



**POSITION PAPER SUPPORTING BORROWING REQUEST
Council Order 2026-117**

**Replacement of Fire Apparatus & Restoration of the City's
Two-Station Fire Protection Model**

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Submitted To:

Amesbury City Council

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"This proposal is not simply about replacing fire engines. It is about restoring Amesbury's apparatus replacement program, protecting taxpayer investments, and ensuring that the Fire Department has reliable, purpose-built apparatus to protect our community for the next generation."

— Robert J.H. Serino, Fire Chief



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Executive Summary

We have a public safety problem that has a fiscally responsible solution. Today, the department is operating with one aging frontline engine requiring ongoing repairs, one engine with a catastrophic engine failure, one engine removed from service due to pump failure, and is currently relying on a borrowed apparatus to maintain minimum operational capability.

The Amesbury Fire Department respectfully requests the City Council's approval of Council Order 2026-117, authorizing the borrowing of funds in an amount not to exceed \$1.6 million for the purchase of two purpose-built fire engines designed specifically for Amesbury.

While the Mayor has the authority to execute the purchase contract, approval of the borrowing request provides the funding necessary to proceed, allowing the Mayor to execute the agreement with Greenwood Emergency Vehicles, secure current pricing, and reserve production slots.

The proposed purchase includes:

- Two purpose-built fire engines at approximately \$750,000 each
- A \$50,000 allowance per apparatus for mounting, warning devices, radios, loose equipment, hose, tools, and other equipment necessary to place each vehicle into frontline service
- Borrowing with the first debt service payment beginning in Fiscal Year 2028 (after July 1, 2027), with repayment over seven to ten years as determined by the City's Chief Financial Officer

This proposal represents far more than the purchase of two fire engines. It is an opportunity to:

- Restore the City's intended suppression fleet of two frontline engines, one ladder company, and one reserve engine.
- Re-establish a long-term apparatus replacement program.
- Significantly reduce reliance on borrowed emergency apparatus.
- Complete the operational reopening of the Elm Street Fire Station.
- House all frontline response apparatus indoors.
- Protect the City's investment in its public safety infrastructure.
- Secure two fire engines at pricing substantially below today's market.

Failure to act now will likely result in significantly higher replacement costs, continued investment in aging apparatus, and increased operational risk.



A Return to Planned Capital Investment

This proposal represents more than the purchase of two fire engines—it reflects the City's transition from reactive capital replacement to proactive asset management. The City of Amesbury has not designed, specified, and purchased a custom fire engine through its normal capital planning process since 2001. During the past twenty-five years, apparatus acquisitions have largely occurred in response to equipment failures or unique purchasing opportunities rather than through a consistent capital replacement program.

Engine 2, a 2008 Rosenbauer pumper, was purchased in 2010 as a demonstration apparatus. While purchasing a demo unit provided immediate cost savings, it also meant the City acquired an apparatus with significantly more mileage and operating hours than a typical new fire engine.

Engine 1 was acquired in 2015 and put into service in early 2016 as an emergency replacement after the department experienced apparatus shortages due to the failure of the frame on the 2001 Pierce engine. Because of the urgency of the purchase, the City acquired an apparatus that had been designed and specified for a fire department in the southern United States rather than for New England operations. While Engine 1 has served the City well and has become the department's frontline workhorse, the apparatus has operational and design limitations that have contributed to maintenance and usability challenges over the past decade.

The City's most recent apparatus acquisition was Ladder 4, approved by the City Council through Council Bill 2021-127. The ladder truck was funded primarily through a Federal Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), which provided \$947,619 toward the project, with the City contributing \$302,381. The apparatus was delivered in July 2023 and represents a successful partnership between local investment and federal grant funding.

This borrowing request provides the City with the opportunity to break that cycle. Rather than purchasing apparatus out of necessity or taking advantage of whatever equipment happens to be available, Amesbury can once again design and purchase apparatus specifically configured for its operational needs, climate, response area, and long-term service expectations. Approval of this borrowing request allows Amesbury to return to proactive capital planning rather than reactive emergency replacement.

Replacing two apparatus now restores the City's intended replacement schedule and positions future apparatus purchases to be planned, budgeted, and financed before vehicles reach the point of failure. This is the first opportunity in twenty-five years for the



City to intentionally design, specify, and purchase fire apparatus based on Amesbury's operational needs rather than purchasing equipment in response to emergencies or taking advantage of available opportunities.

Planning for the Future

This borrowing request is not an isolated capital project. It represents one component of the City's broader commitment to responsible long-term planning and asset management.

The City of Amesbury is currently working with the Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management to develop a comprehensive, citywide Capital Improvement Plan that prioritizes major municipal investments over multiple years. The Fire Department has embraced this initiative by developing its own five-year and ten-year capital improvement plans, establishing a comprehensive fleet replacement and preventative maintenance program, and beginning work on a long-term Strategic Plan that will guide the department's operations, facilities, apparatus, staffing, and service delivery into the future.

Approval of Council Order 2026-117 is consistent with these planning efforts. Rather than reacting to equipment failures through emergency purchases, this borrowing request reflects a deliberate, data-driven approach to asset management that aligns departmental planning with the City's overall capital planning process.

This proposal is intended not only to address today's operational needs, but to establish a sustainable framework that allows future City leaders to make informed, predictable, and fiscally responsible capital investment decisions.

Current State of the Fleet

The department's engine fleet has reached a critical point where continued deferral of replacement is no longer financially or operationally sustainable. At no point in recent history has the department faced simultaneous major deficiencies involving all three engine companies.

Ladder 4

Ladder 4 is the department's newest frontline apparatus and serves as an excellent example of the City's commitment to investing in public safety infrastructure.

The ladder truck was approved by the City Council through Council Bill 2021-127 and acquired through a successful partnership between the City and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. The federal



grant provided \$947,619, with the City contributing \$302,381 toward the total project cost. The apparatus was delivered and placed into service in July 2023.

Ladder 4 is expected to remain in frontline service for many years and is not part of this borrowing request.

