

TOWN OF ELMORE, VT

Monthly Select Board Meeting

Meeting Minutes – prepared by G. Schwartz
Status: Draft

Meeting Date: February 19, 2019

Start Time: 6:00 pm **Adjourn:** 9:00pm

Meeting Attendees: See attached sign in sheet

A. Meeting Minutes Approval:

1. The minutes of the January 29, 2019 Special Select Board Meeting were approved.

B. SPECIAL TOPICS:

1. First of two informational meetings to discuss the Fire Departments desire to purchase a new fire engine in 2019

Notes: See attached information supplied by the Select Board and the Fire Department

C. ACTIVE ITEMS:

D. CONTINUING ACTIVE ITEMS: (Update status by principle owner)

1. **UPDATE:** Road Commissioner's Report – Lacasse

Notes: See attached report. It should be noted that the Town of Hyde Park graciously lent us a plow truck on the day that both of our plows were down for repairs.

2. **UPDATE:** Planning Commission – Schwartz

Notes: The Planning Commission met on January 24, 2018. Minutes of that meeting are available on the Elmore Website. The topics that were discussed were as follows;

- Zoning and Subdivision Amendments:
- Town Plan survey
- FEMA Lamoille Watershed Questionnaire
- Healthy Community signs
- PUD/Conservation Subdivision section being sent to DRB for Comments

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3. **UPDATE:** Development Review Board – DeVore

Notes: The Development Review Board met on February 7, 2019. Minutes of that meeting are available on the Elmore Website.

4. **UPDATE:** Lake Association – Schwartz

Notes: Fund Raiser Pancake breakfast was held day of Polar Splash. Also had 10 people jump in the Lake for the Lake Association Milfoil Removal fund.

6. **UPDATE:** Digital client services including email, server backups, document retention, disaster recovery, and equipment servicing. – Schwartz

Notes: The Email conversion is complete and working fine. We are about a week out from having the document retention system ready to test. ALARIO created a spreadsheet that will list the abbreviated field names and the equivalent description. The spreadsheet will be shared once all the setup is complete.

E. COMPLETED/INACTIVE ITEMS: (Update status)

1. Review Action Item List

Notes: The action list was not reviewed at this meeting

E. NON AGENDA/OTHER ITEMS: (Time Available)

1. Routine Administrative, Operations items and payment approvals.

F. EXECUTIVE OR DELIBERATIVE SESSION AS NEEDED

Town of Elmore
Meeting Attendance Record

ENTER MEETING DATE	2/19/19
ENTER MEETING NAME	Select Board Meeting

Check all that apply

Reason for Attending

Reason for Attendance

YOUR NAME (printed)	<i>Observer</i>	<i>Interested Party</i>	<i>Principal Party</i>	<i>Expert or Consultant</i>	WHY ARE YOU ATTENDING?
Brent Hosking			✓		Fire Chief
Adam Audet			✓		EFD
Kent Shaw	✓				BFO + IT
Jason Cohen			✓		EFD
JOE CICCOW		✓			RESIDENT
Trevor Braun			✓		
Andrea Audet	✓				Resident
Ryan Hannon		✓			Fire Captain
Don Valentine	✓				Resident
Garth Brooks		✓			Requested by Fire Dept.
Bruce Gibson		✓			Resident
Matt Hill	✓				
Don Zukswert		✓			Elmore fire dept
Hannah Zukswert	✓				Resident
Jason Tallman		✓			Fire Captain
Hunter Tallman		✓			Fire Fighter
Sharon Fortune					Community Resident

Open Letter - Overview

To: Residents of Elmore

From: Elmore Select Board

Subj: Article Authorizing New Fire Engine Purchase

The Elmore Select Board recommends an OPPOSED/NO vote on the Australian Ballot Article presented on Town Meeting Day, March 5, 2019. The Article authorizes the Select Board to spend up to \$370,000 to support the purchase of a new pumper truck for the Elmore Volunteer Fire Department.

