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By Alanna Lynch at 3:08 pm, Jun 26, 2025

Fire Apparatus Assessment Committee Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2025 at 6:00PM
Zoom Teleconference

Attendees:

Eric Balles
Travis Snell
Scott Triola
Chief Sorrows

I. Review and Approve Minutes

- Minutes for the June 9, 2025 FAAC meeting were reviewed and approved. Vote 3-0.

II. Committee Member Updates and Discussion

Financial Analysis

- **Tax Impact of Borrowing** - The Committee discussed the estimated tax impact of borrowing provided by the Town Administrator (see attached). Snell commented that based on the numbers, the cost per million borrowed was closer to \$79k.
- **Apparatus Lifespan and Replacement** - The committee reviewed the information and estimates provided by Chief Sorrows regarding the fleet's vehicle replacement schedule (see attached). Chief Sorrows commented that the lifespan of some vehicles (e.g. Engine 5 and Ladder 9) can be extended due to relatively light use and good maintenance. Engine 4, however, is expected to need to be replaced around the 25-year mark due to heavy use.
- **Career versus Call Fire Department Costs** - The Committee discussed the costs and operational implications of transitioning from a call fire department to a career department, with Chief Sorrows providing a rough estimate of \$2 million annually for a career department compared to the current \$500,000 for the call department (see attached). It was agreed that a more accurate estimate can be obtained by working with the Town to also include health, insurance and other benefit costs. MRI might also be able to provide some additional information in this area.

Fire Department Survey

- Triola briefly reviewed the firefighter survey data collected by Tecton Architects in March/April 2025 and excerpts of the 2016 MRI Fire Staffing Study. The Committee also reviewed potential survey questions proposed by Tecton (see attached). The group discussed and came to the general agreement that the firefighter survey would not likely yield additional/different insights from the Chief's. Balles suggested that MRI should answer the proposed survey questions based on its expertise and broader industry perspective.

MRI Update

- The committee discussed engaging MRI to support the assessment at an hourly rate of \$135/hour. The Town Administrator requested a vote of support from the FAAC and authorization from the Select Board for a total amount not to exceed \$5k.

MOTION (Balles): I recommend the Town Administrator sign an agreement with MRI to support the work of the Fire Apparatus Assessment Committee. Services not to exceed \$5,000.

Motion seconded by Snell. Motion passed 3-0.

Triola will have a call with Brian Duggan (MRI - Director Fire Services) this week to discuss next steps and he will also invite MRI to attend the next meeting.

Community Input

- John Lavery recommended involving MRI in future discussions to help guide and accelerate the committee's analysis and decision-making process.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05PM. (Motion made and approved 3-0)

These minutes include all motions made and votes taken during this meeting.

Minutes taken and submitted by Scott Triola.

Minutes approved on June 23, 2025 (4-0).



Fire Apparatus Assessment Committee

Financial Analysis Information

Updated - June 16, 2025

Tax Impact from Borrowing

Estimated Tax Impact from Borrowing

(Estimates provided via email by Town Administrator)

Rough cost of borrowing for each \$1M borrowed?

Estimated range:

20 years at 5% = 100k in annual debt payment

15 years at 5% = 116k in annual debt payment

10 years at 5% = 150k in annual debt payment

How much would this impact the average tax bill in Carlisle?

100k on the average tax bill is: \$51

Apparatus Lifespan and Replacement

Information and estimates provided via email by Carlisle Fire Chief

Carlisle Fire Department Apparatus:

<https://www.carlislema.gov/364/Fire-Apparatus>

NFPA standard (not law):

Annex D of NFPA 1901: Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus (now recognized at NFPA 1900: Standard for Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Vehicles, Automotive Fire Apparatus, Wildland Fire Apparatus, and Automotive Ambulances) includes life cycle recommendations regarding frontline and reserve apparatus. The standard suggests that apparatus should provide 15 years of frontline service and then be turned over for reserve status. Fire apparatus that are older than 15 years should be evaluated for rebuilding in accordance with NFPA 1912: Standard for Fire Apparatus Refurbishing. NFPA 1901's Annex D further recommends that apparatus that are more than 25 years old be retired from the vehicle fleet.