The investment in Ladder 4 modernized the department's truck company. This borrowing request focuses on completing the modernization of the department's engine fleet, restoring the City's three-engine deployment model and establishing a sustainable apparatus replacement program.

Engine 1

Engine 1 has served as the department's frontline pumper for the past ten years and has become the workhorse of the fleet.

Due to its age and extensive use, the vehicle continues to experience increasing maintenance issues and remains in need of multiple repairs simply to remain in frontline service. Engine 1 incurred more than **\$30,000** in maintenance expenditures during the past year alone.

Engine 2

Engine 2 recently experienced a catastrophic engine failure. Current estimates indicate replacement of the engine alone will cost **between \$80,000 and \$100,000**.

These estimates do **not** include any additional repairs that may be identified during installation, nor do they address the remaining mechanical wear associated with an apparatus approaching the end of its planned service life.

Engine 2 was already scheduled for replacement in Fiscal Year 2029. Investing nearly six figures simply to replace the engine does not substantially extend the useful life of the apparatus and represents poor long-term stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Engine 3

Engine 3's history illustrates the consequences of deferred capital replacement and the importance of protecting the City's investments in emergency response apparatus.

In winter 2019, while the apparatus was being stored outdoors during the winter months, the fire pump sustained catastrophic freeze damage after the vehicle could no longer be housed indoors. Prior to that, Engine 3 had been temporarily stored inside the Town Park Garage following its removal from frontline service. As operational demands



on that facility increased, the apparatus was relocated outdoors because the Elm Street Fire Station was no longer capable of housing fire apparatus.

Evaluation of the damage determined that replacement of the fire pump would cost approximately \$50,000, making repair economically impractical for an apparatus already approaching the end of its planned service life. Although the vehicle remained in the City's inventory, it was no longer considered operationally viable and was officially removed from service entirely in 2021.

Following its removal from service, Engine 3 was relocated to the Water Department for storage. Extended outdoor storage ultimately resulted in significant deterioration, including rodent infestation and damage to the cab, rendering the apparatus unsuitable for future operational use.

The history of Engine 3 demonstrates the importance of maintaining adequate indoor storage for fire apparatus and adhering to a planned replacement schedule. The reopening of the Elm Street Fire Station, combined with the purchase of two replacement fire engines, ensures that the City can once again house all primary response apparatus indoors, protecting valuable municipal assets, extending apparatus service life, and reducing unnecessary deterioration caused by prolonged exposure to the elements.

Borrowed Apparatus

To maintain minimum fire protection capabilities, Amesbury is currently operating with a borrowed engine from the Salisbury Fire Department.

While we sincerely appreciate Salisbury's partnership, this apparatus remains their property and may be recalled at any time to meet their own operational needs. On multiple occasions, the borrowed engine has nearly been returned. Reliance on borrowed emergency apparatus is not a sustainable strategy for protecting the residents and businesses of Amesbury.

Fleet Reliability and Maintenance Costs

The Amesbury Fire Department has experienced a steady increase in maintenance demands as the apparatus fleet has aged. While preventative maintenance remains a priority, the department is now encountering major component failures that significantly increase repair costs and reduce operational reliability.

Engine 1 continues to require increasing maintenance to remain in frontline service. Engine 2 has experienced a catastrophic engine failure requiring an estimated **\$80,000**



to **\$100,000** engine replacement before any additional repairs are considered. Engine 3 has already been removed from service due to catastrophic pump failure.

These failures illustrate the challenges of extending the service life of aging apparatus beyond their intended replacement cycle. While repairs can temporarily restore individual components, they do not address the overall age and condition of the vehicles or eliminate the likelihood of future mechanical failures.

Replacing this apparatus allows the department to reduce long-term maintenance expenditures, improve fleet reliability, and provide firefighters with dependable equipment they can rely upon during emergencies.

The Financial Opportunity

The proposed purchase represents a rare opportunity that is unlikely to present itself again in the foreseeable future.

Over the past decade, the cost of fire apparatus has increased dramatically. Ten years ago, a new fire engine typically cost between \$400,000 and \$500,000. Today, that same apparatus routinely costs between \$950,000 and \$1.2 million before equipment, mounting, radios, warning devices, hose, and tools are included. Once fully equipped, many departments are now paying well more than \$1.2 million for a single engine.

To place this proposal in perspective, the fire engine previously specified and designed in 2024, carried a purchase price of approximately \$900,000 for a single apparatus should the City have elected to proceed with its purchase. Even if this borrowing request is not approved, the City would still need to purchase that replacement engine simply to begin restoring the department's fleet.

Greenwood Emergency Vehicles has provided Amesbury with an exceptional opportunity to purchase two fire engines at approximately \$750,000 each, along with a \$50,000 allowance per apparatus for equipment mounting, radios, warning devices, loose equipment, hose, tools, and all components required to place the vehicles into frontline service. The total project cost will not exceed \$1.6 million.

Under today's market conditions, purchasing two comparable fire engines would likely cost the City between \$2.0 million and \$2.5 million. This proposal allows the City to purchase two fully equipped engines for approximately \$800,000 each, representing a potential savings of \$400,000 to \$900,000 compared to current market pricing.



Unlike previous emergency apparatus purchases, these engines will be purpose-built specifically for the operational needs of the Amesbury Fire Department. Rather than purchasing apparatus originally designed for another community, the City will have the opportunity to specify vehicles that meet Amesbury's response environment, staffing model, station dimensions, and operational requirements.

Fire Engine Cost Comparison	
Typical Cost (2015–2016)	\$400,000–\$500,000
Chief Nolan's 2024 Specification	~\$900,000
Typical Cost Today	\$950,000–\$1,200,000+
Greenwood Proposal	2 Engines for \$1.6 Million
Estimated Cost for 2 Comparable Engines Today	\$2.0–\$2.5 Million

The proposed apparatus will maintain the pumping capacity, water supply capabilities, equipment storage, and firefighting performance expected of a modern frontline engine while incorporating design features that improve firefighter safety and operational efficiency. These include a shorter wheelbase and improved turning radius to better navigate Amesbury's historic downtown, narrow residential streets, and tight intersections. The apparatus will also feature a lower hose bed, reducing the height firefighters must lift hose during deployment and repacking, improving ergonomics, reducing the risk of lifting-related injuries, and allowing hose to be deployed more efficiently during emergency operations.

