Town of Sunapee

Board of Fire Wards

August 21, 2019

Present: Josh Trow, Austin Brown and John (Jake) Paris

Also, present: Fire Chief Dan Ruggles and Town Manager Donna Nashawaty

Firefighters Mark Scott, Chris Seale, John Gosselin, Steve Marshall Rob Riessle and John Galloway.

Josh Trow opened the meeting at 7:00AM.

The Firewards signed the Oath of Office form to appoint Daniel Ruggles Chief of the Sunapee Fire Department.

**Truck Purchase-** Josh Trow explained that at the last Board of Selectmen’s Meeting the Board gave the authority to purchase the Slow Speed Utility/Forestry Truck to the Board of Fire Wards. Josh Trow began by saying he wants to make sure this is the truck that best suits the needs of the Department. Chief Ruggles explained that the Forestry Truck needs to be replaced but this truck is much more than that. This vehicle will go to calls such as wire downs, tree downs, medical for extra supplies and auto accidents. It will pull the boat and max and eliminate the need for personal vehicle to do this sort of thing. Chief Ruggles noted when the Truck Committee began investigating the possibilities, they felt a 2-person cab would be sufficient but after some thought felt it would serve the Department better as a 4-person hence being able to bring a total crew in one vehicle. The Truck Committee agrees this is the truck the Town should purchase. Josh Trow questioned how we got to such a big truck when we began with a smaller one. Chief Ruggles explained this is customary size in the field today for the supplies and equipment it will be carrying. Chief Ruggles went onto say this mirrors the truck that the Truck Committee looked at in Arundel Maine. Austin Brown asked if this is a truck that would be stripped it down in the Fall. Chief Ruggles said we would play it by ear for the first winter. Chief Ruggles explained this is the best price quote we received presenting another quote that was out of the ballpark in his opinion. Josh Trow asked if this includes lighting etc. Josh Trow and Austin Brown asked what we do with the present Forestry Truck, and if we explored getting another Forestry Truck like the one, we presently own. Chief Ruggles said they do not have anything we need. There are not many people who can drive as it is a standard, and the type of trucks available are all standards. Jake Paris questioned why we could not bring a fire truck to the types of scenes explained for usage of the new truck. Chief Ruggles said we could but his thought is we could save the bigger trucks from responding as we try to keep them 30 years. Jake Paris voiced his concerns about having a small truck like this compared to having an Engine that would protect our personnel. Chief Ruggles said he had no problem bringing a truck of this size to a live wire scene. Jake Paris explained he still is concerned about the size of this truck, and what if we do not have enough manpower. Chief Ruggles gave a scenario of an accident that occurred last week. Chief Ruggles said that Engine 1 is up for replacement in 2022 and he has increased it by $100,000 on the Fire CIP. He has a meeting with a Company Representative later on this year to make sure $100,000 is enough. Jake Paris expressed his concern about the process of how we came about choosing this particular truck. He feels the Fire Wards should have seen this prior to it being presented to the voters. He is having an issue with spending a $125,000 for a truck that looks like a brush truck and is utilized three times a year. Austin Brown stated a plus about this truck is that anyone can get in this truck and drive vs a Fire Engine. Jake Paris said he feels we are contradicting what the voters said they did not want. Josh Trow then questioned when people were voting the truck down was it because they didn’t want a Forestry Truck or was it other factors such as other items on the ballot that were more important to them. Josh Trow feels it is somewhat equal to E7, and with a small department we need a truck that is versatile. Josh Trow stated with what has been explained and if the Truck Committee are comfortable with the proposed truck then we should probably approve it. Austin Brown reiterated Josh Trow’s point. Austin Brown stated it is difficult being a newly established Board of Fire Wards and be the decision maker at the end to dismiss what the Truck Committee has presented. Austin Brown went on to say before this is delivered, we are going to have some clear Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in place and this truck have its own set of SOP. Josh Trow stated in the future the Fire Wards must approve a design and the actual cost of the vehicle before it goes on the warrant. No blame intended just next time this is the procedure to follow. Austin Brown stated this is a good lesson learned for the future. Austin Brown asked what the anticipated life of this truck is. Chief Ruggles answered probably 20-25 years. Josh Trow said the department does a good job keeping equipment in nice shape. Donna Nashawaty asked about the warranty and the exchange rate and why Lake Regions Fire and this company from Canada are so far apart in price. Austin Brown asked if Arundel Maine bought their truck from Canada. Chief Ruggles stated yes with no issues. Chief Ruggles said it’s a contract and the contract is in US dollars. A brief discussion took place regarding Canadian vs US purchases. Donna Nashawaty said it concerns her that she is hearing that personal vehicles are being used to haul trailers and boats. Austin Brown feels once we have this truck, we should stop towing trailers and boats with personal vehicles. Donna Nashawaty asked if the Chief would drive this truck and he said no. Chief Ruggles stated he would like to purchase one of the old police vehicles to use as a Chiefs Car. Josh Trow said he sees a Chiefs Car when we have a full-time department and used for non-fire calls. Jake Paris stated many departments have a command car. These are normally assigned to whomever is in charge, most of the time the Chief except when away then it should be used by whoever is in command. John Galloway stated he is not against the truck but feels we are paying too much and are getting a truck far beyond what Sunapee needs. He went on to say Unity just bought one for about a third of the price of what we are paying. He also is concerned that people will need Class B license. Jake Paris said we need to keep this in mind the Chief can give someone permission to drive to scene but not back to station. Jake Paris gave an example of what happened to him without a Class B and now he is leery about waiving anything. John Gosselin stated he disagreed and said all municipal workers can apply for a med card exemption. Chief Ruggles stated this should not make a difference as any of the vehicles we have now require a med card. Chief Ruggles went on to say we encourage med cards and Class B license; we even have held classes in order for our members to get their Class B license. John Galloway stated we could carry the same amount on the 3500 as the proposed truck at a third of the cost. Josh Trow feels we must make sure we have the best equipment for our people to do the job they need to get done. Donna Nashawaty stated it was discovered that the Selectmen could spend the money and Town Manager can sign the contract for the proposed truck. Austin Brown stated he would rather this truck roll out then having personnel use their personal vehicle to get to a scene. Josh Trow made a motion and Austin Brown seconded it to have the Town Manager sign the contract for the Fast Response Utility Truck. All in favor.

