman Smith reviewed past history of Fire Department and purchases such as the new boat and pump as well as recent need to replace hydraulics that have all created a lack of trust when looking to make purchases from here on out. He strongly suggested we ask more questions and do better research when bringing requests for new budget and for future needs. He encouraged improved long range planning. Discussion took place regarding hydraulics and boat and recent issues.
 - B. Another discussion was regarding the ladder truck and what may be needed to stock the truck sufficiently. First Selectman Smith strongly encouraged, and Fire Commissioners all agreed, we need to determine possible increases in budget request prior to upcoming Board of Selectmen meeting. The plan is to obtain a copy of inventory that is expected to come with the Quint if we do get the grant and to review this and assess the need to adjust appropriately. The Fire Commissioners will determine if there is a current committee and have a commissioner join to assure improved assessment of needs and improved communications.
 - C. Question arose to determine what the department will do if the town is not given the grant. Discussion took place and a back up plan is necessary. There is an option of purchasing a used truck (ladder) but there will need to be significant background and information to be reviewed before a purchase like this as the Fire Department does not need to take on a used truck if it is not cost effective. The Fire Department will continue to reapply for the grant each year as a vehicle such as a ladder truck or more importantly a Quint can be a huge improvement to the safety of our fire fighters. The use of manual ladders is very risky especially with the terrain in our town. Repairing the truck is not an option as the open jump seats are no longer approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles. Another consideration is purchasing a Quint as it has five useful aspects to it which will compliment our fleet. Research will be done to assess basic cost of a Quint.
 - D. Reviewing trucks for replacement and/or refurbishing: As financing is of concern the commissioners plan to ask for approval to refurbish Engine 2-16 (mini pumper) instead of a replacement to save on costs as this truck is in need of improvement as it is in poor condition from significant rot. This will extend use possibly by an additional 20 years.
 - E. New boat purchase: Discussion took place with agreement that the commissioners and town should consider repurposing the boat to another department if possible. The boat is not able to be launched in all waterways in town. The boat has high sides making it

difficult to get someone rescued and into the boat for return to shore. The space is limited to getting a scoop stretcher onboard for patient transport and have a crew onboard as well.

- F. Crown Vic Officer Vehicle: Ms. Varricchio indicated thus far it has required \$8,000 in maintenance. The Chevy S-10 (fire police) is another vehicle we need to consider as a need or a want. After discussion it was determined the commissioners will authorize preventative maintenance on the Crown Vic and replace tires. Before any other work is done the request needs to go to the Fire Commissioners for review and determination if quoted repairs will be done. It has been determined the Crown Vic will not be replaced. The Fire Commissioners will discuss ongoing need for the Chevy S-10 as it currently holds needed equipment for road closures and directing traffic. If this can be relocated to POV of the Fire Police and some on Rescue truck we could put up for the surplus sale.
 - G. Hydraulics: Reviewed delay in placing these critical tools on capital budget. There is a known need for replacement of the existing tools. The Fire Commissioners need to take appropriate steps with Town to review and follow legal steps to obtain tools. It was discussed it could be very important to demonstrate the various vendors with this type of equipment. The commissioners need to assure they get the tools that are the best option and be financially savvy with the purchase. The cost can range from \$52,000 to over \$75,000 so a clear picture and evaluation needs to be completed as soon as possible to keep the community safe. The commissioners did review the evaluation of four types of hydraulic tools done by Bridgeport Fire where they determined Hurst tools out performed all of the others with better safety features of the tools, quicker time extricating with the new metals used in newer cars thus making it quicker to extricate someone. It has been noted that the requested air bag replacement will be in conjunction with the hydraulics. Ms. Varricchio will also reach out to CIRMA to discuss best option and possibly a review of our equipment. She will also ask about the liability risk.
 - H. Thermal Imaging Cameras (TIC: Question arose regarding request for \$15,000 per year for TIC's. Fire Commissioner H. Bogue will do research on cost for a more informed decision on how many cameras are needed and cost for fire rated TIC's.
 - I. First Selectman Smith mentioned he recommended a landing pad for Life Star be considered at Company #1 especially for winter landings. The Fire Commissioners noted they have used school parking and other parking areas which are normally cleared with plows. They appreciated the concern and will consider it again in the future.
 - J. The other items included in the budget were discussed with minor changes being adjusted by Ms. Varricchio.
3. There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:00pm

Respectfully submitted
Jennifer Spencer