Additionally, the apparatus will be designed to fit appropriately within both Headquarters and the reopened Elm Street Fire Station, ensuring the City receives engines specifically tailored to its facilities rather than adapting operations to apparatus designed for another community.

Greenwood has provided Amesbury with a unique opportunity to purchase two purpose-built engines for substantially less than current market pricing. Comparable opportunities are unlikely to be available once current production slots and pricing expire. The proposed borrowing allows the City to capitalize on favorable pricing that may not be available in the future. Council Order 2026-117 authorizes the borrowing necessary to fund this capital project. Upon approval of the borrowing authorization, the Mayor will have the ability to execute the purchase contract with Greenwood Emergency Vehicles.



The borrowing has been structured so that the first debt service payment will not occur until Fiscal Year 2028, following July 1, 2027. This allows the City to secure today's pricing, reserve a production slot with the manufacturer, execute the purchase agreement, and take delivery of the apparatus within approximately one year while delaying repayment until the next fiscal cycle.

Long-Term Value

The proposed apparatus will also be delivered with comprehensive manufacturer warranties covering major vehicle components, reducing the City's exposure to unexpected repair costs during the initial years of service.

Combined with indoor storage at Headquarters and the Elm Street Fire Station, a preventative maintenance program, and adherence to the City's fleet replacement schedule, these engines are expected to provide approximately twenty years of reliable frontline service followed by additional years in reserve service.

Fire apparatus are long-term capital assets with an expected service life of twenty years or more. Financing these assets through borrowing appropriately spreads the cost over the period during which residents benefit from the investment rather than requiring a single year's taxpayers to bear the full expense. This approach is consistent with municipal capital financing practices and aligns the cost of the apparatus with their long-term public safety value. This investment protects taxpayer dollars by reducing lifecycle maintenance costs while maximizing operational reliability.

Should the City decline this opportunity, it is unlikely comparable pricing will be available again. Instead, Amesbury will almost certainly face substantially higher acquisition costs while continuing to invest significant funds into maintaining an aging apparatus fleet.

Why Two Frontline Engines, One Ladder Company, and a Reserve Engine Matter

The Fire Department's suppression fleet is designed so that two engine companies provide the City's primary fire attack and water supply capabilities, while Ladder 4 provides specialized truck company operations. A reserve engine ensures that frontline coverage can be maintained whenever a primary engine is undergoing maintenance, repairs, or is otherwise unavailable.

This deployment model allows the department to::

- Maintain dependable Citywide fire protection.
- Respond effectively to simultaneous emergency incidents.
- Maintain coverage while an apparatus is undergoing maintenance or repair.



- Meet automatic and mutual aid obligations without compromising protection within Amesbury.
- Provide reserve capability during major incidents or extended operations.
- Eliminate dependence on borrowed emergency apparatus.

Without a reserve engine, the department becomes significantly more vulnerable to service interruptions. When one frontline engine is unavailable because of mechanical failure, preventative maintenance, or repairs, the City is immediately left with only one frontline engine and its ladder company to protect the community. Maintaining a dependable reserve engine ensures the department can continue operating with two frontline pumping apparatus while repairs are completed.

The department's suppression fleet is designed around the complementary capabilities of two frontline engine companies, one ladder company, and one reserve engine. While the City made a significant investment in replacing Ladder 4 through Council Bill 2021-127 and the successful award of an Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG), the ladder truck cannot permanently replace a dedicated engine company.

Ladder 4 was designed as a quint, providing the flexibility to temporarily function as either an engine or a ladder company when operationally necessary. That flexibility has proven invaluable during periods when an engine has been out of service. However, because of the department's staffing model, Ladder 4 can function as either an engine company or a ladder company—not both simultaneously. Using Ladder 4 as a permanent replacement for a frontline engine would remove the City's only aerial apparatus from ladder company service and diminish the specialized capabilities for which it was purchased.

Approval of this borrowing request restores the department's intended deployment model, allowing Ladder 4 to remain in its primary truck company role while ensuring two dependable frontline engines remain available to protect the community. The reserve engine provides the operational resiliency necessary to maintain that deployment whenever a frontline apparatus is unavailable.

Elm Street Fire Station & Apparatus Distribution

The City has already made the decision to restore the Elm Street Fire Station. This borrowing request does not fund those renovations; rather, it ensures that the City's investment is fully realized by providing the purpose-built apparatus necessary to



restore full operations at the station and re-establish Amesbury's historic two-station deployment model.

The proposed deployment model will be:

Headquarters

- New Engine 2
- Ladder 4
- Ambulance 1
- Ambulance 3
- Reserve Engine 1
- Squad

Elm Street Fire Station

- New Engine 3
- Ambulance 2
- Forestry

Upon completion of the Elm Street Fire Station restoration, every primary response vehicle will once again be housed indoors in facilities designed to support emergency apparatus. This not only improves operational readiness but also protects millions of dollars in municipal capital assets by reducing weather exposure, extending apparatus service life, and minimizing unnecessary deterioration.

Equally important, reopening Elm Street addresses the growing space limitations at Headquarters. Today's department has expanded significantly through EMS operations, specialized rescue equipment, training requirements, and administrative responsibilities. Returning apparatus and personnel to Elm Street restores the City's original two-station operating model while creating much-needed operational and training space.

The apparatus specifications will also take into consideration the physical limitations of both Headquarters and the Elm Street Fire Station. The engines will be designed to fit appropriately within both stations while providing improved maneuverability throughout the City. A shorter wheelbase and tighter turning radius will improve access to Amesbury's older neighborhoods, tighter intersections, and constrained streets without sacrificing the equipment, pumping capacity, or capabilities required of a frontline fire engine.

