

**Lamar County Board of Commissioners**  
**Special Called Meeting**  
**September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024**  
**3:00 P.M.**

Chairman Traylor called the Special Called meeting to order at approximately 9:04 a.m. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor, Vice-Chair Gilles, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Thrash, County Administrator Townsend, and County Clerk Davidson. County Attorney Mayfield was absent for the meeting.

**Engine 6 Motor Failure**

Fire Chief Matthews addressed the Board of Commissioners. He stated that the engine in the 2019 Fire Truck # 6 has failed and the engine will need to be rebuilt. A quote was received from Peterbilt of Atlanta-Jackson in the amount of \$42,323.12 to rebuild the engine. Fire Chief Matthews stated that he found another one for \$38,000.00 but they would have to ship it to that location and that cost would be the same or more than the quote from the local company Peterbilt of Atlanta-Jackson. Fire Chief Matthews stated that there is also an emission failure on the 2011 Engine 3 Fire Truck and before the engine fails they need to have it repaired. The cost will be around \$12,000.00. Fire Chief Matthews stated that he asked his third party source Justin Savage what they can do to prevent this from happening. Fire Chief Matthews said that Fire Engine 6 has around 68,000.00 miles and when you run the trucks it affects the emission system. Chairman Traylor asked what they could do to not have this happen with the two new fire trucks.

Justin Savage with John's Truck and Automotive addressed the board regarding the two fire trucks and their emission system. Mr. Savage said nothing is the same as it used to be included even the new vehicles or trucks. He explained that the EPA is pushing for less emissions and when they create these fire truck engines they have what is called an Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR), a Diesel Oxidation Catalysts (DOC), a Diesel Particulate Filters (DPF) and a Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) system. These are filters in the exhaust systems that pull out as many of the particulates of the emissions as they can. What comes out of the fuel pipe is supposed to be clean. Mr. Savage said this is never cheap and you will see this happen again.

Mr. Savage said Fire Trucks used to just go put out fires but how they are required to go to every call, every wreck, every fire and every incident. He explained that the trucks that travel to these events are typically cranked up cold with no warmup time before it hits the road and then it sits on site for sometimes two to three hours idling as they work the call and this horrible on an emission system. They do best with long drives and big loads where the exhaust is hot and it burns out. If you could do it this way, it works best but there is no way around it and if you buy a new truck it will come with this on it. Mr. Savage said Engine 6 ran way to long with the high pressure code into the crankcase and it finally blew the seals on the engine. He said not only are they having to build the engine they are having to pull the engine and replace the front and rear crankcase seals, put it all back together and put it back into the truck and build it. This is the reason the labor and parts cost is so high.

Mr. Savage said three trucks are in his shop with maxed out crankcase pressure. This puts the engine in D rate and it knows something is wrong. He said yes, you can clear the codes but it could be the next call or in two years when the seals are blown again. You can bring it to any shop and get it burn off or regen'd but when there is an active code they will not regen it. When they do not regen it, then the filter stops up and then the crankcase pressure gets worse creating a chain reaction around and around. At this point, the engine has to be rebuilt or replaced.

Commissioner Thrash asked if the damage is already done by the time they get an indicator that there is a problem. Mr. Savage responded that Cummins does a test where it will start with a less severe, moderate and most severe crankcase pressure fault code. Once you see this, there is a problem. This is not a filter that is stopped up or something needs to be maintained. This means there is more crankcase in that engine than that Energy Transition Maintenance (ETM) knows that is supposed to be there. Most of the time what is causing this code to be there is because of ring failure. A lot of the ring failure comes from, by definition, the way the motors are made. They have an EGR system that pulls the exhaust out of the exhaust system and brings it right back into the intake system. When you run the exhaust back into the intake system all of this is going on top of the pistons and the liners that are not clean but it is how they make it meet Emission standards for the EPA. As you run it back into the intake of the truck you are doing damage; long term.

Chairman Traylor asked how often should they be changing the filters. Is there an alarm that lets them know to change the filters. Mr. Savage said there is no alarm but because they sit running idle they have to be changed more frequently. He said he does not normally work on Fire Trucks but on a Road Tractor they usually pull the filters around 250,000 miles. He said they may put on their work hours the engine hours and 96,000 hours is a lot of hours and half or more or sitting, idling on scene. For those that run air conditioner in the cabs and they do not idle. They cut them off.

Commissioner Lovett requested Mr. Savage explain what happens when an emission system goes into D rate the ECM on the computer on the engine gives you just enough power to get it off the road and get it repaired. He said if the truck keeps running and it kills another DCL system you are looking at spending another \$10,000.00 to \$12,000.00 plus the cost to rebuild the engine and this is throwing good money on top of bad.

Fire Chief Matthews suggested that they fix Engine 6 and then send Engine 3 to Mr. Savage and let him finish it up. Since the EGR system got replaced and instead of running it they would like to fix it so they do not damage the new EGR system.

