

**TOWN OF BRUNSWICK
PUBLIC HEARING
November 14, 2024 6:30 P.M.
TOWN HALL**

Board Members Present: Supervisor Herrington, Councilman Cipperly, and Councilman Balistreri, Councilman Sullivan.

Board Members Absent: Councilman Christian.

Also Present: Attorney, Thomas Cioffi and Town Clerk, Rebecca Del Gaizo.

Supervisor Herrington called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold a Public Hearing to accept public comment for the purpose of considering the matter of contracting with the Brunswick Fire Company No. 1, Inc., for fire protection to be furnished by said Brunswick Fire Company No. 1, Inc., to the Fire Protection District established in said Town of Brunswick, and known as the Brunswick Fire Company No. 1 (Sycaway) Fire Protection District, as follows: For the fiscal year commencing January 1, 2025, at a cost not to exceed the sum \$575,313.00; and for the fiscal year commencing January 1, 2027, at a cost not to exceed \$586,916.00.

At Supervisor Herrington's request, the Town Clerk read the complete Notice of Public Hearing into record. The Notice had been posted on the Town website, the Town Hall bulletin board and published in The Eastwick Press.

John Mainello, Brunswick Fire Company No. 1, Inc., reviewed the proposed fire protection contract. He said the last budget was processed prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore was unable to predict the increase in costs. He said the biggest cost is in the trucks. The last pumper truck purchased for \$700,000 and is now listed for \$300,000 more. The fire company is looking to improve the health of members and expand cancer awareness, especially since the recent passing of Assistant Fire Chief David Plew. Currently, fire gear is carried in vehicles in the open. There are new standards to protect members from added carcinogen exposure from the gear that include possibly a ventilation system for the vehicle carrying the gear or even putting the gear in the back of a pickup truck. Three vehicles would need to be outfitted for this new ventilation system. Last year, Brunswick Fire Company No. 1, Inc. responded to 643 calls, a record year. Mr. Mainello said everything has increased in year-over-year costs, such as insurance rates, interest rates, etc. Recently, the fire company invested in repaving the parking lot and fixing drains to prevent water from entering the bays. They had to change a certain area to concrete to help prevent the fire trucks from sinking into the asphalt. The fire company also sells off older vehicles to recoup some of their money.

Councilman Sullivan said he understands expenses are going up, but this budget is hard to support. He said he hopes fire districts will be able to cut their future budgets enough to possibly support ambulance services. Mr. Sullivan continued by suggesting using more shared services to allow cutting back a truck could save an average \$1million. He said the mission needs to match the services.

Mr. Mainello said people will have to pay one way or another; individuals could feel the effects in the homeowner's insurance premiums or through taxes.

Supervisor Herrington said the issue comes down to getting volunteers to respond to fire calls.

Councilman Christian arrived 6:55 p.m.

Steve Wilson, Fire Chief, said most of the time they have people available to respond to calls but agreed most fire departments struggle with getting people to respond to calls. He also said in terms of downsizing equipment, the department dropped a pumper truck and replaced a pickup truck recently. Mr. Wilson said if the town built an ambulance service and building and charged homeowners a minimal charge for the ambulance services, it would run itself with paid staff.

VISITORS WHO WISH TO SPEAK:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Supervisor Herrington made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Councilman Sullivan. Unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Del Gaizo
Town Clerk