The Select Board will outline our concerns with this proposed purchase and our recommendations for next steps during public information meetings.

Tuesday, 2/19 at 6:00pm, Elmore Town Offices -or- Tuesday, 2/26 at 7:00pm, Elmore Fire Station

Overview:

- An investment in the Fire Department's 1979 pumper engine is required to ensure safe operation. Safety of our equipment and Fire crew is paramount.
- The purchase of a new \$370,000 pumper truck requires significant long-term, unplanned investment by the Town.
- **Total Cost:** Financing for this truck will be for 10 years. The estimated finance charge is \$70,000 raising the cost of the fire engine to \$440,000
- **Tax Impact of New Engine:** This investment will add between 2.5 – 3.0 cents to the Town's municipal tax rate for 10 years assuming all reserves are used toward this purchase.
- This investment will increase Elmore property taxes by \$25.00 – \$30.00 per \$100,000 of assessed value. Example: if your property has an assessed value of \$400,000, this purchase will increase your municipal tax by \$100.00 to \$120.00 each year for 10 years.
- **Additional Reserve Fund:** A Fire Department equipment reserve account must continue to be funded at \$20,000 - \$25,000/ year to plan for future equipment purchases and maintenance. The **combined tax impact** of the new engine and the reserve account is between 4.5 – 5.0 cents or \$45.00 – \$50.00 per \$100,000 of assessed value. Example: if your property has an assessed value of \$400,000, fire department equipment costs will be \$180.00 to \$200.00 each year for 10 years.
- **Total Investment:** This total investment represents more than 10% of the Town's tax rate.
- **Average Usage:** A pumper engine has been required on 2 – 5 calls per year for the last 5 years.
- **Other Investments:** Over the same 10-year period the Town must also plan for:
 - o Significant State mandated road erosion control expenses
 - o Construction of a new Town garage
 - o Maintenance of Town buildings
 - o Possible reclassification of roads from Class 4 to Trails due to funding gaps
 - o Milfoil removal from Lake Elmore
 - o School tax increases

The Select Board recommends the Town delay the purchase of a new fire engine to allow for deeper study of alternatives, including repair of our current engine, purchase of a used engine, or coordination with a dual-coverage town.

Questions and Answers:

What is the Select Board's recommendation?

- Vote no on March 5 to the purchase of a NEW pumper engine
- Immediately evaluate options to either repair or replace the existing 1979 pumper engine
- Evaluate availability of used pumper engines that will extend our ability to keep our fire department safe and allow for rapid response to critical fire emergencies.
- Bring all options to the Town for review and approval vs. only bringing forward a NEW purchase option.
- Evaluate this purchase in terms of all estimated expenses across all departments for the next 10 years. Make certain the Town understands this expense in terms of other capital equipment, permit, State roadway expenses and employee expenses the Town will be required to support over the same period we're paying for the new pumper engine.

When was the request for a new pumper engine made?

The request was presented to the Select Board at our January 2019 meeting. Based on the information presented at that meeting, the Board unanimously voted to delay this purchase until additional research and analysis can be completed.

Why was a petition circulated to request this vote?

A petition was required because the Select Board voted unanimously to delay this purchase. Articles for consideration must have Select Board support or 10% of voters can bring a vote forward.

What does the article say?

The Article authorizes the Select Board to spend up to \$370,000 to purchase a new pumper engine. If approved by the voters, the Select Board would begin the process of securing financing for a period not to exceed 10 years. A new fire engine would take up to 9 months to build and deliver. Payments would begin in late 2019 or early 2020. Tax increases would take effect in the July 2019 budgeting period raising taxes beginning September 2019.

What would the total cost of the fire engine be over 10 years?

If all existing reserve funds are used, financing for \$285,000 would be required. Estimated finance charges are \$70,000 bringing the total cost of the new engine to \$440,000.

What is the Select Board's priority?