By designing the apparatus specifically for Amesbury's response area rather than adapting to a vehicle originally intended for another community, the City will receive



apparatus that are operationally efficient, easier to maneuver, and better suited to protect the community for the next twenty years.

Protecting Existing Investments

The experience with Engine 3 clearly demonstrates the importance of protecting the City's capital assets. Following the loss of adequate indoor storage, the apparatus deteriorated beyond economic repair while awaiting replacement. The reopening of the Elm Street Fire Station, combined with the purchase of two new purpose-built fire engines, ensures that all primary response apparatus can once again be housed indoors, reducing weather-related deterioration, extending apparatus service life, and protecting millions of dollars in municipal assets.

This borrowing request is directly aligned with the City's commitment to restoring the Elm Street Fire Station to full operational service. While this borrowing request does not finance the renovations to the station, it complements those previously funded improvements by providing the apparatus necessary to fully utilize the facility as originally intended.

The City has already made a significant investment in restoring the Elm Street Fire Station. Through a combination of insurance proceeds, previously appropriated capital funds, and other available funding sources, Amesbury has completed or initiated substantial improvements to return the station to operational service. These improvements include structural repairs, heating upgrades, and renovations necessary to safely house personnel and apparatus.

Rather than viewing the Elm Street Fire Station project and this borrowing request as separate initiatives, they should be viewed as complementary investments in the City's public safety infrastructure. The restoration of the Elm Street Fire Station has been accomplished through careful financial planning that has leveraged insurance recoveries, existing capital appropriations, and grant funding where appropriate. By utilizing these funding sources, the City has been able to restore a critical public safety asset while minimizing the impact on taxpayers. Approval of this borrowing request complements those investments by ensuring the restored station is fully utilized as originally intended.

Approval of Council Order 2026-117 ensures that the City's previous investment in Elm Street is fully realized by returning frontline apparatus and personnel to the station. Once reopened, the City will once again operate from two strategically located fire stations, improving response coverage while reducing congestion at Headquarters.



The proposed apparatus are being specifically designed to fit both Headquarters and the Elm Street Fire Station. Their shorter wheelbase, improved turning radius, lower hose bed, and overall dimensions will allow them to operate efficiently throughout Amesbury while fitting comfortably within both facilities. These are not simply replacement fire engines—they are purpose-built apparatus designed around Amesbury's stations, streets, and operational needs.

Together, the Elm Street restoration and the purchase of two new fire engines represent a coordinated investment in Amesbury's public safety system. These projects restore the City's historic two-station deployment model, protect valuable municipal assets, improve firefighter safety, and position the Fire Department to serve the community for the next twenty years.

Supporting a Growing Community

Reopening the Elm Street Fire Station restores a frontline engine company to the east side of Amesbury, reducing travel distances, improving response coverage, and increasing the department's ability to simultaneously protect all areas of the city. Amesbury continues to experience residential growth, commercial development, expanding emergency medical service demand, and increased expectations for emergency response. Amesbury's call volume continues to evolve as residential development, commercial investment, and an aging population increase demands on emergency services. The apparatus is expected to protect the community for the next twenty years and must be capable of meeting not only today's needs but tomorrow's growth as well. The Fire Department's apparatus fleet must be capable of meeting not only today's operational demands but also the needs of the community over the next twenty years.

Why This Request Cannot Wait

Rarely do multiple capital issues converge simultaneously.

Today, the City faces all of the following:

- Engine 3 has already been lost.
- Engine 2 has suffered catastrophic engine failure.
- Engine 1 requires continued repairs.
- Amesbury is relying on borrowed apparatus.
- Elm Street Fire Station is nearing completion.
- Greenwood has provided pricing substantially below today's market.
- Borrowing delays repayment until FY28.
- Engine prices continue to increase annually, significantly outpacing inflation



Viewed individually, each challenge could be managed. Taken together, they create both an operational necessity and a unique financial opportunity.

Every year this purchase is delayed increases the likelihood of additional major repairs to the existing fleet while simultaneously exposing the City to annual apparatus price increases that continue to outpace traditional inflation.

Consequences of Not Approving the Borrowing Request

Failure to approve Council Order 2026-117 will likely result in:

- Immediate expenditures of \$80,000–100,000 to replace Engine 2's engine.
- Continued repairs to Engine 1.
- Continued reliance on borrowed apparatus.
- Continued operation with only one guaranteed engine.
- Loss of favorable pricing.
- Loss of current production opportunities.
- Future replacement costs estimated between \$2.0 and \$2.5 million.
- Continued deferral of the City's apparatus replacement program.

This proposal is not simply a request to purchase fire engines.

It is an opportunity to restore the City's long-term capital replacement plan, maximize the City's investment in the Elm Street Fire Station, improve operational readiness, and provide Amesbury with reliable fire protection for the next decade and beyond.



Recommendation

The Amesbury Fire Department respectfully recommends approval of Council Order 2026-117, authorizing the borrowing necessary to fund the purchase of two purpose-built fire engines.

Approval of this borrowing request will allow the Mayor to execute a purchase agreement with Greenwood Emergency Vehicles, secure current pricing, reserve production capacity, and restore the City's long-term apparatus replacement program. This proposal represents far more than the replacement of aging vehicles. It restores the City's fire apparatus deployment model, supports the reopening of the Elm Street Fire Station, protects prior capital investments, reduces long-term maintenance costs, improves firefighter safety, and ensures that Amesbury's residents continue to receive reliable emergency services.

Well-managed organizations do not wait for critical assets to fail before planning for their replacement. They establish sustainable replacement cycles that balance operational readiness, fiscal responsibility, and long-term stewardship of public resources. Council Order 2026-117 represents Amesbury's opportunity to take that step.

The City has a rare opportunity to solve an immediate operational problem while restoring a sustainable apparatus replacement program and making a fiscally responsible investment that will serve the community for the next twenty years.

