

New Ambulance, Fire Engine May Soon Come to Kodiak

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A new ambulance and fire engine may soon be coming to Kodiak. During last night's city council work session Fire Chief Rome Kamai presented the two potential purchases to the council, both of which he said were very needed.

Kamai said an ambulance would cost around \$201,000, but thanks to two grants the city will only pick up \$105,000 of that cost. He said the average life of an ambulance is 10 years, and the one being replaced is pushing 16. There are two other ambulances that the fire department currently operates, by Kamai said three are needed to service the Kodiak road system in an effective manner.

"The fire department responds to approximately 800 calls per year and it's common to have back to back ambulance calls requiring separate ambulances to respond to different areas if not the same call. Additionally, other types of calls may yield more than one patient, thus requiring multiple ambulance responses. For example, a large passenger vehicle, a car accident, a school bus accident, a plane crash, etc. Having less than three ambulances would impact the current level of services being provided."

Kamai also discussed purchasing a new fire engine, which would replace a pumper truck that was decommissioned in 2012.

"Currently the fire department has one fire pumper, which is 12-years-old, and one ladder truck, which is 13-years-old, to respond to fire calls. When either one of these vehicles is out of service for repair or maintenance, the department is down to one fire type vehicle for fire response."

He said this poses a big problem, especially in areas where the ladder truck is too big to access. He said the lack of a second pumper also reduces the department's total water flow capability, basically how much water it is able to put on a fire. Adding a new pumper truck will increase the water flow capacity by one third, or 1,500 gallons per minute.

Kamai said the new fire engine will cost the city about \$450,000. City Manager Aimee Kniazowski said unlike the ambulance, there were no federal or state grants awarded to offset the cost.

“If you’ll remember, we put a fire apparatus request two years on our state list, didn’t receive any funding for that. And we looked when we were in D.C. for funding, and there just wasn’t any funding. So, we know that this is a very large purchase, but we just have to move forward and get it taken care of.”

If approved, the purchase of the new ambulance and fire engine will cost the city about \$555,000.