



Dear Sunapee Community,

I hope this letter finds you well. As President of the Sunapee Fire Department Association (SFDA), I'm writing to share what your support has helped us accomplish this past year, express gratitude, and to be candid about the challenges ahead.

Thanks to your continued generosity, we've made several important investments this year to improve firefighter readiness, member support, and patient care. These are investments that go beyond the town's annual budget to directly serve our community.

Our most significant purchase this year was a new **Zoll X Series Cardiac Monitor**, at a cost of over \$42,000. This was a purchase born out of necessity. The department's previous cardiac monitor was no longer serviceable and could not be used on pediatric patients, a critical gap in our ability to care for the community's youngest and most vulnerable. The fire department budget has been unable to fund a replacement, and while the Association does not typically supplant the town's budget, we felt this was a dire and emergent need that had to be filled. Your donations made that possible.

We also donated **10 MSA LUNAR Thermal Imaging and Firefighter Location devices**, a \$10,000 investment that puts a life-saving tool in the hands of every firefighter on scene. The LUNAR is a hand-held thermal imager and tracking device that helps our members navigate smoke-filled environments, locate downed firefighters, and rescue victims faster. Equipping the entire department, rather than a single officer per crew, is a meaningful step forward for fireground safety.

In addition, your donations allowed us to:

- **Fund Class B uniforms** for all members of the department, supporting professionalism and pride across the ranks.
- **Recognize retiring members** for their years of dedicated service to the town of Sunapee.
- **Extend the safety services dock** at a cost of over \$6,000. Low water levels left both our fire boat and the police boat beached for much of last year. The Sunapee Police Benevolent Association purchased the original dock, and this extension ensures both vessels can deploy rapidly when every second counts.
- **Improve the Georges Mills station** with exterior repairs and rebuilt garden beds, so one of our community's most visible public buildings continues to reflect the pride our members take in their work.

I want to be transparent: these purchases have spent the majority of our funds. The cardiac monitor and LUNAR devices alone represented a significant draw on the Association's reserves, and we are now looking to refill the coffers. The reality is that the town's budget can barely keep pace with the basics, things like personal protective equipment and routine apparatus maintenance. Items like the cardiac monitor and the LUNAR devices, in years past, would have been considered "extras." Today, they are essentials, and our ability to keep providing them is on the line.

In the short term, we are looking to purchase a low-profile deck gun for our new rescue truck, new large-diameter water appliances, and training scholarships for our members. It is of equal importance that we raise funds to meet the **dynamic and unanticipated needs** of the fire department: needs that don't fit neatly into a town budget cycle, and can't wait for the next warrant article. Our mission is, and has always been, to react to whatever our firefighters need, when they need it, so they can react to whatever the community needs.

Our ongoing fundraising efforts continue to support that mission, including the sale of street number signs, challenge coins, department patches, and updated t-shirts. Beyond showing community pride, items like the street number signs make a real difference in helping us find you quickly in an emergency.

We remain a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and your donations are tax deductible. Your trust and generosity are what make all this possible. **Thank you!**

As we look ahead, we remain committed to supporting a department that serves with integrity, improves with intention, and is always ready. Thank you for standing with us. *(Please turn over for an important note on apparatus costs and the new full-time Fire Chief position that was approved at this year's town vote.)*

With gratitude,

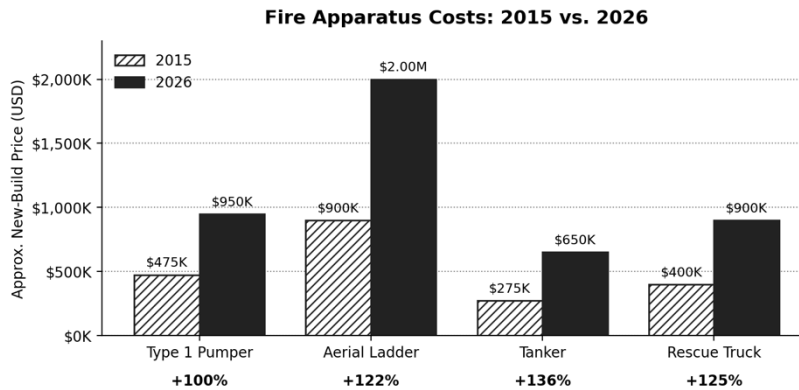
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An Independent Appeal: Apparatus, Capital Reserve, and The Road Ahead

The Sunapee Fire Department Association is an **independent, member-run 501(c)(3)**. We exist alongside the town's budget, not as a substitute for it. After this year's town vote, we feel a responsibility to share some context that the warrant articles couldn't fully convey.

The cost of fire apparatus has skyrocketed.

Over the last decade, the price of nearly every front-line fire apparatus has roughly doubled. Supply chain disruptions, chassis shortages, materials costs, emissions standards, and post-pandemic demand have combined to drive prices up sharply, and they show no signs of returning to where they were.



Wait times have stretched dramatically as well. In 2015, a new apparatus could be delivered in roughly 12 to 18 months. Today, lead times of **36 to 48 months or longer** are common, meaning a truck ordered today may not arrive until 2029 or beyond. Buying used offers little relief, with pre-owned apparatus prices up roughly 100% since 2015.

Refurbishing isn't off the table. Reconditioning an existing engine or aerial, by replacing the body, pump, plumbing, and electrical systems on a sound chassis, can extend the useful life of an apparatus by 10 to 15 years at a fraction of the cost of new. We support exploring that path. But whether the town chooses to refurbish or replace, **funding the Fire Apparatus and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund is the prerequisite for both.** The fund cannot grow without warrant article support, and Article 15 fell short by a narrow margin this year.

Capital reserves "mow the lawn." Steady, predictable contributions to the fund spread the cost of large purchases over many years, so a single \$1M+ replacement doesn't spike the tax rate in one cycle. The SFDA strongly supports keeping the townspeople fully involved in apparatus decisions; alongside that, we want to advocate for the fiscal responsibility of funding the capital reserve year after year. We hope this conversation continues, with eyes wide open about what apparatus actually costs in 2026.

Thank you for approving the full-time Fire Chief position.

We also want to publicly thank the voters who supported Article 13 and the new full-time Fire Chief position. This is a critical step for Sunapee. Maintaining the quality of service and the training standards expected of a modern fire department is harder every year. More and more of our members work outside of Sunapee during the day, and are simply unable to respond during the department's busiest hours.

Beyond emergency response, the administrative load has grown into a job of its own: training records, certifications, grant writing, equipment specifications, mutual aid coordination, recruitment, and retention. A full-time Chief allows the department to operate the way the community deserves, both on calls and behind the scenes. The SFDA stands behind the department, and behind this decision. Thank you for standing with us, and with them.

Donate online: now even easier.

The SFDA has partnered with Zeffy, a 100% free fundraising platform for nonprofits, so every dollar you give goes directly to the department. Scan the QR code, or visit the link below, to support our annual appeal.

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/sunapee-fire-department-association-annual-appeal>