Simple answers that helps with forecasting that the town has used for planning:

- Passenger vehicles last 10 years
- Ambulances last 10 years
- Fire engines/tankers last 25 years
- Ladder truck lasts 30 years

Apparatus Lifespan and Replacement

Information and estimates provided via email by Carlisle Fire Chief

Vehicle	Date in Service	Planned Replacement Date	Price Guess (2026 Dollars)		Proposed/ Expected
Car 1	2016	2026	\$80,000	electric? crew cab pickup	2030
Car 2	2018	2028	\$40,000		
Car 3	2016	2026	\$40,000		
Carlisle 10 (pickup)	2012	2022	\$90,000		2034 (\$250,000 mini pumper)
Ambulance A1	2019	2029	\$400,000		
Ambulance A2	2009	2019	\$400,000		2032
Engine 3	2000	2025	\$1,000,000		2029 (ordering now)
Engine 4	2007	2032	\$1,000,000		2035
Engine 5	2017	2042	\$1,800,000		
Engine 6	2011	2036	\$700,000		
Engine 7	1990	2015	\$600,000	(commercial water hauler, not custom fire engine)	2033
Ladder 9	2001	2031	\$1,900,000		2041

To map that out:

The replacements will largely be for the next Fire Chief to advocate for and I don't want to box him in but some nuance:

Cars:

The most appropriate car for this town's fire chief is a crew cab F150 style pickup. We should plan to buy one for the next Chief when I retire in 2030. For numerous reasons, cars can be kept in service until there is a major maintenance issue.

Pickup:

Many Chiefs would expect a town with our risks to replace it with a squad car like: <https://carverfire.org/apparatus/squad-1/> or a mini-pumper: <https://www.darley.com/tactical-pumpers/>. I don't expect that we will replace the current pickup while I am Chief. The takeaway is that a squad or mini-pumper will be more expensive.

Ambulances:

With a backup (second) ambulance, we can consider keeping the active one past 10 years. The only consideration is that A2 has an engine that was only manufactured one year that has known weaknesses. If A2 fails we would want to get the new ambulance ordered. Note that there is an ambulance fund for that replacement. Also, \$80,000 or so of the cost of a new ambulance is being spent this year for the power cot and load which can be moved to the next ambulance.

Engines:

Engine 3 is on order and should be delivered in 2029

Engine 4 should be considered for replacement in 2032. We can probably push the date out a couple of years but not indefinitely.

Engine 5 is well designed and in excellent condition, we can consider pushing out the retirement date

Engine 6 is also well designed and in excellent condition. We can consider pushing out the retirement date

Engine 7 is well designed and an excellent engine and should have more life, but storing it outside has taken its toll. I expect that once we can store it inside we will begin planning for a commercial tanker replacement like: <https://foutsfire.com/4000-gallon-tanker/>. The combination of a commercial tanker and mini pumper will be vastly more versatile while also being cheaper than an exact replacement of the existing engine.

Ladder 9 is in excellent condition once we have some pump work done next year. Not to box in the next Chief, but a 40 year lifespan should be reasonable.

Career Department Cost - Rough Estimates

Information and rough estimates provided via email by Carlisle Fire Chief

Career Department - Rough Cost Estimate

The move to a career department would be phased in over time, but it would end up with: Two career + two “per diem” (part time) at all times. For a while, we would have a “combination” department with some on-call staff remaining. This transition typically lasts for up to 10 years.

This would look like: 10 full time @ \$100,000 = \$1,000,000

Per diem coverage: 365 days x 24 hrs x \$30 x 2 people = \$525,000

In addition:

3 full time officers: \$500,000

Firefighting

As for firefighting, we would quit laying long lines (Engine 4's role) and would rely on tankers. We would require two tankers year-round. The results for fires in larger structures would be the same as it is in surrounding communities in their areas without hydrants.

Station Costs

As for station costs, the minimum requirements for a career department are pretty comparable. The meeting room size could be reduced some, but they would expect some office / kitchen / sleeping space. Eventually as you can't staff vehicles the bay space could be reduced (ladder, second ambulance) but that involves giving up on saving some structures with fires in the attic and reducing services.

Tecton – Potential Questions for Discussion

1. How necessary is each existing Apparatus to your response/delivery of service? *(Multiple Checkboxes)*

	Necessary – Used all the time	Nice to Have – Used sometimes	Unnecessary – never used
[Vehicle]	X		
[Vehicle]		X	
[Vehicle]			X
...			

2. For each Apparatus that is “Used sometimes”, do you think there is value in maintaining it even if it is used infrequently? *(Free Response – or build from Q1 to Q2 and respond to that selection)*

3. If [Vehicle] was eliminated, would it affect your capabilities? If yes, please explain. *(Free Response)*

4. Are there any alternative vehicles, or other response strategies, that may be worth considering in the event the tanker truck is eliminated? *(Free Response)*

5. To your knowledge, are there consistent and reliable mutual aid resources readily available when we need them/when called upon? How do you feel about this approach as a long-term strategy? *(Free Response)*