The Select Board's first priority is balancing the long-term forecast of expenses and obligations with the Town's ability to pay for those expenses. The current budget is published here ([link](#)) and includes ongoing operational expenses (town employees, insurance, building maintenance), mandated State expenses like road permits, Town highway expenses (equipment, materials) and the Fire Dept budget.

Through planning, the Select Board has been able to keep the tax rate stable and predictable. Reserve funds are a tool used successfully for the purchase of expensive equipment. The Town forecasts equipment utilization (how many times will we use it, how many miles a year, maintenance costs, insurance). The Select Board reviews alternatives to equipment purchase (rent, use contractors, buy used, buy new). By planning and setting aside smaller reserve amounts each year, taxes are kept level, and we reduce or eliminate the need to pay financing charges. Planning also gives the Board an

opportunity to look for the best fit of equipment to our needs and negotiate from a strong financial position.

The Town's continued ability to operate responsibly to the benefit of our residents has been reflected in our comparatively low tax rates and low to no finance charges that are always associated with bonds or borrowing funds.

Does the Select Board support the Town's Fire Department?

Yes. The Select Board is fully supportive of our volunteer Fire Department. We have recommended that the Fire Department partner even closer with the Select Board on budget development. The approach the Board uses to buy large road maintenance equipment can be used for the Fire Dept budget process as well. The Board recognizes the tremendous value a volunteer fire department brings to our town.

The Board agrees that a pumper engine repair or change is needed to ensure the safety of our equipment operators, team members and the public they serve.

The Board has asked the Fire Department to immediately discontinue the use of any equipment that is deemed to be unsafe. Operator and passenger safety is our priority.

Other Towns have new equipment, why not Elmore?

Wolcott and Morrisville have purchased new pumper engines in the last several years. Wolcott's engine is very similar to what has been requested in Elmore. These towns either have a larger base of property owners to pay for new equipment or they have determined that they need to make a significant local investment.

Could Elmore partner with neighboring cross-coverage towns?

Yes, we could explore combining efforts to purchase equipment that is complimentary and could be pooled to support each other's needs. Especially when we have few calls that require advanced equipment.

If Elmore doesn't have a pumper engine, will our houses burn down?

Without a working Elmore-owned pumper engine, calls that require a pumper engine will be answered by a local cross-coverage Town (Morrisville, Worcester, Wolcott). Depending on the location of the emergency, call response time may be longer.

How often is the pumper engine used?

- The Elmore Fire Dept responds to 8-26 total calls per year; of those, 1-5 require the pumper engine. The pumper is also used for training purposes.

Repair vs Replace

- Repair costs of \$10,000 - \$15,000 would return the current engine to safe working order
- A repair extends the Town's ability to save funds for the purchase of a new truck
- Addition time to save funds reduces finance charges on a new truck purchase
- A repair gives the Town time to look for a viable used truck

Replace with a Used Truck

- A used pumper engine could extend the Fire Department's ability to respond to emergency events for up to 15 years, allowing the Town to save for a longer-term solution
- A used pumper engine would provide a significant safety and capability upgrade to our 1979 engine. It may not have all upgrades that a new truck would provide.
- A used pumper engine could potentially be purchased from existing funds or require significantly reduced fund borrowing, tax impact and finance charges
- A used pumper engine may have unknown maintenance costs. An extended warranty would be investigated.

Replace with a New Truck

- A new truck will take about 9 months to custom build and cost \$370,000 - \$440,000 after financing
- A new truck will have lower maintenance costs for the initial ownership period
- The truck could be used for more than pumper-specific calls and would allow Elmore to be a viable backup responding Town for other area departments that need support. A used pumper could provide this coverage as well.
- A new truck will bind the Town to 10 years of payments and finance charges.