For these reasons, I respectfully request the City Council's favorable consideration of Council Order 2026-117. Council Bill 2021-127 modernized the City's ladder company. Approval of Council Order 2026-117 completes the modernization of the City's frontline suppression fleet by restoring the engine companies and re-establishing a sustainable apparatus replacement program for the future.

Approval of Council Order 2026-117 is not simply an investment in two fire engines. It is an investment in Amesbury's public safety infrastructure, responsible capital planning, and the long-term protection of the residents, businesses, and visitors who rely upon the Fire Department every day.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert JH Serino, Fire Chief



Appendix A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the City Council being asked to approve?

The City Council is being asked to approve Council Order 2026-117, authorizing the borrowing of up to \$1.6 million for the purchase of two purpose-built fire engines designed specifically for Amesbury.

The Mayor has the authority to execute the purchase contract; however, the City Council must authorize the borrowing that provides the funding for the project. Approval of the borrowing request will allow the Mayor to enter into a contract with Greenwood Emergency Vehicles and secure current pricing and production slots.

2. What is included in the \$1.6 million project cost?

The project includes:

- Two purpose-built fire engines at approximately \$750,000 each
- A \$50,000 allowance per apparatus for mounting, radios, warning devices, hose, tools, loose equipment, and other items required to place each vehicle into frontline service.

The total project cost will not exceed \$1.6 million.

3. Why is this considered such a good financial opportunity?

The Fire Department has worked directly with Greenwood Emergency Vehicles to secure pricing that is substantially below today's market.

Currently, fire engines typically cost between \$950,000 and \$1.2 million before equipment and mounting costs. Once those items are added, many departments are paying well over \$1.2 million for a single apparatus.

This proposal allows Amesbury to purchase two fully equipped purpose-built engines for approximately \$800,000 each, representing an exceptional value that is unlikely to be available again.

Additionally, former Fire Chief Jim Nolan completed the design, specification, and competitive procurement process in 2024, establishing pricing of approximately \$900,000 for a replacement custom fire engine should the City have elected to proceed with its purchase. Although the apparatus was never ordered, the procurement provides a valuable benchmark for comparison. Even if this borrowing request is not approved, the City will still need to purchase at least one replacement engine, likely at a significantly higher cost than both the 2024 pricing and the unique opportunity presented in this proposal.



4. Why purchase two engines instead of one?

Purchasing one engine would improve the fleet but would not solve the City's apparatus challenges.

Engine 3 has already been removed from service due to catastrophic pump failure.

Engine 2 has now suffered a catastrophic engine failure.

Purchasing only one engine would leave the department operating with one new engine and one aging frontline engine requiring continued repairs while still lacking a dependable three-engine fleet.

Purchasing both engines restores the City's intended deployment model and re-establishes the apparatus replacement schedule.

5. Why not repair Engine 2?

Engine 2 recently experienced a catastrophic engine failure.

Current estimates indicate replacement of the engine alone will cost between \$80,000 and \$100,000.

These estimates do not include any additional repairs that may be discovered during installation, nor do they address the remaining wear associated with an apparatus approaching the end of its planned service life.

Investing nearly six figures to replace only the engine does not significantly extend the overall life of the apparatus and does not represent the best long-term value for taxpayers.

6. Wasn't Engine 2 purchased relatively recently?

Engine 2 is a 2008 Rosenbauer pumper that was purchased by the City in 2010 as a demonstration apparatus.

Purchasing a demonstration vehicle provided immediate savings to the City at the time; however, the apparatus entered service with substantially greater mileage and operating hours than a typical newly manufactured fire engine.

Combined with the recent engine failure and the apparatus' planned replacement under the City's replacement schedule, continued investment in the vehicle is no longer fiscally responsible.



7. Why is Engine 1 staying in service?

Engine 1 is not being replaced as part of this borrowing request.

Engine 1 was acquired in 2015 as an emergency purchase after the department experienced apparatus shortages. Because of the urgency of the purchase, the apparatus was originally designed and specified for a fire department in the southern United States rather than for New England operations.

Despite those design differences, Engine 1 has served Amesbury exceptionally well as the department's primary frontline engine for the past ten years.

Once the two new engines are placed into service, Engine 1 will transition into reserve service, extending its useful life while ensuring the City maintains dependable backup apparatus.

8. Why borrow instead of paying cash?

Fire engines are long-term capital assets expected to remain in service for twenty years or more.

Borrowing allows the cost of the apparatus to be shared over their useful life so that future residents who benefit from the equipment also share in its cost.

This approach follows common municipal capital financing practices while preserving the City's available reserves for emergencies and other capital priorities.

9. When do borrowing payments begin?

Although the contract can be executed immediately following approval of the borrowing request, the first debt service payment is not anticipated until Fiscal Year 2028, beginning after July 1, 2027.

This allows the City to secure today's pricing, reserve production slots, and receive the apparatus while delaying repayment until the following fiscal year.

10. Why is this purchase being made now?

Several significant factors have aligned simultaneously:

- Engine 3 has already been removed from service.
- Engine 2 has suffered a catastrophic engine failure.
- Engine 1 continues to require increasing maintenance.
- Amesbury is relying on a borrowed engine from the Salisbury Fire Department.
- The Elm Street Fire Station is nearing completion.



- Greenwood Emergency Vehicles has provided pricing substantially below current market value.
- Borrowing allows repayment to begin in Fiscal Year 2028 rather than immediately.

Taken together, these circumstances create both an operational necessity and a unique financial opportunity.

11. What happens if the borrowing request is not approved?

If Council Order 2026-117 is not approved, the City will likely:

- Spend \$80,000–\$100,000 replacing Engine 2's engine.
- Continue investing in repairs to Engine 1.
- Continue relying on a borrowed engine from Salisbury that may be recalled at any time.
- Continue operating without a dependable three-engine fleet.
- Lose favorable manufacturer pricing.
- Face replacement costs estimated between \$2.0 million and \$2.5 million for two comparable engines in the future.

12. What happens to the borrowed Salisbury engine?

Once the new apparatus are delivered and placed into service, the borrowed engine will be returned to the Salisbury Fire Department.

