

Analysis of Debt Exclusion Question 3 at Annual Town Election:
Borrowing for Fire Department Rescue Truck

Question 3 on the Annual Town Election Ballot would authorize the Town to issue debt outside of the Proposition 2 ½ limit. The item is also presented as Article 9 on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant contingent on the voters deciding Question 3. Article 9 and Ballot Question 3 would authorize funding for the Fire Department to replace its 1999 Rescue Truck.

Existing Vehicle:

- The 1999 Rescue Truck serves as the primary Fire Department rescue truck that responds to all emergency medical calls, fire calls, rescue calls including vehicle extrication, ice and water rescue, hazardous materials response, search and rescue, and service calls. The Rescue Truck is the most used vehicle in the Fire Department fleet.
- The Rescue Truck was formerly a landscape truck purchased used. The vehicle currently has 11,248 miles and 2,672 diesel engine hours. The vehicle is showing deterioration and rusting of various body panels and undercarriage. The vehicle's electrical system was and is currently not designed to maintain the voltage draw on the charging and battery system from the voltage needed by radios, emergency lights, sirens, back up alarms, and running lights. There are frequent electrical issues with the vehicle. The vehicle does not have critical emergency scene lighting due to the draw on the electrical and battery system. This makes emergency scene operations difficult at night.
- This emergency vehicle currently can only transport 2 first responders to medical and fire emergencies. Because there is only two seating positions, it requires the response of additional fire apparatus to transport personnel to the emergency scene. The need for additional apparatus to respond to transport manpower results in the increased use of fire apparatus and which raises the risk of accidents by responding vehicles, accelerated use and wear of apparatus, higher service and maintenance costs, higher fuel costs. The replacement vehicle will have four seated positions to transport personnel, significantly reducing the amount of fire apparatus needed to respond to emergencies.
- There is limited storage space for critical equipment such as defibrillators, Lucas Device (CPR device), medical bags, extrication equipment, ice rescue suits, generators, and other specialized rescue tools. Sensitive medical equipment is exposed to cold and hot weather temperatures which raises the potential for equipment malfunction and premature aging of equipment. Medical equipment is exposed to gas and oil residue from power equipment. Some rescue equipment stored in the open bed of the vehicle is exposed to all weather conditions due to no cover. Firefighters must place their protective clothing in the open bed and often get wet during inclement weather.

- Refurbishment of this specialized vehicle is not cost-effective due to its age and need for additional space. The return on investment of refurbishment is not cost effective and only lengthens the life of this vehicle by a few years. The low mileage of this vehicle does not provide an overall benefit to keeping this vehicle because of its lack of appropriate design and space for the emergency services it is required to perform. The Rescue Truck and its design was sufficient in previous years due to its low service on emergencies, however the increase in emergency calls and the increased need for emergency medical response to rising calls requires a vehicle that is reliable and has capabilities consistent with its emergency response needs.

New Vehicle:

- The New Rescue Truck would be a 2022 Ford F-550 Chassis 4x4 SD Crew Cab with seating for four and designed specifically for carrying of various specialized rescue equipment.
- The vehicle has upgraded Heavy Duty Front End and Suspension designed to carry the weight of rescue tools and equipment.
- The vehicle has 397 Amp Alternator designed to effectively carry the load of various electrical systems on the vehicle.
- The vehicle will have an onboard breathing air system for filling of firefighter self - contained breathing apparatus. This will eliminate the need to replace the fire station breathing air system currently 30 years old and at the end of its serviceable life span. The cost savings by not having to replace the station breathing air system is estimated at \$50,000 to \$80,000.
- The replacement of the Rescue Truck will complete the Fire Department's large vehicle and apparatus replacement capital program which will eliminate the need to request replacement of any large fire apparatus for a minimum of 5 years if not longer.
- The necessary equipment needed to conduct emergency scene operations will be effectively readily available, stored in appropriate compartments to eliminate premature damage and reduced service life of equipment.
- There is no additional costs needed for specialized tools and equipment to add to this vehicle.

Cost:

- The estimated cost of replacement of the 1999 Rescue Truck is \$190,000.
- The payment for the truck would be accomplished over a 4 year period with an interest rate of approximately .5%.
- This request is also contingent on approval of a debt exclusion approved by the voters.
- The debt service will have a financial impact of \$39.20 on a typically assessed single family residential property, however, in this case, the new debt would replace existing debt that is being retired and therefore, the financial impact of approving this change is at least neutral for the coming fiscal year.

