

MINUTES

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

June 21, 2022

The meeting was called to order by First Selectman Christopher L. Johnstone at 8:00 p.m. Nominations were opened for Moderator. Ben Bartlett nominated Chris Johnstone and was seconded by Ernie Marmer. There were no other nominations and Christopher L. Johnstone was declared Moderator. The Moderator read the call of the meeting.

Item No. 1. Mr. Johnstone discussed the truck and its purpose. He stated that the Board of Finance always felt that the purchase would require a loan or a bond, but that this year we are in a unique position with the American Relief Plan Act money of approximately \$414,000 paying out over two years. Fire Chief Bartlett had three bids and that with the pandemic and supply chain issues the cost has increased and that we must act by June 23, 2022 or the price will go up another 13%. Mr. Johnstone explained that the town has three million in the reserve fund and that the money will be transferred to the Capital Fund for the down payment. This truck will take approximately 450 to 500 days to complete and the final payment will not be due until the next fiscal year. His feeling is that the ARPA Funds will cover most of the cost. At this point Mr. Johnstone turned the meeting over to Colebrook Fire Chief, Ben Bartlett. Chief Bartlett gave a brief overview of the Colebrook Fire Department and the two fire houses along with the existing vehicles. He then went over the fact sheet on the new truck. He also discussed how time is of the essence and that having firefighters on the ground ready when they arrive at a fire helps to save homes and lives. If the contract is signed there will be a guaranteed savings of \$8,000. (Please see the attached spec sheet prepared by Todd Hiller, Deputy Chief of Forge Fire House). Chief Bartlett asked for questions regarding the truck:

Mr. Johnstone discussed the terms of the sale; cost of the truck is \$719,000 and the down payment of \$318,000 and approximately \$8,000 will be taken off of the total amount.

Dr. Lucciardi asked how much bigger is this truck than the one we have in service now? Chief Bartlett explained how that the size of the truck was not any bigger than the truck they will be replacing. The department took this into consideration when selecting the new truck.

Helen Campbell asked that the finances be explained again. Mr. Johnstone explained that the funds would come from the Reserve Fund to the Capital Fund for the down payment of \$318,633 and the hope was that the balance would come from the APRA Funds. Mrs. Campbell then asked what affect this will have on taxes and Martha Neal said that there would be no effect on taxes whatsoever. Mrs. Campbell then asked about the 1,000-gallon water tank, to which Chief Bartlett replied that with a truck like this that water could be used as quickly as minutes. The truck they have now is also a 1,000-gallon tank as well as Engine 1 and Tanker 31 holds 4,000. Both are housed at Center Fire Department.

Mark Sullivan asked if the new tanker would have foam, to which Chief Bartlett remarked “unknown with foam” and he would not have that put on the truck at this time, since it is not good to run through the pump. Ballpark guess the life span of this tanker truck is 30 years with the stainless steel.

Trish Woodman asked why wasn't this large purchase in the recent budget to be voted on. Mr. Johnstone answered that they wanted to keep the budget as low as it could be. Jim Millar, Chairman of the Board of Finance wanted to fund this over two fiscal years with ARPA funds so that there would be no impact on your taxes.

Dr. Lucciardi asked if the new fire truck will fit into the fire house? And the answer was yes.

Chief Bartlett will make a few more changes and the price will come in a bit lower than the \$719,000 if all of the paperwork goes well. They are planning on downsizing the pump as well as moving to a four-inch hose that they already use on the other trucks. Penny White asked if that will change the safety and the answer was no. Chief Bartlett explained that the firefighters are tax payers too, so they are looking out for the town as well.

Helen Campbell mentioned selling the vehicle that is being replaced? Mr. Johnstone said he had no idea what if anything that would bring. Chief Bartlett used the example that when they replaced Engine 1, they sold the old Engine 1 and Tanker 32 for \$15,000 together, so it wasn't a whole lot.

There being no further questions or discussion, Mr. Johnstone called for a vote by hand. Karen Odell and Sherri Gray, Registrars of Voters, counted hands for a total Yes 32 and No 0. Motion to approve (i) the purchase of a rescue pumper fire truck costing \$719,107 and (ii) a supplemental appropriation to the 2022-23 Capital Improvement Plan of \$318,633 for the down payment has passed.

There being no further business Mr. Johnstone closed the meeting at 8:32 pm.

Debra L. McKeon
Town Clerk