The Amesbury Fire Department is grateful for Salisbury's willingness to assist during this period; however, reliance upon borrowed emergency apparatus is not a sustainable long-term solution for protecting the community.

13. How does this project support the Elm Street Fire Station?

The reopening of the Elm Street Fire Station is a key component of this borrowing request.

Once complete, the Fire Department will distribute apparatus between Headquarters and Elm Street, restoring the City's historic two-station deployment model.

This deployment will improve response coverage, provide additional operational space, and allow all primary response vehicles to be housed indoors, protecting the City's investment while reducing long-term maintenance costs.



14. Why can't Ladder 4 be used as one of the engines since it is a quint?

Ladder 4 was intentionally designed and purchased as a quint, meaning it is capable of performing both engine and ladder company functions. This provides the Fire Department with valuable operational flexibility and redundancy during temporary situations, such as when an engine is out of service for maintenance or repair.

In the short term, Ladder 4 can be staffed and deployed as an engine company when necessary. However, doing so removes the City's only aerial apparatus from ladder company service. While functioning as an engine, Ladder 4 is no longer available to perform the specialized truck company operations for which it was purchased, including aerial access and rescue, roof ventilation, elevated master stream operations, upper-floor laddering, and other technical truck company functions.

Given Amesbury's current staffing model, Ladder 4 is operated as either an engine company or a ladder company—not both simultaneously. Using it as a permanent replacement for a frontline engine would require the City to sacrifice its only aerial apparatus on every response where it is committed as an engine.

The purpose of purchasing Ladder 4 as a quint was to provide operational versatility during temporary circumstances, not to permanently replace a dedicated engine company. The flexibility of the quint has been invaluable while the department has managed apparatus shortages; however, it was never intended to serve as a long-term solution to the loss of multiple pumping apparatus.

Approval of this borrowing request restores the City's intended apparatus deployment model: three dependable engine companies supported by a dedicated ladder company. This allows Ladder 4 to remain available for the specialized functions it was designed and purchased to perform while ensuring the City maintains adequate engine company resources for fire suppression, EMS response, and mutual aid obligations.

15. Will this require hiring additional firefighters?

No.

This borrowing request replaces existing apparatus and restores the City's intended deployment model. It does not create additional companies or require additional staffing.



16. Why Greenwood Emergency Vehicles?

Greenwood Emergency Vehicles has provided a unique pricing opportunity that allows Amesbury to purchase two purpose-built custom fire engines at a cost substantially below today's market pricing.

The proposed purchase fully complies with Massachusetts procurement requirements. The apparatus are being procured through nationally recognized cooperative purchasing programs, including Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts (FCAM) and Sourcewell, both of which utilize competitively solicited contracts that satisfy applicable public procurement requirements. Cooperative purchasing through these programs is a common and widely accepted procurement method used by fire departments throughout Massachusetts and across the country for the acquisition of fire apparatus.

In addition to the financial advantage, Greenwood Emergency Vehicles has the manufacturing capacity to deliver the apparatus within approximately one year, allowing the City to address its current apparatus challenges without the extended production delays that have become common throughout the fire apparatus industry.

Beyond pricing and delivery, Greenwood has demonstrated a willingness to work collaboratively with the Amesbury Fire Department to design apparatus specifically tailored to the City's operational needs, ensuring the department receives purpose-built engines that will serve the community for decades to come.

17. What operational improvements will the new engines provide?

The proposed apparatus are not simply newer versions of the department's current engines—they will be purpose-built specifically for Amesbury's operational needs.

Key design improvements include:

- Shorter wheelbase to improve maneuverability throughout Amesbury's historic neighborhoods and narrow streets.
- Improved turning radius to safely navigate tighter intersections and residential roadways.
- Lower hose bed, reducing the height firefighters must lift hose during deployment and repacking, improving ergonomics and reducing the risk of injury.
- Apparatus dimensions designed to fit both Headquarters and the Elm Street Fire Station while maximizing available compartment space and operational capability.
- Modern safety features and equipment layout designed around current firefighting practices, improving efficiency and firefighter safety.



These improvements allow the department to purchase apparatus specifically designed for Amesbury rather than adapting to apparatus originally built for another community.

18. How long are these engines expected to last?

There is no fixed service life for a fire engine. The lifespan of an apparatus depends on many factors, including annual mileage, engine hours, emergency response volume, maintenance history, operating environment, and whether the vehicle is housed indoors and maintained in accordance with manufacturer recommendations.

Under normal operating conditions, many fire departments plan for approximately 15 years of frontline service, followed by additional years in reserve status. This approach balances reliability, firefighter safety, maintenance costs, and lifecycle replacement planning. As apparatus age, repair costs increase, parts become more difficult to obtain, downtime becomes more frequent, and reliability decreases—particularly for vehicles that respond to emergencies every day.

Engine 2 illustrates this lifecycle well. It is a 2008 Rosenbauer pumper that was purchased by the City in 2010 as a demonstration apparatus. While purchasing a demonstration vehicle provided an initial cost savings, it also meant the apparatus entered service with significantly greater mileage and operating hours than a typical newly manufactured fire engine. The apparatus then served as one of the department's frontline engines for approximately fifteen years, accumulating thousands of emergency responses and significant operational wear. The recent catastrophic engine failure, combined with increasing mechanical issues associated with the age and service history of the apparatus, demonstrates that it has reached the point where continued major investment is no longer the most fiscally responsible option.

This borrowing request is intended to restore a sustainable apparatus replacement program by replacing frontline engines before escalating maintenance costs, increasing downtime, and declining reliability outweigh the value of continued repairs. It also allows apparatus to transition into reserve service while they remain dependable, maximizing the City's investment over the full lifecycle of each vehicle.

While every effort is made to maximize the useful life of City-owned apparatus, emergency response vehicles are unlike typical municipal fleet vehicles. They operate under extreme conditions, often at maximum engine load, while carrying thousands of pounds of equipment and responding under emergency conditions where reliability is critical to firefighter and public safety.



