

**West Ossipee Fire Precinct Public Hearing  
2010 Annual Precinct Meeting Special Warrant Article  
January 15, 2010**

Commissioners Present: Paul Jay and Henry Ela

Registered West Ossipee Precinct Voters Present: Stanley Brothers, Roland Millette, Sarah Millette, Joseph Lombardi, Diane Lombardi, Tom Kondrat and WOFD Chief Brad Eldridge

Others Present: Carl Huddleston, Glenn Tucker, Carl West and Matt Welch

Minutes Taken By: Marilyn Bolduc, Clerk

Commissioner Jay opened the hearing at 6:00pm. He read the special warrant article as it appears on the 2010 West Ossipee Fire Precinct Annual Meeting Warrant.

*To see if the precinct will authorize the commissioners to enter into a long-term lease-purchase agreement in the amount of \$150,000, payable over a term of 60 months to purchase new air packs, Hurst tool, EMS supplies and turnout gear, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$34,000 for the first year's payment for that purpose. The commissioners recommend this appropriation. The budget committee recommends this appropriation. (Two-thirds ballot vote required.)*

Commissioner Jay asked Chief Eldridge to explain what equipment will be purchased and why it is needed.

Chief Eldridge explained that the 24 air packs currently used by the department range in age from 7 to 15 years old. They have been upgraded as much as the equipment will allow. However, in order to have the equipment to meet current safety standards the facemasks, alarms and harnesses need to be upgraded. The cost is approximately \$100,000.00. Our order could be attached to an order from Manchester, NH to give us a better price break.

Mr. Brothers asked how many of the packs are being replaced. Chief Eldridge said all 24 packs will be replaced. At this time the department has two different brands of air packs. From a risk management viewpoint, it is recommended that all the equipment be identical so the fire fighter does not have to figure out which brand pack they are putting on so operation of the air pack is always the same and second nature. A committee of firemen is reviewing the operation of MSA and Scott packs and will be making a recommendation of which brand they would like to use. About half of the air bottles we now have will be used with the new packs. Some of the air bottles are outdated for use. If the department goes with MSA, the equipment will be identical to Center Ossipee and Freedom. Ossipee Corner uses Survivair. The air bottles are interchangeable with all brands.

Mr. Millette asked if equipment replacement will be put on a rotating schedule to spread the cost in the future? Chief Eldridge said future plans are to buy 4-5 new pieces a year. Standards have changed dramatically in the last couple of years. Because of the changes, we need to replace all of the packs.

Mr. Millette asked what is the workload of the department? The calls for service in 2009 increased 46% over 2008. This figures includes calls for fire, EMS and hazmat for the most part. A breakdown of 2009 calls will be available for the annual meeting.

Mrs. Millette asked if the equipment will be compatible with the other departments in Ossipee Mutual Aid? Chief Eldridge stated that all air bottles are interchangeable with any brand air pack. Each department member has their own specially fitted facemask. They are individually fitted to ensure proper fit for the safety of the firefighter. The fittings on the mask assembly are common and can be connected to the other departments' air bottles.

Chief Eldridge stated MSA is very reliable as is Scott. The men seem to be leaning to MSA. MSA provides good service for the equipment.

Asked if there is any value to the old equipment, Chief Eldridge said possibly overseas. There are companies who will buy them to resale overseas. Dealers selling new equipment will not take them as "trade-in".

Mrs. Lombardi asked if there will be any savings in insurance premiums? Chief Eldridge said he does not believe the premiums will be lowered, but the savings will be realized with fewer incidents due to equipment failure. This upgrade is to lower risk to the fire fighters and to comply with risk management of the job. The new air packs have more ergonomic harnesses and alarms with redundant backup alarms. The alarms are extremely loud and help to find the firefighter if he goes down in a building. The new packs allow additional firefighters to attach their packs to another firefighter as a last resort in an emergency situation.

Mr. Millette stated that replacing the air packs is really not a matter of choice. He asked if going with MSA will have a price advantage. Chief Eldridge said the difference in price between companies is not very much. If the Precinct purchases the MSA packs, there will be less need to purchase as many replacement parts. Standards require that when an air pack goes out on a call a MSA pack must have a MSA air bottle attached to it. Once you are at a scene any brand air bottle can be used to replace an empty bottle.

The Hurst tool upgrade is to replace the head, spreader and blades. The motor of the tool will not be replaced. This is necessary due to the thicker layers of metal in the newer cars. The old parts can be sold at auction.

A stair chair for the to be kept on the Rescue is also included in this article. A stair chair allows EMS to move people more safely with less chance of injury to the patient and the EMS personnel. With the new stair chair one person can bring a patient down a staircase and be in complete control. The price for the stair chair is approximately \$2,800.00.

Also in this article is funding to replace much of the turnout gear that is out of date. Currently, some of the firefighters have gear that was purchased in 1993 and 1996. Turnout gear life is 7 years. It costs approximately \$2,000.00 just for a coat and a pair of pants. It does not include boots or a helmet. The article includes sets of turnout gear for the junior fire fighters. The junior firefighters are very dedicated and have proved to be of great assistance at call scenes. A junior firefighter is not allowed into a burning building. The department is looking to purchase 15 sets of turnout gear and will try to tag our order onto an order for a larger department to help reduce cost. The gear needs to be replaced due to age. Commissioner Jay said the department sent people out to be trained in turnout gear inspections and gear is inspected every 6 months. Outside inspection by a independent inspector costs \$100 per unit. Repairs are done by a man certified to do repairs. Some damage is not repairable.

Chief Eldridge stated that the costs to meet equipment and firefighting standards are rising every year. He just doesn't know where to cut cost and still be able to provide the needed service.

The lease/purchase agreement has a 4.7% interest rate for a 7-year lease and is fixed. At the end of the agreement the buyout is for \$1.00 and it has an escape clause.

Land value in the West Ossipee precinct is up to \$191 million dollars. This article will add about ½ cent to the tax rate. The proposed operating budget for 2010 is up about 2.9% over 2009.

Stanley Brothers stated that since the vote on the special warrant article has to be by ballot, that the polls will have to open for 1 hour for the precinct taxpayers to vote. This must be posted on the annual meeting notice.

With no further questions, Comm. Jay adjourned the meeting at 6:48pm.