Jake Paris stated he feels it is time for the town to look at our own ambulance. Josh Trow said to date it has not been cost effective for the town but maybe in the near future. Jake Paris feels we are about 20 years behind, and Josh Trow said it had worked previously when both Newport and New London Ambulances were utilized. There was a conversation about what we need to discuss with New London Ambulance This discussion shall continue at the next meeting.

A review of the SOPs took place considering the Fire Chiefs additions and deletions. There was a lengthy discussion about how personnel should get to fire and what constitute it OK to take personal vehicles. Austin Brown believes personnel should come to station. Josh Trow unless it is your neighbors house you should come to the station. Austin Brown stated it is dangerous especially at an accident situation having all the personal pickup trucks all over the place. A discussion took place about what apparatus should go to the scene. Austin Brown reminded the Fire Wards not all personnel can drive the large trucks. Austin Brown feels the most important objective is that apparatus should respond with a crew and not several personal vehicles. A discussion took place about mutual aid calls and again personnel should be in a piece of apparatus not respond in personal vehicles. Jake Paris stated he is in total agreement.

Jake Paris made a motion and it was seconded by Austin Brown to adopt Standard Operating Procedures 101-103 pending a few changes. All in favor.

Chief Ruggles asked if meetings could be changed to evening. Jake Paris and Austin Brown stated mornings are easier for their schedules. It was determined if the Chief cannot make a meeting, we can still have the meeting and any questions that need attention could be handled in a different forum.

The next Fire Wards Meeting will be held at the Safety Services Building on Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 7:00AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01AM.