



## CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

## MEMORANDUM

Fire Department

**DATE:** May 15, 2018

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Juan F. Diaz, Fire Chief

**VIA:** Daniel H. Rich, City Manager

**SUBJECT:** Fire Department Antique Apparatus

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**INTRODUCTION**

The Fire Department (FD) apparatus inventory includes three unique and historical antique units. Two of these units are in operational status and have been used on a regular basis in public events, most recently our Spring Parade. The antique apparatus fleet is as follows:

- **1917 Ford Model T Chemical Engine:** This apparatus was custom-built 101 years ago in Mountain View and served as front-line equipment for 30-plus years. In the 1990s, it was fully restored by FD volunteers, active members, and retirees with funding from the City and from employees. This apparatus is in excellent condition, currently valued at \$75,000 to \$80,000 due to being the first motorized (not pulled by horses) fire apparatus in our county and unique in that it has never left City inventory.
- **1930 Ford Model A:** This apparatus has always been kept in running condition; however, in 2017, it suffered a major engine failure after the Spring Parade, requiring a full engine overhaul. We just finished the rebuild with funding from the City at a cost of \$3,000 in parts. The rebuild was completed just in time for the 2018 Spring Parade. The labor, in excess of 120 hours, was performed by several Firefighters volunteering their off-duty time with the primary work accomplished by Fire Engineer Derek Schmitz. Currently, it needs new brakes. This apparatus is currently valued at \$50,000 due to being a rare piece of Ford Motor Company and fire engine history.
- **1924 American LaFrance:** This fire engine was purchased brand-new by the City of Mountain View. It is very unique and rare in that it was purchased with all options, including chemical tanks, bell, hoses, and steel wheels. It served our City

as a front-line apparatus for over 30 years. In the 1980s, it was disassembled with the intent to restore it. However, it has never been restored due to the lack of funds and unsuccessful fundraising. It is currently in very poor shape due to years of neglect and being stored outdoors until 2015, when it was moved indoors.

Yearly, the City allocates \$740 for the maintenance of the antiques. A group of current and former employees initiated efforts to restore the third truck as a volunteer activity. The City provided \$10,000 in the Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget to support the three antique vehicles.

### ANALYSIS

Historically, the antique apparatus fleet has been utilized at City events and has always been a welcome sight for the public, FD employees, and City officials. They are a nostalgic view of years past and show the value the City places in preserving its history. However, such preservation has an ongoing cost. These apparatus require expensive maintenance and parts have to be custom made as none are available, making their upkeep costly. A dedicated group of FD employees are committed to preserving our history for future generations and have volunteered hundreds of hours over the last few decades toward this endeavor.

For the restoration of the 1924 American LaFrance, the MVFD Historical Society has always had the goal of obtaining private and corporate donations. However, those efforts have not obtained any results. Staff established a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization under the IRS Code to obtain donations. Several private corporations and foundations have been contacted, as well as private donors, with no positive results. One of the challenges in obtaining donations, as shared with the MVFD Historical Society, is that preserving antique fire apparatus is not in alignment with their foundations and/or corporate donation strategies. In fact, the only private donations received toward this effort have been by a limited number of MVFD personnel.

While it is the intent of the MVFD Historical Society to continue with the efforts to solicit donations for its restoration goals and not depend on public funds, they have asked the FD to attempt to obtain public funds, through the budget process, to at least being able to get the restoration project started. The request of \$10,000 in the Fiscal Year 2018-19 budget represents about 16 percent of the total goal of \$60,000. The \$10,000 amount was requested to allow work to start and to motivate others to contribute towards this project.

At the May 1 Narrative Budget Study Session, Council inquired about funding the entire project. While that can be done, it was never the original intent. Staff instead

suggests increasing one-time funding to \$30,000 as a 50 percent “challenge grant” to incentivize private donations.

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