

**HOPKINTON FIRE DISTRICT**

 2876 State Highway 11B

Hopkinton, New York 12965

(315) 328-4682

Commissioner Meeting Notes – Special Meeting September 14, 2022

Present: Joachim VanElls, Carl Pitts, Ernest Wood, Sue Wood

Absent: Rob Stillwell, Richard Powers, Earl McBride

Guests: Will Votra, Steve Parker, Greg Crump, Steve Hopkins, Mary Fullerton, Bill Converse, Rick and Ashley Eakins, Kristina Parker, Matt and Michelle Razi, Jim and Bella Boardway, John Hewey, Dave Fullerton

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman VanElls, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The chairman explained this was a special meeting to discuss the proposed construction of a new fire station. The proposal was passed by the fire commissioners on July 13 and a vote of the public is scheduled for September 20. The proposal is for $2.5 million.

Chairman VanElls explained what a fire district is and that they need to follow town law. The district was established in 2010. The district is responsible for making sure the department is supplied with the appropriate equipment and establishing rules and regulations. The district is not allowed to interfere with the fire duties of the department. The district needs to prepare a financial budget each year and hold a public hearing. Once the budget is approved, it is turned over to the town to be included with the town budget. The fire tax is separate from the town tax. There are five (5) appointed commissioners who serve staggered five (5) year terms. The treasurer is elected for a three (3) year term. The secretary is appointed.

 A fire district, upon approval of the voters, may issue bonds to cover the cost of the construction and furnishings. The district is asking the voters to approve $2.5 million in bonds, which is based on the current cost estimates of $2,236,075 and potential price increases. The primary source of repayment currently a USDA loan, along with $90,000 from the capital reserve fund. This is a 25-year payback. The current application includes a grant for $100,000 for furnishings.

The district is also pursuing other sources such as the Community Project Funding. There is also an HR-3728 bill in congress that is co-sponsored by Elise Stefanik. This provides FEMA with grant money to upgrade and construct fire and emergency medical services facilities.

The current estimated payment after construction would be $110,000 annually for 24 years. The current interest rate through USDA is 2.25%. In 2021 the fire district tax levy was $101,218, a 1%

increase from 2020. In anticipation of this project the tax levy for 2022 was $130,560 which amounted to 29% increase. That amount included $42,360 for the capital reserve fund. The estimated proposed tax levy for 2023 with a 29% increase will be $168,422 and $217,264 for 2024. A property owner with property valued at $63,600 paid $62.44, which was an additional $10.89 for the year. For the 2023 year, it is anticipated that $80.55 would be paid in fire tax and d$103.91 in 2024. These amounts are barring any other sources of money from the federal or state government.

Chairman VanElls turned the meeting over to Chief Steve Parker to explain issues with the current fire station and why a new one is needed. Chief Parker invited everyone in attendance to review the posterboards. The current building is not ADA compliant. The current overhead doors are 9’6” and new or used equipment is not readily found. The beams are not able to be raised as they are going in the wrong direction. Any special truck order would cost approximately $500,000. The existing bays are 35’. The newest engine is 32.5’ not leaving any room to walk behind it. The restrooms are located on the second floor and are not up to code. The water supply is currently supplied through NuMed as there is no well. There is no space to drill a well as the back side of the building is sitting on NuMed property. The fire pit also sits on ½ of property owned by NuMed.

The new designs for the station are due to NFPA recommendations. A thermo vent system is required to suck up the fumes when starting up trucks. This is a cancer causing issue. There is also no contamination area – the current option is hosing off with a garden hose. A washer and dryer is needed to get remove the carsinages from the turnout gear. By not having this, family members could also be exposed. A fitness area is also being requested.

The department is only asking for the bare minimum – a meeting/training room, a couple offices and truck bays. NFPA requires drive through bays so the equipment does not need to be backed in. A small kitchen, bathrooms and a laundry room are included in the design.

The floor was opened for discussion and questions:

Bill Converse – What will happen to the existing building? The building goes back to the department. Chief Parker stated that they would try to sell the building and use the funds towards the new building. Bill also commented that this is a significant tax increase for the people. He also asked if this is approved and bonded before the grants are approved, are we not eligible for funding? Chairman VanElls stated that we have a year before the first payment is due.

Rick Eakins – Are NFPA only recommendations or actual requirements? Parishville does not have a ventilation system so why are we spending extra money on this? Steve Parker responded that NYS requires the department to have cancer coverage so the insurance may not cover anything if the system is not there. Are the current pans still being looked at? Steve Parker has emailed other companies regarding steel buildings and there is only a $10/square foot difference. Rick does agree that a new station is needed but thinks the cost needs to be brought down. There is also no room for expansion.

Joachim VanElls stated that the commissioners plan to be very frugal. He is hoping that by putting the bids out in the fall, more competitive bids may be received.

Steve Parker mentioned that there are no bells and whistles in the plans (bunkrooms, commercial kitchen, no epoxy floors, etc.)

No further questions – meeting adjourned. The vote is scheduled for September 20 from 12:00 – 9:00 in the town hall.