

Mountain Fire Protection District

Fire Truck Meeting

February 7, 2023

In Attendance: Trustees Neil Nelson, Dave Stewart, Clem Remillard, Harold Kamikawaji and Tony Wright. Administrator/Financial Officer Sarah Zubkowski. Many members of the fire department. Both residents and non-residents of the District.

Meeting called to order @ 7:03 pm by Neil Nelson. Second by Tony Wright. MSC.

Introduction:

- Introductions – board and firefighters.

Background:

- Background on meeting – replacing/retiring the 1988 fire truck with a new truck. This has been in discussion for the past 3-4 years. The fire truck to be discussed is one that is needed by the District. We have received 3 quotes and are ready to present the options to the residents of the District.
- The cost of the new truck being proposed is \$603,966.72. We do receive the GST back of \$26,962.80 which means that the cost to the District is \$577,003.92.

Firefighter Presentation:

- Wayne Morgan wanted to thank the residents for complying with the burning permits procedure and ensuring these are filled out and completed properly.
- Russ McMann went over the details of the truck in specifics. Russ McMann stated that he obtained 6-7 quotes in total however only 3 were presented to the Board as the others were much too high. This will be purchased with Westvac Industrial Ltd who will be building a fire truck for the first time. It is being built by Dependable Fire Trucks.
- The purchase of a fire truck has been researched for 3 years. The COVID pandemic has also made the purchase of a truck a tough task.
- Many options were explored – buying a used truck, buying a chassis and retrofitting, purchase from out of country. Russ McMann stated that there are issues and requirements due to bay size of the 3rd bay. The 1988 is on its last legs and repairs are costly.
- Marilyn Whitworth – are you going to see the truck prior to delivery and purchase? Russ McMann stated yes, he will view prior to purchasing. Neil Nelson stated that this truck is being built regardless of whether we purchase and will be reviewed prior to purchase.
- Marilyn Whitworth – are you worried about a delay in delivery date? Russ McMann stated yes, there is always a worry however the chassis is currently being built so expected delivery date is early summer 2023 (June/July 2023).
- Marilyn Whitworth – what will happen to the 1988 fire truck? The District will sell this.
- Darcy Morgan explained the process of the trucks and the water that can be provided. There is not a lot of water in the District as there are no hydrants. The fire department has to bring their own water to fires. Darcy Morgan showed a couple of videos - a car fire and a house fire which highlighted the high pressure system that will be on the new truck proposed. The truck can also get to locations quite easily and make initial attacks

faster and use less water while bringing the other fire trucks to the location. Less water also means less damage. This new system has been used in Europe for years as Wayne Morgan stated.

- Charles Pinker asked if the new truck is 4x4? Darcy Morgan stated yes it has to be due to the nature of the District layout and terrain.

Financing Options:

- Neil Nelson discussed financing options. Due to the timing of Government financing we will most likely have to obtain bridge financing through the bank. We would then obtain a loan through the Provincial Government which would then pay back the bridge financing. The board had a meeting about how to finance the truck and have decided to finance the entire purchase based on the fact that the interest is locked in for 15 years at 4.5%.
- Clem Remillard stated that the old truck will be independently appraised and then sold in a closed bid situation. The District will try to get as much as we can for the truck.
- Tony Wright stated there are 604 residents which the average property value is \$1.349 million. Based on financing the entire truck cost, this will cost approximately \$92/year increase for each resident based on the average property value. This is affected by status of properties (i.e. farm status, schools, churches etc.).
- Rob Argyle – just to be clear it is \$92/year based on \$1.349 million. Tony Wright stated that yes this is case – or \$0.068/\$1,000 of value.
- Russ McCallum – because of the way the super shuttle service accreditation people should be saving average \$300-400 per year. Tony Wright stated that the new truck will help this accreditations stay in place. Neil Nelson stated that there are still emails received from residents that are inquiring about the insurance savings. Dave LeNeveu stated that most insurance agents should have this noted on file.
- Charles Pinker – what is the increase in the budget for 2023 and what will this be with the new loan? Tony Wright stated that he will follow up.
- Charles Pinker – if you go to the bank for the loan my understanding is that the loan can be paid off once the financing comes from the Provincial government. Neil states that the truck delivery would occur and we would obtain the financing/use our reserves and then once we get the money from the Provincial government we will pay off the loan. Sarah Zubkowski stated that we can apply for a non-revolving demand loan for 1 year or less. This way depending on when the truck is complete we will have the funds to pay for it. The Provincial government only provides funding twice per year – July and December. Therefore depending on when the truck is complete, we will have to bridge finance until funds are received from the Provincial government. Dave LeNeveu stated that the reason this is complexity is due to the approval process as we can't move forward until this truck purchase is approved. If we have to wait again the truck will increase in price and will require more work to find a new replacement. Dave LeNeveu is hoping that this can be decided tonight.
- Charles Pinker – how are you going to approve this? Based on attendance at the meeting tonight or based on a vote from all residents. He thinks people will be mad if they don't get a say. Clem Remillard stated that if the Provincial government states we have done enough then we may move forward. We have advertised in the paper, on the sign, on the mailboxes, on the website and through word of mouth. Neil Nelson stated

that we advertised as much as we could and we can only do so much. Clem Remillard thanked everyone for coming and caring about the issues. Neil Nelson stated that the AGM attendance is also low each year.

