




Fighting Fires, Saving Lives and Promoting Safety.

Phillip A. J. Charron
Fire Chief

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thomas A. Golden Jr., City Manager 

FROM: Phillip A. J. Charron, Chief of the Fire Department

DATE: September 7th, 2022

SUBJECT: MOTION OF 8/09/22 REQUEST CITY MANAGER PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON APPARATUS REPLACEMENT AND EQUIPMENT CLOSURES OF THE GORHAM ST. FIREHOUSE.

On August 1st, 2022, Engine 1 was placed out of service for a maintenance brown out due to significant wear on the pump and gear case. This made it impossible to pump water and to operate it on the road. At the time, no spare pieces of apparatus were available to replace it. Engine 1 remained shut down for a 48 hour period between August 1st and August 3rd, 2022. There has not been another maintenance brownout at Engine 1 since March 17th, 2022, when all companies were placed in service around the clock.

The short term solution was to borrow a working spare fire apparatus from another community. Dracut Fire Department and the Town of Dracut graciously offered a spare engine for use to temporarily replace Engine 1. This was placed in service at Gorham Street at the start of the evening shift on August 3rd, 2022. The plan was for the Dracut spare apparatus to be used for a 4-6 week timeframe while Engine 1 and Spare Engine 7 were being repaired. Once one of these vehicles became available, it was to replace the Dracut spare at Gorham Street and that vehicle was to be returned to Dracut. We have since learned that the estimates for the repair of Engine 1 will exceed \$33,000 dollars, a number which is very hard to justify in light of the age of that piece of equipment (23 years). It will be slated for disposal. Spare Engine 7 will cost significantly less and we expect it to be available in two weeks' time.

The long term solution was to replace Engine 1 with a new apparatus from Seagrave Manufacturing. This company pushed off its delivery date of the new truck several times and then requested a surcharge be added to the total cost of the vehicle to make up for supply chain issues. This contract was terminated. Pierce Manufacturing made available a stock fire apparatus, through Allegiance Vehicles, that meets most of the vehicle standards of the Lowell Fire Department. More importantly, it was similarly priced and could be made available to us in the first week of October of 2022. With apparatus companies reporting 19 to 24 month build times, this acquisition was very timely indeed. Once it becomes available, it will go into service at the Gorham Street Firehouse and Spare Engine 7 will go into the reserve.