

Town of Bristol Fire Department

Memorandum



To: Town of Bristol Selectboard
From: Brett LaRose, Chief
Cc: Town Administrator
Date: November 20, 2025
Re: Fire Department Utility Pickup Truck Purchase

The purpose of this memo is to request Selectboard support for the purchase of a utility pickup truck. A utility pickup truck is justified by its crucial role in logistical support, operational efficiency, and cost-effectiveness, which frees up the Town's larger, more expensive frontline apparatus for primary firefighting and rescue missions.

Operational Efficiency and Support

- **Logistics and Resupply:** Utility trucks transport essential supplies like extra Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) air cylinders, supplies, and rehabilitation items (food, water) during prolonged incidents. In addition, they carry contaminated equipment (e.g., fire hose, turnout gear, etc.) back to the fire station following an incident for decontamination eliminating the need to utilize a privately owned vehicle to complete these tasks.
- **Equipment Transport:** They carry tools and gear such as portable lighting, chainsaws, and traffic control devices.
- **Personnel Transport:** Used to shuttle firefighters to and from emergency scenes, training events, public service activities (e.g., fire safety home inspections, smoke/CO detector installations, illegal burning investigations, etc.).

Note: The utility pickup truck will be the primary transport vehicle for recruit firefighters travelling to and from the Firefighter 1 certification course that is now regularly in Rutland County. On average, the Town is paying each recruit firefighter \$1,500 in mileage reimbursement.

- **Scene Management:** For extended operations like building fires, wildfires or technical rescues, utility trucks can act as mobile workstations, carrying incident specific equipment and be utilized as a mobile command center.

Versatility and Accessibility

- **Adaptability:** Utility pickup trucks can be customized with various configurations, such as custom storage compartments, slide-out trays, and specific equipment mounts, to meet a department's unique operational needs.
- **Towing and Hauling:** Equipped with heavy-duty towing capabilities, these trucks can move a variety of trailers, including those for decontamination units, side-by-side units, extending the department's reach into specialized operations.
- **Off-Road Capability:** Built on 4x4 chassis for responding in rural, wildland, or off-road environments that larger apparatus cannot access.

Safety and Cost-Effectiveness

- **Firefighter Safety:** By providing a separate cargo area, pickup trucks help keep contaminated gear, which may contain carcinogens, separate from the passenger cab, enhancing firefighter health and safety.
- **Resource Allocation:** They improve overall operational effectiveness by allowing the more expensive, frontline apparatus (engines, heavy rescue unit) to remain focused on their primary mission of firefighting and lifesaving, rather than logistical tasks.
- **Affordability:** Utility trucks are less expensive to purchase and operate compared to full-sized fire apparatus, making them ideal for support and logistics work.
- **Reliability:** Newer utility trucks feature modern electrical components, anti-lock braking systems, and robust frames, which improve reliability and safety in emergency situations compared to an aging general-purpose fleet vehicle.

The fire department (FD) capital equipment fund is supported by an annual \$25,000 appropriation approved by the voters. In addition, this fund is supported by various donations the FD receives each year. The specific source of funding for this purchase is part of a \$220,125 donation the FD received over a two-year period (2022 and 2023) as part of an estate settlement. \$82,500 of this donation was deposited into the FD's capital vehicle fund and the remaining \$137,625 into the capital equipment fund with the intent of utilizing a portion to purchase a utility truck. My justification for utilizing capital equipment funds versus capital vehicle funds is that I do not want to include this vehicle in a long-term capital vehicle replacement plan.

I am requesting up to \$68,085 for the purchase of a Ford F-250 XLT 4X4 crew cab pickup truck and auxiliary vehicle equipment.

2026 Ford F250 4X4 Crew Cab: \$60,085

Emergency lighting package:	\$3,000
Mobile Radio installation:	\$500
Vehicle graphics:	\$1,500
Bedslide:	\$3,000

Total: \$68,085

I have included with this memo vehicle specifications and quotes from two local Ford dealerships, G-Stone Motors and Heritage Ford. I emphasize local as geographically, these are the two closest dealerships to the Town of Bristol. Equally as important as the initial purchase of a vehicle is the long-term service of that vehicle. As FD personnel are responsible for the maintenance of the fleet, proximity of service is essential as someone will have to take time off from their regular full-time employment to take this vehicle to a service appointment. When FD employees are expected to perform tasks such as these at no cost to the Town, it is my opinion that their individual time must be factored into these decisions.

Respectfully,

Brett LaRose, Chief
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