

**Borough Council Workshop Meeting
February 4, 2026**

Call to Order – Mrs. Dekar called the meeting to discuss the purchase of a new fire engine to order at 5:40pm. The start of the meeting was delayed due to a fire alarm on West Lockhart Street.

Roll Call – The following members of the Borough Council were present; Cori Belles, James Bentley, James Daly, Derrick Hall, Dan Wayman, Jessica Meyer, Vice President; Jessie Dekar, President. Also present; Henry Farley, Mayor; Gil Crossett, Fire Chief; Jonathan Foster, Borough Solicitor; Robert Repasky, Assistant Fire Chief; and David Jarrett, Borough Manager.

Citizens to be Heard – There were none.

Discussion – Fire Truck Purchase – In addition to Chief Robert Repasky, the following members of Howard Elmer Hose Company were present to discuss the purchase of a new fire engine to replace the Borough's 2000 Pierce® which is designated as Engine 2; Andrew Hickey, Firefighter; Blane Lathrop, Captain; Jordan Myers, Lieutenant; and Tracey Stroup,

Chief Repasky provided an overview of the Borough's fire apparatus explaining that the Borough has one aerial truck (Truck 1), two (2) fire engines (Engine 2 and Engine 3) which pump water to Truck 1. The Department also utilizes a Squad vehicle which is a truck with utility boxes with small tools.

Mrs. Belles asked if the aerial truck can pump water, and Chief Repasky stated that the 12 Truck 1 can pump 1500 gallons per minute and has a 300 gallon pump. Chief Repasky added that 12 Engine 3 can pump 2000 gallons per minute and has a 750 gallon tank, and 12 Engine 2 can pump 1750 gallons per minute and has a 500 gallon tank.

Mrs. Dekar asked how the Department's response to alarms are determined. Chief Repasky explained that Truck 1, Engine 2, and Engine 3 respond to all alarms. Mrs. Belles asked if responding all three pieces was the normal response and Chief Repasky stated that it depends on the nature of the call. Chief Repasky stated Truck 1 responds to all alarms but other apparatus may be stood down once it is determined by the on-scene officer that they are not needed.

Mrs. Dekar asked about the staffing requirements for each apparatus, and Chief Repasky stated that each apparatus requires a driver and pump operator. Chief Repasky stated that once on scene, the driver of Truck 1 can operate the pump and the second person would then operate the aerial turntable if necessary. Mr. Lathrop stated that Truck 1 is used often for ventilation duties.

Mrs. Dekar asked what dictates the response to each call. Chief Repasky stated that the Department's response to a call is determined by what equipment is needed for the call.

Mrs. Dekar asked if mutual aid response from neighboring communities helps reduce the need to respond all three pieces of apparatus, and Chief Repasky explained that the box alarm mutual aid response was originally implemented in the 1990s and the program has been updated over the years. Chief Repasky stated manpower needs determines if other fire departments are needed for an alarm and explained that Sayre provides mutual aid assistance to other fire departments in the area.

Mrs. Dekar asked how many firefighters are needed for each call. Mr. Myers stated that a driver, officer, and two firefighters are needed for each engine to meet standards. Chief Repasky explained that there are many responsibilities during an emergency call that includes command, traffic control, connecting the apparatus to the hydrant, and firefighters to fight the fire. Chief Repasky stated that the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards stipulate that there be five (5) personnel on each apparatus.

Miss Meyer asked what the requirements were for ISO (International Standardization Organization) such as apparatus pump size and hose capacity. Chief Repasky explained that the ISO rating is based on specific factors that include apparatus, water supply, and emergency communications and that the Department currently meets ISO standards and that the ISO rating impacts insurance rates for property owners.

Miss Meyer asked if the number of hydrants impacts the ISO rating, and Chief Repasky stated that the Borough's fire protection is provided 100% by hydrants but underlining factors such as available water supply and frozen hydrants may require water to be provided by tanker trucks. Miss Meyer asked how often it has been necessary to utilize tanker trucks for water supply, and Chief Repasky stated that water had to be pumped from Island Pond during the Paluzzi building fire that occurred in 1999.

Mrs. Belles asked how often the Department's response includes properly staffed apparatus. Chief Repasky explained that the apparatus can sometimes respond with the required staffing but it is anticipated that the firefighters are responding directly to the scene in their personnel vehicles. Chief Repasky stated that mutual aid helps meet the standard of five (5) green tags that are needed for to respond to a structure fire. A green tag firefighter is certified as an interior firefighter.

