



Fire Services Memo

To: Council
From: Dennis Aldous
Subject: Truck Analysis
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Meeting Date: [Click here to enter a date.](#)

Purpose: This memo is to provide information to Council on impact of extending the replacement schedule beyond 20 years for fire trucks.

Background: In 2016 a Fleet Management Policy that has the useful Life of Fire Vehicles at 20 years was established after looking at Fire Service best practices, the Fire Underwriters Survey and the policies and practices of other local Fire Departments. The Fire Underwriters Survey accredits First-line duty fire trucks to 20 years for Small Communities and Rural Areas, this is the classification that Woolwich falls under. Fire Underwriters also looks at our tankers, aerials, certified tanker shuttle accreditation and fire related infrastructure to get our insurance rating. Currently Woolwich has a 3A/3Bs insurance rating, the best we can achieve beyond adding composite or full-time firefighters, and that rating will be reduced: if we extend the life of our first-line duty trucks beyond 20 years, do not achieve certified tanker accreditation or our infrastructure declines to below the standard needed to efficiently fight fires.

Comments: Staff reached out to Fire Underwriters for some insight into the idea of keeping first-line duty fire truck's past 20 years with no response. Staff was able to find information on recertifying older trucks, but there is no guarantee they will accept or give full credit rating for the truck. Staff consulted the Waterloo Region Municipalities Insurance Pool for some insight into Fire Underwriters and they were able to provide the following information.

"If this is referring to the same topic that I think it is, we have had this inquiry before from other municipalities. It has to do with the age of their mainline pumper and the FUS rating it gets. From what we have been told by other fire departments if I understand correctly, particularly volunteer department it seems, is that personal and commercial lines insurers may use the rating by FUS and costs may go up for homeowners, etc. if the age of the truck is beyond a certain threshold. But as you have mentioned, it would seem unfair to do so if the truck is properly maintained and more than reliable to respond to a fire, however that is not up to either of us unfortunately.

The decision to replace a fire truck due to its age is completely on the municipality, though I would imagine this scenario can place pressure on the municipality by local residents if

they are being told by their insurance companies that premiums are going up because of a fire truck's age.

From our rating perspective, the age of the main line pumper does not have an effect on premiums on liability or property insured under the Pool, and replacement cost is provided up to 20 years of age, and for fire trucks over 20 years but not exceeding 25 years, the actual price paid by the municipality for the automobile and its equipment or actual cash value whichever is greater." Fire Underwriters seems to hold all the cards in the insurance industry as if a municipality gets Certified Tanker Accreditation from anyone other than Fire Underwriters, some insurance companies will not except it.

Staff have also been experiencing costly repairs to our current fleet as it gets older. There is body corrosion around some windows in a 5-year-old pumper/tanker, starting to see corrosion on some welded seams on a 10-year-old rescue, had to replace rear step bumper on a 15-year-old tanker, raised a rescue body on a 10-year-old rescue to repair corrosion from dissimilar metals oxidizing. Staff have had to repair a poly tank in a pumper/tanker, get custom parts made to fix various components on our fire trucks because the part needed is no longer manufactured, air brake system problems while responding or unable to respond and pumps failing at a fire scene while fighting a fire. These are repairs that are made quickly and sparing no cost as staff need the trucks to respond to the next emergency.

Through past budget years and looking into the future, staff will be exploring options for acquiring good condition used trucks when available, looking at changing the vehicles staff use to respond to medicals to be more cost effective and looking at what truck would best suit the fire department at time of replacement. Staff believe that this approach achieves a good balance of obtaining quality vehicles and achieving overall cost effectiveness. It will also help to improve that state of the Equipment Reserve.

This year staff did an analysis showing the required contribution to the equipment reserve fund based on 2024 costs:

20-Year Replacement of First-line Duty trucks and 25 years for rest = \$ 1,256,299

20-year Replacement of all trucks = \$ 1,335,679

25-years Replacement all trucks = \$ 1,097,539