

agenda
2/18/09

#1

Acton Fire Department

Memo

TO: Steve Ledoux, Town Manager
FROM: Robert C. Craig, Fire Chief
DATE: February 18, 2009
RE: Reasons to Purchase a Replacement Pumper

Steve:

As requested, the following are the reasons for my recommendation and request to purchase a replacement pumper for Engine 24 (currently located in South Acton). The primary reason for this request is that we currently have three first-line pumpers (one pumper in each of our three Fire/EMS stations), and no second-line pumpers to be utilized for back-up. In the event of routine maintenance or repairs on one of our pumpers, there is no back-up pumper available. An example would be an event that took place one week ago, when broken springs were discovered on one of our pumpers. The Acton Center pumper was taken out of service and the truck was sent out for repair. Fortunately, the repairs only took one day and the South Acton pumper was sent to cover the pumper assignments in Acton Center. However, this left the South Acton station without a pumper for initial response, although the ladder truck remained in-service. Second, in an instance such as noted above, where the South Acton pumper has been re-assigned and our other apparatus becomes committed to an accident or fire, we may call back personnel. However, once again in that instance, we have no back-up or second-line pumper for them to utilize to respond to other fire or EMS calls with.

Also, as I have attempted to indicate, in-service training is now more necessary than it has been in the past, as we have curtailed outside training costs. At the same time, while conducting in-service training, it is necessary to maintain our response capabilities for fires and emergencies that may occur while personnel are training. Therefore, it would be advantageous, as we have done in the past, to utilize a back-up or second-line pumper for our training evolutions while maintaining our first-line apparatus in a ready state for emergency response.

Another reason for my request is that when our apparatus status and deployment is surveyed by representatives from the Insurance Services Office during a grading review, we are required to have one second-line pumper for every three first-line pumpers. This forms a component of the grading schedule that affects our overall insurance grading and hence the insurance premiums for businesses and residents in the Town. In other words, we will lose some points towards our overall insurance grading if we do not have a second-line pumper available. I do not wish to indicate that this is a major component, but it will have some bearing on our total grading.

It should be recognized also that we previously had three second-line pumpers (one assigned to each station). During the last few years, that number was reduced to two second-line pumpers. With the fact that our previous second-line pumpers have been taken out of service, we do not have a single second-line pumper. In addition, as indicated at the recent budget hearing, the ability to borrow apparatus does not readily exist.

In conclusion, to be clear, my request is to replace our oldest first-line pumper with a new pumper, and then reassign that pumper to second-line or back-up status. The compelling reasons, in my mind, for making such a purpose now is the fact that we currently do not have a single back-up pumper which is critical for the reasons noted above. Further, even in the event of approval for this request it may take 5-8 months to obtain a new pumper based on bid provisions and necessary construction time.

Finally, in conjunction with this memo, I have submitted two visual examples of our apparatus as it was deployed in the past (with back-up pumpers) and at present (without back-up pumpers). Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert C. Craig", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert C. Craig
Fire Chief