Funding overview:

- A reserve fund approved in 2018 contains \$30,000
- The 2019 Town budget adds \$25,000 to the reserve fund for a total of \$55,000
- The Fire Dept identified \$30,000 in accumulated funds that would be added
- Financing the truck for the maximum 10 years would cost an additional \$70,000
- A reserve account for future Fire Department equipment purchases must CONTINUE to be funded for at least \$20,000 a year, in addition to any payments required for new equipment

Elmore Fire Department Call Status

EFD Stats	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Fire - Structure	3	2	0	1	4
Fire - Car	1	0	0	1	0
Fire - Vegetation	2	0	2	0	0
Fire - Other	3	1	0	0	1
CO	4	3	1	3	0
Fire Alarm	7	1	0	1	2
Medical	1	1	1	1	3
Car Accident	5	3	2	2	5
Other	0	0	2	1	3
Total	26	11	8	10	17

Elmore Fire Department Proposed Replacement of 1979 International Pumper Engine

The 1979 International Pumper, known as "Engine 2" is no longer a viable truck for use in responding to emergency calls. An August 2018 inspection of the truck identified several serious issues that will be very costly to address.

Faced with the likely retirement of Engine 2, the Elmore Fire Department (EFD) has evaluated several potential options outlined below:

Option 1: Make repairs and keep the current Engine 2 on the road.

- +Engine and pump are in working order.
- +Repair options exist.
- Repairs to address the serious issues with the braking system and frame rust will likely cost in excess of \$12k.
- Further repairs in the near future will result in even more maintenance costs.
- This truck has served the town well, but doesn't fully suit the needs of the department.

Option 2: Retire Engine 2 and do not replace it.

- +Simplest option.
- +Lowest overall cost solution.
- Standard response to most fires generally requires a minimum of 2 trucks. One "attack" truck will arrive first and will be used to start fighting the fire. A second truck is used to supply the attack truck with water.
- If "Engine 1" were to require service or was dispatched on a call, the town would be left vulnerable with no operating fire engines.
- Reducing the response capacity of the department could negatively affect ISO ratings.

Option 3: Locate and purchase a suitable used engine.

- +Potential for some savings compared to a new truck.
- +Potentially quickest solution.
- Long-term costs could be high. Reliability is a concern with any used equipment.
- Fit for function difficult to find in used options:
 - Lack of water storage
 - Length of truck
 - Regional requirements (panel and pump heaters, on spot chains)
 - Rear suction and dump (for narrow driveways)

(Continued on next page)

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Option 3: Locate and purchase a suitable used engine. (Cont.)

-Neighboring department encountered high maintenance costs with recent used acquisitions. Also found used trucks to be a poor fit for the needs of the town in some cases.

-Used vehicle will require replacement sooner; cost of search and refit of new vehicle.

Option 4: Bid out and purchase a new purpose built truck.

+Functionality is EFD's highest concern. A purpose built truck will provide the following:

-Short wheelbase for accessing long, narrow driveways.

-Large water supply which has proven critical for rural fires.

-Automatic transmission will allow for easier, safer operation.

-Multipurpose truck; fire, rescue/accident response, water supply.

+Vehicle safety is also a vital concern. New vehicles meet latest NFPA and DOT safety regulations.

+Very low maintenance costs for many years.

+Long projected life; 25-30 years.

-High initial cost.

-Long lead time (potentially 1 year from order date).

Elmore Fire Department



Photo by Randy Darne www.firenews.org

Proposed purchase of a new fire truck to replace Engine 2 a 1979 International.

1979 International Pumper

August 2018 Inspection Summary

- The vehicle will not pass inspection without significant repair (approximately \$12K).
- The brake system is hydraulic, not air. The brake system operates at either 2200 psi or 4400 psi depending on brake pedal pressure. The brake lines are showing rust. Potentially failing brakes is of high concern when responding to incidents or during training especially when adrenaline levels are high (hitting the brakes harder).
- The brake booster assembly is no longer available for purchase (complex rebuild is the only option).
- The emergency brake barely keeps the vehicle stopped when on a hill thus wheel chocks are critical. When operated this brake wraps around and holds the driveshaft so any damage to the shaft or U-joints will result in emergency brake failure.
- The driver step has heavy rust affecting structural stability and will need rebuilding to pass inspection.
- The storage compartments and other areas of the vehicle body are rusting and will continue to rust even while kept indoors as rust continues to grow according to the inspection mechanic.
- In summary, the 2018 inspection resulted in an overall concern for life safety for not only the vehicle operators, but also for other vehicles, pedestrians, and emergency responders at a scene.
- We have already had one incident of losing brake while responding to a structure fire and this occurred on Elmore Pond Rd near Courchaine Farm Rd on a sharp corner.

