



Hinesburg Fire Department
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Capital Funding Plan 2015

Hinesburg Fire Department

The number one goal of this plan is to make it affordable for the Town of Hinesburg to meet the communities' expectations of its emergency services.

Items considered while developing the replacement process and schedule:

- Tax impact of replacement schedule.
- Cost to maintain current equipment at a "safe to use" level.
- Responses with reduced day time staff.
- Alternatives to bonding for equipment.
- Long term operating costs.
- How improved ISO (Insurance rating) could help offset any budget increases for equipment to the end consumers of Emergency Services, the public.
- Future growth of the community and how aging population will affect the town's emergency services and budgets.
- Financial impact of diminishing membership and potential need for paid staff at the Fire Department.

Since 1970 it has been the goal and practice of the Fire Department and Select Board to replace the front line engine every 10 years, cycling out the back up engine at 20 years of age, the expected useful life span of a Class A pumper according to NFPA and insurance industry. Currently our front line engine is 13 years old and our back up engine is 24 years old. The replacement cycle was extended due to budgetary impacts. This plan was established to ensure the pumpers were in good serviceable condition, cycled out before their maintenance cost became too high, while there was still value in the asset to be reclaimed in selling it and ensuring reliability in the fleet.

Current Vehicle Status

Engine 1, 1990 International pumper, will soon be 25 years old. It is the our backup pumper used at a water source to fill tankers, pump water to the primary pumper during large fires and key mutual pumper when we are called to furnish water supply. While the engine is in relatively good working condition, we use it sparingly to prolong its life. We estimate its remaining usable life span, barring any major mechanical failures, is perhaps 3-5 years.

Engine 2, 2001 International pumper, 13 years old serves as our first engine out on all fires, accidents and mutual aid coverage calls. It is good mechanical condition but also carries the most equipment, and has the heaviest load.

Engine 3, 2003 Ford F-550 4-wheel drive quick attack engine. E3 is used in the hill areas, especially during the winter and spring due to road conditions, and areas where a full sized engine cannot access. The pump unit was replaced in 2010. It is in good condition and serviceable for at least another 10 years.

Rescue 1, 1998 International 4 door Heavy Rescue truck is in the worst condition of all our trucks and used the second most. The under carriage has suffered extensive rust damage due to the treatments used on the roads in winter. The wiring harness that runs the body has failed. We estimate we will be investing a minimum 2-3 thousand dollars in mechanical repairs this year and years to follow to be able to safely keep it on the road. Due to the extensive rust, it is becoming out of service more and anybody's guess as to how long it will be safe to use and could be taken out of service at any time.

Water 1, 2006 International water tank truck, carries 2100 gallon of water and forestry firefighting equipment. W1 supplies water to the engines. It is in great condition with a 20 plus years more expected serviceable life span.

Med 100, 2012 Ford F-450 4 wheel drive medical response truck. Med 100 is our most used truck, responding to all medical calls, accidents, and working fires. Med 100 is currently leased. The lease will end in 2016.

Overview of Needs Assessment

Our primary concern is the condition of R-1 due to rust and the age of our engines. At the time of its donation to the Fire Department by Dr. Wainer, Rescue 1 was only the second heavy rescue truck in Chittenden County. R1 was specifically designed and set up to specialize in extrication of victims from vehicle crashes or other types of entrapment, carries materials to assist with Hazardous Material spills, and additional EMS response equipment.

We responded to several communities as either primary or backup for vehicle extrication for many years. This is no longer the case. Over time, communities realized that a delayed response of a heavy rescue vehicle equaled potential lost time and lives. Towns have invested in their own rescue trucks and equipment. As a result, the equipment on R1 could be down sized and relocated to other trucks. Because of its condition, the resale value of Rescue 1 is becoming more limited but replacement should be done while there is some value in the truck still somewhat reliable.

Engine 1 is 4 years past optimum replacement time. It is a key piece of apparatus for us as our call volumes increase, and we encounter more simultaneous calls. E1 moves from a backup truck to a primary truck during multiple events and needs to be reliable as well as fully equipped. According to fire truck dealers its value has dropped to a maximum of \$10,000, and very likely lower.

Structure sizes are a huge concern for the fire department leadership and most members. As structures have grown in both numbers and size, they have become more complex for the fire department to respond to. With recent zoning changes allowing bigger building heights and encouraging more dense construction our ground ladders no longer reach upper floors, creating a life safety issue for both the public and rescuers.

With that complexity come added costs, both in manpower and equipment needs. As our capabilities are assessed by outside entities (ISO & Insurance companies) it is very important to stay up to date with our equipment. Potential new businesses that look to locate in Hinesburg factor in insurance costs. A poorer ISO rated Fire Department increases their operating cost (insurance) thus making Hinesburg not as appealing.

After considering many options the Officers and membership feel that the replacement of Rescue 1 and Engine 1 is our immediate need. We propose replacing these two trucks with one single truck, a rescue/pumper. This would allow reduction of the fleet by one truck, thus lowering maintenance and operating cost and delaying any need for additions to the fire station for 5-7 years to house trucks. A rescue/pumper is also typically a smaller truck with a better turn radius. Moving to a rescue/pumper will enable day time crews to respond with fewer staff and vehicles while having the same or better capabilities.

In looking towards the near future, the Officers feel that the growth in the town will result in higher buildings. Building plans are being submitted to the DRB which include building heights up to 3 stories. Due to the increases in proposed (and possibly constructed) building heights, the situation will necessitate the purchase of a truck equipped with a hydraulic ladder (Quint). This purchase will coincide with the replacement of Engine 2 in the next 7 year time frame. A portion of the replacement cost will be funded by impact fees which have and are being collected. While we feel the need for a hydraulic ladder currently exists, we need to address our most emanate failure point, Rescue 1 and Engine 1.

EMS Overview

Our EMS responses have seen a very steady growth pattern, and are nearly double of our other calls for service. There appears to be many factors for the increase in calls. Some of these are the increase in businesses, employment, and residents. We foresee the call volume to continue to increase with an aging population and proposed construction of elderly housing.

After reviewing many ambulance options, we feel that the best option would be a similar model as Underhill-Jericho. They have contracted with Essex Rescue to place an ambulance in their station during the daytime hours while their coverage is thinnest. This model would require the addition to the station to house the ambulance, increased secure storage space for medical supplies, and staffing within the next 6-10 years depending on call volume. The advantage to the contract is it would enable us to postpone an ambulance purchase for perhaps to 10-15 years.

Building Expansion

Our proposed plan of combining Rescue 1/Engine 1 into one truck will allow us to move Engine 3 out of the old fire station back to the main station. We would then move the items currently in a rental unit at Lyman Storage to the old station, thereby eliminating our storage rental fee. In 5-7 years or when funding is available; Engine 2 would be replaced with a Quint. The Quint would fit into the current station without any additions. There would not be a need for the addition to the station to house apparatus until we are ready to house a third party ambulance in 6-10 years. We would, however, still need to build the addition for training/meeting space. This project would be undertaken by the Hinesburg Fireman's Association through a fundraising campaign and using local volunteer labor.

Funding

In consideration of the current and potential future bonded projects in Hinesburg, it is felt that the best funding option for the rescue/pumper would be a lease program. A lease option would not impact the town's bond indebtedness enabling the bonded project to receive a low bond rate.