19. Why is this borrowing request different from previous apparatus purchases?

This is the first opportunity in approximately twenty-five years for the City to intentionally design, specify, and purchase custom fire apparatus based on Amesbury's operational needs rather than acquiring apparatus through emergency purchases, demonstration opportunities, or grant funding.

Approval of this borrowing request restores a planned capital replacement program and positions the City to proactively replace apparatus before failures occur, resulting in better fiscal planning, improved operational reliability, and enhanced public safety for decades to come.

20. Will these new engines improve firefighter safety?

Yes.

Beyond replacing aging apparatus, the proposed engines will incorporate modern safety features and operational improvements that reduce physical strain on firefighters and improve emergency response.

These improvements include a lower hose bed to reduce lifting injuries, a shorter wheelbase and improved turning radius for safer operation on Amesbury's narrow streets, apparatus dimensions designed specifically for both fire stations, and a compartment layout tailored to the operational needs of the Amesbury Fire Department. The result is apparatus that are safer, more efficient, and specifically designed for the community they serve.

21. Why wasn't this project funded through a grant like Ladder 4?

The City's newest apparatus, Ladder 4, was acquired through a successful Federal Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG). The project was approved by the City Council through Council Bill 2021-127 and combined \$947,619 in federal funding with a City contribution of \$302,381. The ladder truck was delivered in July 2023.

While the Fire Department actively pursues grant opportunities whenever available, there are currently no grant programs that can be relied upon to replace two custom fire engines within the timeframe required to address the City's current operational needs. Grant funding is competitive, unpredictable, and cannot serve as the City's long-term apparatus replacement strategy.

This borrowing request ensures the City can replace critical apparatus when needed while continuing to pursue grant opportunities whenever they become available.



Appendix B

Exhibit A – Current Fleet Status



Engine 1 – Frontline Pumper (2016–Present)

Amesbury's primary frontline engine has served as the department's workhorse for nearly ten years, responding to thousands of emergency incidents and carrying the majority of the department's suppression workload. As a result of this extensive service, the apparatus has experienced increasing maintenance needs and required more than \$30,000 in maintenance and repairs during the past year alone, with additional repairs still identified.

Approval of this borrowing request will allow Engine 1 to transition from frontline service into a reserve role. Reducing the operational demands placed on the apparatus will extend its useful life, improve fleet reliability, and provide the City with a dependable reserve engine to maintain emergency response capabilities whenever a frontline apparatus is undergoing maintenance, repairs, or is otherwise unavailable.

AMESBURY
FIRE RESCUE

Exhibit B – Engine 2



Engine 2 – Catastrophic Engine Failure

Engine 2 is a 2008 Rosenbauer pumper that was purchased by the City in 2010 as a demonstration apparatus. While acquiring a demonstration vehicle provided an initial cost savings, it also meant the apparatus entered service with significantly greater mileage and operating hours than a typical new fire engine. After approximately fifteen years of frontline service and thousands of emergency responses, Engine 2 recently suffered a catastrophic engine failure. Current estimates indicate that replacing the engine alone will cost between \$80,000 and \$100,000, exclusive of any additional repairs that may be identified during installation or other age-related mechanical deficiencies.

Engine 2 was already scheduled for replacement under the City's apparatus replacement program. Investing nearly six figures to replace only the engine does not substantially extend the useful life of the apparatus or address the remaining wear associated with a vehicle that has reached the end of its planned frontline service. This borrowing request provides the City with the opportunity to replace Engine 2 rather than making a significant investment in an aging apparatus with limited remaining service life.



Exhibit C – Engine 3



Engine 3 – Removed from Frontline Service

Engine 3 suffered a catastrophic pump failure during the winter of **2019** and was subsequently removed from frontline service. The failure rendered the apparatus unable to perform its primary mission as a pumping engine, leaving the City without a dependable third pumper.

The apparatus was identified for replacement in the City's capital improvement plan and was scheduled for replacement in **Fiscal Year 2024**. However, that replacement has been deferred, requiring the department to operate without a fully functional third engine while placing additional operational demands on Engine 1 and Engine 2.

The loss of Engine 3 has reduced fleet resiliency, increased reliance on aging apparatus, and ultimately contributed to the department's current apparatus challenges. Approval of this borrowing request restores the City's intended fleet by replacing the long-deferred Engine 3 and re-establishing a sustainable apparatus replacement program.



Exhibit D – Ladder 4 – Modern Truck Company



(Image credit to Mike Jarvis – Jarvis Productions)

Ladder 4 – Frontline Quint (Placed in Service July 2023)

Ladder 4 represents the City's most recent investment in fire apparatus and was approved by the City Council through Council Bill 2021-127.

The apparatus was acquired through a successful partnership between the City and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program. The federal grant provided \$947,619, with the City contributing \$302,381, resulting in a modern aerial apparatus that will serve Amesbury for decades.

Ladder 4 is not part of this borrowing request. Rather, it represents the first phase of modernizing the department's suppression fleet. Approval of Council Order 2026-117 builds upon that investment by replacing the aging engine fleet and restoring the department's intended deployment model of two frontline engines, one ladder company, and one reserve engine.



Exhibit E – Borrowed Salisbury Engine



Temporary Borrowed Apparatus

Amesbury is currently relying on a borrowed fire engine from the Salisbury Fire Department to maintain minimum operational capability. While we appreciate Salisbury's partnership, the apparatus may be recalled at any time to meet their own emergency needs and is not a sustainable long-term solution.



