

21 January 2024

Dear Residents of the Aurora Ledyard Fire District:

**On Tuesday the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, the District will hold a referendum to finance the purchase of a new Vacuum Tanker to replace our 1998 Volvo. Voting will be from 6-9 pm in the meeting room of the Firehouse. All registered voters are welcome to cast a ballot. We will hold an informational session for any questions at the opening of our monthly meeting on Monday, Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm. We are asking for your support in purchasing this truck.** Our long-range plan called for replacing this truck in 2018. The District has been careful with its budgets, putting money into reserves and planning for the future. We held off on the process for the purchase of this truck until this summer, when our 15-year bond on the Quint was paid off. We are currently working with the US Dept. of Agriculture on securing a Rural Development Direct Loan/Grant to help us pay for this vehicle. The Volvo will be sold, and that money will be put directly back into the reserve. We anticipate that next year's budget will be within the NYS tax cap, and the tax for both fire and ambulance services in the District for 2024 will be less than a dollar/\$1,000 of assessed value. The maximum cost of this project cannot exceed \$450,000, comparable to what the Quint cost in 2008. After considering the quotes from the companies that build vacuum tankers, as well as the money we will be able to draw from our equipment reserves and the potential for assistance from the USDA program, we anticipate having to bond significantly less than that.

Our priorities are the same as for any rural district: trained firefighters and EMTs using effective equipment to protect lives and property in this community. This truck purchase addresses one of the main goals of the long-term plan we did w/ the National Fire Services Office in 2007 – being certain the Aurora Volunteer Fire Department can move water efficiently to fire scenes. The FD's Truck Committee put many hours into its recommendation. This vacuum tanker can draw water from the lake or from streams and ponds as well as hydrants. The truck itself can hold 3500 gal. of water and will be built to carry the Department's 3500 gal. Fol-da-Tank, so water can be stored at a fire scene while the tanker goes for more. It will also, unlike the '98 Volvo, have an automatic transmission, so any of our firefighters trained in handling the trucks would be able to drive it.

**\*It is important to state that the Department is also currently fundraising to replace its 2002 ambulance. The goal is to raise funds to the point at which**

**District reserves can satisfy the remaining cost, thus meeting the goal of buying the ambulance outright w/out having to return to voters to borrow more \$\$.** Any contribution you can make to the AVFD's Ambulance fund will expedite the purchase of the new ambulance.

As ever, our highest priority is the recruitment and retention of our firefighters and EMTs. Several factors continue to create a drain on membership. This is an issue facing each department in our area. We are lucky to have a number of dedicated younger members who have become essential to our efforts, but as our older members take their Life Memberships, we have not been able to replace them on a one-to-one basis. We have developed a positive and ongoing relationship with Wells College, which has brought us outstanding student members, and we are beginning to explore ways we can effectively retain younger members longer term. Our firefighters and EMTs are second to none in this area for their training and talents, and we need to make sure they have the support and the numbers they need to protect life and property in the District. If you would consider joining the AVFD, or have questions about membership, please see the Department's website at [AVFD.net](http://AVFD.net) or their Facebook page. You can contact them through either one.

We hope to have your support on Tuesday the 20<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for taking the time to read, and don't forget the informational session on the 12<sup>th</sup> at 6pm if you have questions.

The Aurora Ledyard Fire District Board of Commissioners  
(Jim Chase, Michael Miller, Bill Mullarney, Jim Orman, Pam Sheradin)