

Public Safety Committee Report
RE: Purchase of Tower Ladder

Date: 5/14/19

Chair: Matt Whitcomb

Other Committee Members Present: Tom Depoy, Lisa Ryan, Scott Tommola, Melinda Humphrey

Other Aldermen Present: Board President Davis, Matt Reveal, Paul Clifford, Chris Etori, Rebecca Mattis

Other's Present: Mayor Allaire, Chief Larsen, Treasurer Markowski, Scott Mangan, Rod Kenyon, Aron Adamsen, Mike Roy, Kyle Robillard, Stephen Marcoux, Pete Holmes

The Meeting Convened at 5:30 PM to discuss the immediate replacement of Tower Ladder 1 due to safety concerns. Chief Larsen provided background on Tower Ladder 1, explaining that it was a 1986 Grumman Aerial-Cat with over 24,000 miles and approximately 4,000 service miles. Chief Larsen explained that recent certification testing for Tower 1 demonstrated a catastrophic failure during the drift test. The hydraulic system also showed serious leaks and failures. Based on these test findings, Tower Ladder 1 was placed out of service immediately.

Chief Larsen explained that repairing Tower Ladder 1 was not a viable option, citing previous refurbishment efforts, as well as noting \$14,000 in repairs that were required for Tower 1 to acquire a safety sticker in 2018. Also noted was that Earle's Truck Repair of Rutland, with whom the fire department maintains a contract for fire apparatus repair, expressed that continued repairs were no longer a recommendation.

Chief Larsen went on to discuss the unique value and functionality of the tower ladder truck. Chief Larsen explained that the tower ladder has an extensive reach and contains a basket on the end of the ladder, providing a stable platform for firefighters to operate from, and perform rescues when required. Chief Larsen commented that given the height of buildings throughout the city, many potential circumstances could require the use of a tower ladder. Chief Larsen noted of the nearest tower ladders maintained by other municipalities, citing that if the need arose the closest one would likely take an hour to arrive.

Recognizing the value of Tower Ladder 1, as well as the age and condition of the apparatus, Chief Larsen explained that he and a team of firefighters formed a tower ladder apparatus committee in September of 2018 and had begun work on applying for a grant to offset the cost of a new Tower Ladder. Chief Larsen explained that the grant, if awarded, would be for \$1,000,000. Chief Larsen stated it was not possible to determine the likelihood of being awarded the grant. Chief Larsen did express his opinion that the committee submitted a sound application and that letters of support from the Vermont Congressional Delegation and RRMCC CEO Claudio Fort accompany the application. Chief Larsen stated that the grant decision should be expected later in 2019 and that our immediate purchase of a Tower Ladder would not adversely impact the potential grant award. Chief Larsen also answered for the committee that regardless of the grant award outcome, we are eligible to apply every year.

Chief Larsen explained that following several months of the committee researching options and developing a replacement plan they arrived at Ferrara Fire Apparatus of Holden Louisiana as being the best fit to build and deliver a new tower ladder. Chief Larsen noted that Ferrara Fire Apparatus had offered a \$92,000 price reduction on the total cost of the vehicle, with the final amount being \$1,486,401. Chief Larsen stated that Adirondack EVG, Inc. of Glens Falls, New York was selected as the

servicing dealer, noting the company's engagement and responsiveness. Chief Larsen explained that the company had prepared a financing plan with a two-year deferred payment option, no down payment, and annual payments that could be covered by the fire equipment fund. Chief Larsen did note that while other fire equipment would need to be purchased, in particular, air packs, the two-year deferment, and annual financing cost would allow for the development of a plan to address those purchases. Chief Larsen also noted that his planning maintained the assumption that the grant was not received but that if awarded, the funds would be applied directly to the cost of the new tower ladder.

Chief Larsen stressed to the committee that if the city did not enter into this agreement that it would miss the production deadline. Chief Larsen explained that missing the production deadline would not only result in significant delays in obtaining a tower ladder but increase the total cost by approximately \$250,000.

Alderwoman Humphry moved to recommend the purchase of a 2019 Aerial Tower Ladder in an amount not to exceed \$1,500,000 from Ferrara Fire Apparatus through Adirondack EVG Inc. of Glens Falls New York and to enter into a lease/purchase agreement through Community Leasing Partners with annual payments taken from the fire equipment fund. The motion passed 5-0 and I so move.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Matthew Whitcomb, Chair.