Why do we need to replace Engine 2 other than safety inspection concerns?

- Only has 500 gal water capacity
- Not good in winter - no pump heaters, difficult to use chains (no on-spot)
- Limited equipment space due to large LDH reel
- Requires some guesswork when pumping due to some inoperable gauges and controls
- No foam capability
- No portable pond
- No portable pump
- No rear suction
- No deck gun
- No tanker capability
- Overall limited capabilities

What will be the new vehicle's primary function?

- Fire Suppression
- Motor vehicle accidents
- Hauling water (Tanker)
- Water supply (filling tankers at water supply locations, dry hydrant, lake, etc.)

What physical characteristics are critical for the new vehicle?

- Shorter wheel base for better maneuverability for tight/steep driveways (Worcester Ridge).
- Rear suction for the ability to put portable pond in driveway or keep a road open to one lane.
- Large capacity of water, for the purpose of fire attack or hauling water.
- Modern safety features
- Storage space for vehicle rescue equipment
- Designed for winter work - pump heaters, on-spot tire chains, larger engine

What is the vehicle's projected activity level?

- In the last 5 years there have been 72 calls for service in the Town of Elmore.
- Out of those 72 calls the proposed new truck would have responded to at least 38 of those calls or 52% (structure fires, car accidents).

What are the apparatus operator's qualification needs?

- New truck would be an automatic, making it easier to train and safer for operation.
- Built in safety features to detect when the vehicle is traveling too fast around a corner to prevent the truck from rolling.
- Current truck is a standard transmission (which is no longer common).

New Truck Purchase

- Can serve multiple purposes, either as an attack engine, water supply engine or tanker.
- We would have more cabinet space, which we would be able to take some equipment off Rescue 1 and prolong the life of that truck.
- Would be equipped with the Jaws of Life and would respond to car accidents, thus having the capabilities of vehicle extrication and fire protection with one truck.
- Life of a new fire truck could be 25-30 years.
- Truck will be equipment with the newest safety features for occupants (airbags, seat belts, shuts off going too fast into corners). Used truck may not have most of these features.
- Cost of a new truck would be \$12,333 per year if the life of the truck lasted 30 years. The body being stainless could possibly give us the option after 30 years to have the choice of just buying a new chassis and putting the old body and pump on that.
- Would be built to our needs
- When Engine 1 goes in for service, we would have no capabilities of fire suppression without a second engine. That is NOT safe for our community and puts lives at risk.

Purchase of a used truck

- Only get 10-15 years of service out of it
- Limited warranty if any.
- Existing unknown problems.
- We are not qualified to look over fire pumps and other mechanical equipment to determine if there is an issue or if there has been an issue.
- Hard to find a used commercial chassis that would fit our needs. Most used trucks are cab over trucks and have been designed for urban areas with pressurized hydrants
- Need panel heaters and capabilities of working in Vermont conditions
- Would have to travel out of state to see the truck using volunteer's time and personal vehicles for travel.

