**Actions and Decisions**

**of**

**The Scituate Antique Fire Engine Restoration Group (SAFER)**

**Requested permission to store the 1924 White Fire Truck in a town building**.

Last fall, the group was told that the fire truck needed to be housed in a town-owned building. The men made a verbal request to use a large storage building owned by the town to store the fire truck. They received permission but were told that the building was currently full. It was expected to be available within a month or so from that time, but that space ultimately did not become available.

**Letter of request sent to Fire Chief John Murphy**

On January 9, a letter was given to Chief Murphy requesting space to house the fire truck during the restoration period and after restoration when the fire truck is turned over to the Town. Chief Murphy advised that he sent a request to the Board of Selectmen, the government entity responsible for allocating space in all government buildings in the Town of Scituate. Chief Murphy, along with the four SAFER retired firefighters, attended the Scituate Board of Selectmen’s meeting on March 10,2020 at 7 p.m. Chief Murphy made the request to the Board. Selectmen discussed the proposal, asked questions about the fire truck and its future proposed use and visibility, and Selectman Shawn Harris offered use of the Paul Young showroom to house the fire truck. Town Administrator Jim Boudreau was asked if it would be OK to house the fire truck in that building, since it isn’t a town-owned building.

; he agreed that it would be fine, and the Board of Selectmen unanimously.

**SAFER Bylaws**

The group put together a draft set of bylaws for SAFER that clearly set out the rules and responsibilities of members who choose to join SAFER: Board of Directors, Charter Members, Officers (Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer), various Committees, annual/quarterly/special meeting schedules, general membership, etc.

**Cost of Fire Truck Restoration, Equipment, and Accessories**

SAFER is still trying to respond to the comments made at the first CPC meeting, when the application was submitted. The men put a lot of time and effort into seeking out professional Fire Truck restorers (there are very few of them). They found and requested estimates from the three, which is a number generally considered sufficient when seeking job estimates. The restorers they found are located in Connecticut, West Virginia, and Maine. Two restorers sent estimates, both of which were quite close in cost estimates; however, after submitting several requests to the third restorer in Maine, he said he was too busy to take on the job. He then suggested another restorer, which turned out to be the one whose estimate we submitted to the CPC. We have been searching and talking with individuals who have restored fire trucks, only to be given the names of the same professionals we already contacted. The alternative then was to find individual professionals to complete the work piecemeal; though not the best alternative or simplest way to complete the project, the group then went through the original estimate, deleted the plan for a frame-off restoration and the gold leaf and lettering, and sought out less expensive alternate individuals and less expensive finishing details to lower the cost.

The SAFER group was beyond excited about their good fortune in discovering and purchasing this rare find. The fact that it was a 100-year-old fire truck once owned and operated by the Town of Scituate was unbelievable! So it was disconcerting that some CPC members didn’t seem to appreciate the value or significance of this artifact to the Town of Scituate. One asked what the value of the truck would be once it is restored, implying that it needed to be valued at the cost of the restoration. But how much is a new car worth when it leaves the lot? Certainly not how much you paid for it! Vehicles very rarely increase in value over time! The same applies for any antique car or truck that someone restores; it’s rarely, if ever, valued at the amount that the person invests in the restoration.

However, we feel that the value of an artifact of such significance to the Town of Scituate’s history should be considered in the equation. It should be of more important value than you can put a dollar amount on. The educational value of this historical artifact alone, especially since the fire truck originated right here in Scituate, should most definitely be considered, but how do you put a dollar amount on the educational value of such a historical artifact? We think it is priceless! This fire truck has a direct historical link to Scituate. It will be used for many years and for many purposes within the Town, the most important one being to educate the community. School children will learn about this unique Fire Truck that was owned and operated in their Town of Scituate almost 100 years ago and was in service to the town for 20+ years. The Fire Truck will be used to engage both children and adults in discussions about the history of Scituate’s firefighting as well as in the history of Scituate in general. It will be used to explain how it compares with today’s Scituate Fire Department, what technological advances have been made over the years, and, with help from community members who may have had family members who were on the Fire Department back then, it will generate stories about those long ago firefighters. The White Fire Truck can be used for all sorts of occasions: to lead parades, and displayed at Heritage Days, Firemen’s Sunday, and at schools and other local events.

The group has been seeking ways to decrease the cost, which will ultimately lead to a less than complete restoration of this wonderful historical Town of Scituate artifact. The group desperately wants the Town of Scituate to have this Fire Truck; they came up with the money to purchase the truck but they can’t assume the restoration expense. They have been told by one of the professional restorers that the truck as it sits now is well worth $10,000, so they could not only get their money back but more than double it if they sell it, but that’s not why they purchased it. They want the truck, not for themselves but for the Town of Scituate, where all four men worked until retirement. However, if necessary, they are willing to do a less than perfect restoration if that’s what the CPC wants. In looking at the cost estimate submitted by the professional restorer in CT, they are willing to eliminate the $65,000 to disassemble and re-assemble the truck and part of the $12,000 for the gold leaf and lettering cost. This will reduce the group’s request to the CPC to just $62,550. The Scituate Historical Society has agreed to provide an additional $5,000 to the project contingent on receipt of CPC funding. The group will conduct fundraising activities in the community to raise additional money to purchase the needed fire truck equipment and accessories, and to put aside $5,000 for future maintenance and upkeep of the Fire Truck once restoration is completed and the truck is turned over to the Town of Scituate Fire Department.