- Marilyn Whitworth – if we did a referendum, how long would that take? Neil Nelson stated that he did not know. The assumption is that tonight enough people for a forum would be here to make a final decision. This has been discussed at the last 3 AGM's. As Dave LeNeveu stated, if we don't make the purchase, we will be moved back into the queue and will end up waiting for again and paying more probably. In 10 years, a larger fire truck will have to be replaced potentially as well which we assume will cost more than this truck. Neil Nelson stated that we do have a reserve fund which we plan to use for the next truck. Clem Remillard stated that the cost of a referendum is approximately \$30,000- \$40,000. That is why when the fire hall was built, they went through an alternate process to avoid these additional costs to residents.
- Marilyn Whitworth – asked how much the fire hall cost was back in 2010? Clem Remillard stated that it was \$1.1 million. How much is owed currently? Approx \$510,000. Clem Remillard stated that we had previously gone to the Provincial government and asked for \$200,000 which they had approved. However now we need \$577,000 which shows the increase in just a couple of years.
- Russ McMann stated that if the truck is not approved tonight then we will not get this truck. The handshake deal we have currently is holding the truck pending approval.
- Wayne Morgan – has written 26 permits since we advertised this meeting and asked all of them to attend the meeting. Only 3 are here in attendance. There are 3 current loans which are coming due. The 2015 fire truck loan is coming due in 2029 – we currently owe \$129k. The fire hall loan is coming due in 2030 – we currently owe \$510,000. The water tank loan is coming due in 2040 – we currently owe \$82,000.
- Debbie Avender – are you discussing whether to purchase or not? Or are you deciding that this is happening? Neil Nelson stated that the Board is ready to move forward and is hoping the residents agree. Debbie Avender asked is this enough people to go forward? She believes it is. Clem Remillard stated that we still have to go to the provincial government for final approval. Debbie Avender asked what else we could do? Clem Remillard stated that we have followed the template and are doing everything we can to ensure that we have provided the information to the residents and had their input. Neil Nelson did state that we are dealing with a new liaison at the government office.
- Charles Pinker – has there been enough advertising? Neil Nelson stated that it was in the paper, on the sign, on the mailboxes, on the website and word of mouth amongst fire fighters and board members.
- Rob Argyle – if you asked residents currently, half of them would not even know who responds to the fires in the District. Neil Nelson stated that the residents that are in attendance came to have there say and we will take the general consensus.
- Marilyn Whitworth – obviously we need a new truck? Neil Nelson stated that yes, this has been in discussion for years.
- Gord Shoquist – if we have a mutual aid agreement with Lantzville why do we need a 3rd fire truck? We have a pumper truck and calf truck, is this not enough. Dave LeNeveu stated that in the mutual aid agreement Lantzville will send aid if they are available to therefore they may not respond. Also due to the nature of the properties in the District (i.e. length of driveways, hills, etc) the firetrucks will not make it to all locations. The best pump we have is currently on the old truck which assists in pumping the water to other

trucks. Russ McCallum also stated that automatic aid, Lantzville will only send the tender truck (i.e. water supply only) therefore it does not have a pumper. Darcy Morgan stated that the accreditation used automatic aid and the old truck as an integral part of the this process. If we do not replace this, the fire department would have to try to requalify and this most likely won't happen with only 2 trucks.

- Charles Pinker – how will the vote work? Open forum or secret ballot? As some of the fire fighters are taxpayers and there could be a conflict of interest. Russ McMann stated that there is only an interest to the District. Neil Nelson stated that they are taxpayers as well. Darcy Morgan stated that a conflict of interest is only when there is a perceived financial benefit. Since there is no financial gain from this there is no perceived conflict of interest for the fire fighters that are tax payers.

Vote:

- Neil Nelson stated that the vote can be open forum or closed by way of secret ballots. What is the consensus? General public agreed to open forum. No objections noted. Neil Nelson asked for any further questions or concerns. None noted.
- Open vote taken. Unanimous vote taken. No one opposed.

Thanks:

- Dave Stewart wanted to say thank you to the fire department for all their hard work. They have put in a lot of work on trying to purchase a truck that is needed for the District at the best possible price.

Motion to adjourn meeting @ 8:00 pm made by Neil Nelson. Second by Clem Remillard. MSC.