Mrs. Belles asked if current manpower meets the Department needs and asked how often it is necessary to pull manpower from other communities. Chief Repasky stated that mutual aid helps meet staffing needs, and Mr. Lathrop stated that the availability of mutual aid is based on time of day because some employers do not allow employees to leave work to respond to a fire alarm.

Miss Meyer stated that the Borough Council supports the Department but there are concerns that the apparatus cannot respond properly staffed. Mr. Hickey stated that the apparatus responds fully staffed, and Chief Crossett stated that the fire department responds to 85% of the alarms without the need of mutual aid support.

Mrs. Dekar stated that the Borough does not have the funding available to purchase the new fire engine and she asked if other options were considered including purchasing a mini-pumper similar to the one that the Waverly-Barton Fire District recently purchased.

Miss Meyer asked Mr. Jarrett about the availability of funding to purchase a new fire engine, and Mr. Jarrett stated that a loan would be needed that will result in a tax increase as was the case when the aerial truck was purchased.

Mrs. Dekar asked if having a bigger pump on the truck is beneficial, and Chief Repasky stated that larger pump sizes does not mean that it is better because of the additional requirements needed for fire engines with larger pumps. Chief Repasky stated that the pump size on the current Engine 2 is 1750gpm and that the new fire engine would have the same size pump.

Mrs. Belles asked how often the ISO rating is recertified, and Chief Repasky stated that it is recertified every three years. Chief Repasky explained that the ISO rating is based on the type of responding apparatus, water supply availability, and emergency communication. Mrs. Dekar asked if purchasing the new fire engine will improve the rating and Chief Repasky stated that it would not.

Mrs. Belles asked if there were other ways to improve the ISO rating such as infrastructure improvements. Chief Repasky stated that the purchase of the new aerial truck helped improve the rating.

Mrs. Belles asked if the Department meets NFPA standards and Mr. Hickey provided an overview of the NFPA standards and if there is a best practice standard for emergency responses and what the Department is doing to ensure staffing requirements are currently met. Chief Repasky stated that the staffing requirements are met now.

Mr. Hall asked if the truck committee took into consideration the replacement of Engine 2 when they were designing Truck 1, and Chief Repasky stated that Truck 1 is capable of carrying 500 feet of 5" diameter hose and that Engine 2 is capable of caring 1500 feet of 5" diameter hose.

Mrs. Belles asked if grants and fundraising opportunities are being considered. Chief Repasky stated that the Department previously received an allocation of the Local Service Tax but those funds have been taken out of the budget. Mr. Jarrett explained that a portion of the Borough's LST revenue is designated for paving and police expenses and the balance is deposited in the General Fund account. Mr. Jarrett stated that revenue in the General Fund is used to pay the annual debt service on the Truck 1 which had been as much as \$197,000.00 but was recently reduced to \$150,000.00.

Mrs. Dekar asked how much longer it will be until the debt service on Truck 1 is paid off and Mr. Jarrett stated that it could be paid off in four or five years.

Mrs. Belles asked about available grants, and Chief Repasky stated that the Department had previously received a federal grant to purchase new air packs and explained that the purchase was a cooperative effort with the Chemung Fire Department. Mrs. Belles asked if there was an opportunity to cooperate with other Departments, and Mr. Hickey stated that the Borough owns the apparatus and that the Department would need to own the apparatus to qualify for the grant. Mrs. Dekar asked if it would be possible for the Department to own the apparatus and Chief Crossett stated that Department could not afford the maintenance costs of the apparatus.

Mrs. Belles asked if it is now the time to form partnerships with other fire departments, and Chief Repasky said that it would not result in a benefit and that the ISO rating would be reduced.

Chief Crossett suggested that the LST be increased. Mr. Jarrett stated that the LST could be increased to \$3.00 per week which would result in approximately \$500,000.00 in new revenue annually. *(Note: After looking into the issue further after the meeting, only municipalities designated as distressed are allowed to increase the LST to \$3.00/week however legislation has been proposed to allow all municipalities to increase the LST to fund fire, police, EMS)*

Mrs. Belles stated the Department's response model will need to be addressed based on the availability of staff.

Mrs. Dekar stated that the Borough will need to develop a replacement schedule and funding cycle for future purchases including Engine 3 that could be replaced as soon as 2034.

Mrs. Dekar asked if it would be possible to bill insurance companies for responding to motor vehicle accidents. Chief Repasky stated that the Department is primarily funded by the Borough so that it may not be possible unlike the Athens Township Fire Department that is only partially funded by the municipality.

Adjourn – A motion was made by Mr. Daly and seconded by Miss Meyer to adjourn the meeting at 6:30pm. There were no objections.

Respectfully Submitted,



David M. Jarrett
Borough Manager/Secretary