Exhibit F – Elm Street Fire Station



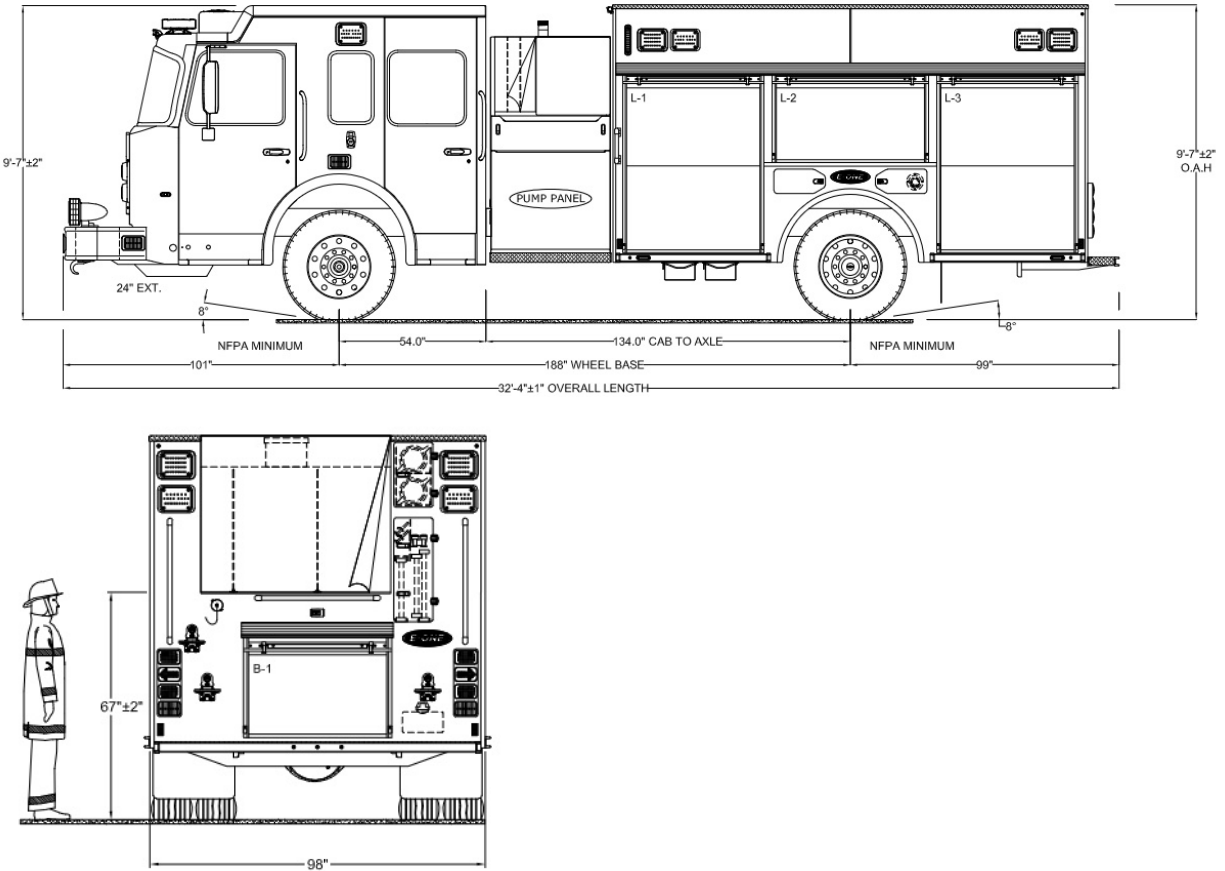
Elm Street Fire Station

The City has already committed significant capital resources toward restoring the Elm Street Fire Station. Approval of Council Order 2026-117 complements that investment by providing the apparatus necessary to return the station to full operational service and restore Amesbury's historic two-station deployment model.



Exhibit G – Proposed Greenwood Engine

SPARTAN FC-94 4 DOOR CAB 4X2 CHASSIS



Proposed Replacement Apparatus

The proposed purchase provides Amesbury with two custom fire engines designed specifically for the department's operational needs, response area, and staffing model. This represents the City's first opportunity in over twenty-five years to intentionally design and purchase engines through a planned capital replacement process.

At a total project cost not to exceed \$1.6 million, the City can acquire two fully equipped custom engines at pricing substantially below today's market value. Approval of Council Order 2026-117 will authorize the borrowing necessary to execute the purchase contract, secure current pricing, and take delivery within approximately one year, restoring the department's intended deployment model of two frontline engines, one ladder company, and one reserve engine.



Exhibit H – The Complete Suppression Fleet

Apparatus	Status	Funding	Future Assignment
Engine 1	Frontline	Emergency Purchase (2016)	Reserve
Engine 2	Engine Failure	Demo Purchase (2010)	Replace
Engine 3	Pump Failure	Capital Purchase (1995)	Replace
Ladder 4	Excellent	AFG + City Match	Frontline
Salisbury Engine	Borrowed	Mutual Aid	Returned

TODAY:

- 1 Frontline Engine
- 1 Failed Engine
- 1 Out-of-Service Engine
- 1 Ladder
- 1 Borrowed Engine



AFTER APPROVAL OF COUNCIL ORDER 2026-117:

- 2 Frontline Engines
- 1 Frontline Ladder
- 1 Reserve Engine



CITY OF AMESBURY
IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK

CITY OF AMESBURY, MA

SPONSORED BY:

Kassandra Gove
Kassandra Gove, Mayor

BILL No. 2026- 117

An Order to appropriate and raise by borrowing, \$1,600,000 to pay the costs of the following project, including the payment of all cost incidental and related thereto:

Project	Amount
Amesbury Fire Department	
Purchase of two (2) fire pumpers	\$1,500,000
Incidental equipment or unanticipated costs for each apparatus	\$100,000
Total:	\$1,600,000

Summary: This order will authorize the Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, to borrow \$1,600,000 to pay costs of the project listed above. Pursuant to G.L. c. 44, the order must be passed by at least a two-thirds vote of the entire membership of the City Council.

Be it Ordered by the City Council of the City of Amesbury assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

That \$1,600,000 is appropriated to pay costs of the capital project described above, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto; and that to meet this appropriation, the Treasurer, with the approval of the Mayor, is authorized to borrow said amount under G.L. c. 44, §7(1) or any other enabling authority and to issue bonds or notes of the City therefor. The Mayor is further authorized to take any other action necessary or convenient to carry out this project.