Purchase of a used truck continued (examples)

- **Fenton Fire Equipment Inc.**
720 Cambria St. Suite #1
Portage PA 15946
United States
- 2006 International Pumper 1500 gpm / 750 gal \$110,000.00
- Has 130,000 miles which is a lot. May get 15 years out of the truck.
- Truck has a small pump and is a crew cab, making the truck long however we are looking for something that has a shorter wheel base, and a regular cab.
- Cost of this used truck over 15 years to the Town would be approximately \$7,333 and another truck purchase would be needed.
- Truck with a 750 gpm pump limits the distance and amount of water that can be delivered and truck is not capable of dumping water which limits this truck's functions
- 2005 International 4000 Series \$40,000.00
- 1250 gpm/ 1000 gal pump (lack of water)
- 168,500 miles 20,000 engine hours (truck has been used a lot)
- Also has a mid-mount pump making the wheel base longer
- Might get 5-10 years of use.

Why can't EFD rely on Mutual Aid?

- We currently do rely on mutual aid from Wolcott FD (both department respond to calls in either town).
- Wolcott FD has all time low membership and has a hard time getting enough people to handle calls in Wolcott alone.
- Morrisville FD during the day time lately has only had 3 people at most.
- Worcester FD has been called in the past during the day and no one ever responded.
- Those 3 towns are the closest for Mutual Aid. At this time volunteers are hard to find, more so during the day.
- There would most likely be a very long response time to get the needed equipment to the scene if we relied on mutual aid for the initial response which is a risk to the community of Elmore.
- Elmore has been very lucky that we have been able to average 5-8 people during daytime response.
- Having One Engine on scene and not knowing when the next one or tanker would arrived would limit our ability to preserve life and property for the residents of Elmore and possibly put us in danger.

What has EFD done for equipment in the past?

- We have secured multiple grants
- Most recently for new air packs. We saved the Town over \$68,000 with this grant alone.
- Other grants have resulting in a Trailer, ATV, air bottle fill station, generators, lights, wildland gear, pagers, etc.
- We have raised funds for purchase of a Rescue truck and special equipment.
- We try not to have an impact on the taxpayers and rarely ask for a lot unless we see that there is a life safety need for it. In this case it is for the safety of the people who are volunteering their time to help people in need and for those who are in need.

Towns nearby replacement schedule and recent vehicle purchases

- Morrisville FD is replacing trucks every 20 years
- MFD just bought a mini pumper for \$227,000
- Wolcott FD has been replacing every 15 years
- North Hyde Park FD is purchasing a new Engine for just over \$300,000

Fire Department's Budgets

- Elmore Fire Department
\$38,700
- North Hyde Park/Eden Fire Department
\$60,850
- \$73,700 (with truck payments \$35,000)
- Wolcott Fire Department
\$68,900
- Hyde Park Fire Department
\$65,900
- Greensboro Fire Department
\$79,751
- Morrisville Fire Department
\$314,081
- \$403,000 (with truck payments)

Equipment Replacement / Capital Reserve

- Engine 2 is a 1979 International Purchased in 2002
- Replacement Schedule 2018 (according to town plan)
- Rescue 1 is a 1989 GMC & Rescue 2 is a 2003 Chevy Silverado
- Replacement approximately: 2029
- These two trucks could be combined with a single crew cab rescue truck with rescue body on the back. The purchase of this truck used would cost between \$60,000-\$100,000. I would suggest a capital equipment fund for this projected purchase to be between \$5,000-\$10,000/yr.
- Engine 1: 2010 International Pumper/Tanker
- Replacement in approximately: 2040
- Starting in 2029 I would suggest a capital equipment fund for this projected purchase to be approximately \$25,000/yr. That would give the Town 10 years to save for this projected replacement.

Road Commissioner Report February 19, 2019

Work in process or Complete:

1. Lot's of snow. January 2019 is in the record book's at number 3.
2. Lot's of rain (ice) 5 days this month so far.,
3. Parts of Town, grader has been used twice to push back snow banks.
4. Parking lots plowed and sanded for polar splash event.

Equipment:

1. Truck #1 Hydraulic line failed.
2. Truck #2 Sander gearbox was replaced by H.P. Fairfield, sander broke down again, fixed in house.

Employee's:

1. Working.

Upcoming Issues:

1. Prepare for spring.