Mr. Savage said they could have some type of protocol in place where when it gets so many miles or hours on the fire truck it is out. He said this may not be feasible because of the cost of a new fire truck. Mr. Savage said you can fix them cheaper before it gets so bad you have to replace the engine. If you can just go in and put in rings, pistons, liners and a silver head and put the engine back together it will be a lot cheaper.

Fire Chief Matthews said he would get with the Public Works Department regarding the hours and miles and the timeline. He said to hook up to the computer to check the code is

\$150,000.00. Public Works Director Rigdon said a crankcase pressure fault code system is around \$20,000.00.

Commissioner Lovett said there was an exemption to having an emission system on the Fire Trucks. Mr. Savage said he did not know the loophole to do this. Commissioner Lovett said they have to get with the Legislation that says that emergency vehicles do not have this equipment. Commissioner Lovett said it could be a loss of life if a Fire Truck goes into D Rate. Commissioner Lovett said they needed to give the County Administrator an emergency amount to access for this type of service.

Mr. Savage said that it will be three weeks to rebuild the engine. There is a 30 to 60 days to get it fixed. The new Fire Trucks are in Georgia but it will be another two weeks at least to get the equipment added to the fire trucks. Chairman Traylor asked if there was a fire truck they could get on loan. Fire Chief Matthews said they are okay with the trucks they have now as long as the others do not break down. The 2011 Engine 3 is sitting in Milner and has not been completely taken out of service. Chairman Traylor said he would rather not take a chance on using the 2011 truck and wanted to see if there was another organization that could loan them a truck. Commissioner Thrash pointed out there is an intergovernmental agreement in place with the surrounding counties in case they need help. Chairman Traylor said if they have the 2011 truck sitting ready to use and they do use it and it goes down then the cost to fix the engine goes up. Mr. Savage said that it will probably take 2 to 3 weeks to get the 2011 fire truck fixed. They can have the parts within a week and then get it fixed.

Commissioner Fletcher inquired about the funds for fixing the fire engines. County Administrator Townsend said it would come from the General Fund budget under Maintenance and Repair ( M&R). This will make this line item for the Fire Department over budget. Fire Chief Matthews said he would use the money budgeted for hoses in General Fund and take it out of his SPLOST fund budget. He said he would move money in his budget to help cover this expense. Fire Chief Matthews said he does not know how to budget because of the timelines and the six month waiting periods.

Chairman Traylor pointed out that Lamar County is not an emission County. He said no other vehicle in the County has to worry about emissions except the fire trucks. Mr. Savage said it is every truck and fire trucks and it is criminal to take off the emission. He said the company that takes it off goes to prison. Mr. Savage said a few weeks ago a company north of Atlanta was fined 10 million dollars for removing emissions because this is a federal crime. Commissioner Fletcher said for the record we would not be removing emissions from the fire trucks.

Mr. Savage explained that this started in 2005-2006 and they went from tier 1 to tier 4 and now everything is tier 4 emissions. Fire Chief Matthews said that for the new fire truck motors you can have 150,000.00 miles on them before there are problems.

Commissioner Fletcher said for the record they are needing to approve the engine rebuild on Engine 6 and fixing the motor failure on Engine 3 therefore both of them will need to be approved today. The amount for Engine 3 will be around \$30,000.00. The bid from

Peterbilt for \$42,323.12 does not include replacing the EGR in their bid it is just for the engine parts. Public Works Director Rigdon said that will cost another \$12,000.00 to put an EGR back on them. Mr. Salvage said as long as they are damaged they can clean them. He said that it does need to be a part of the maintenance routine and they need to figure out how many hours they can run the trucks before they pull the filters. Public Works Director Rigdon said that the oil needs to be changed on the fire trucks every 250 hours which is every two weeks. Mr. Savage said this because the fire trucks go to a call, sit idle and then go back to the fire house.

Commissioner Fletcher asked County Administrator Townsend how they were going to come up with \$73,000.00. He replied that it would have to come from the fund balance which is around 7.4 million dollars at the end of the year. He said this is how they are able to get to October 15<sup>th</sup> when the Insurance Premium Rollback check comes into the County and this is when the cashflow goes back up. Fire Chief Matthews said they will not be billed until the middle of October for this. He said the computer is something they should have known about earlier and they are working on that game plan now. It cost \$150.00 to plug it up to the computer to test it and it takes around 2 hours.

Commissioner Lovett stated quotes or close but most or higher than anticipated. He suggested that they do 1.1 and do 10 percent and put a number on top of that. County Administrator Townsend suggested they set the amount to \$110,000.00 for approval. Commissioner Lovett suggested they set the approval amount at \$80,000.00.

Commissioner Lovett made a motion to approve the purchase of a rebuilt engine from Peterbilt of Atlanta-Jackson for the 2019 Fire Engine 6 in the amount of approximately \$43,000.00 and \$30,000.00 for the 2011 Fire Engine 3 with a total approval amount for County Administrator Townsend not to exceed \$80,000.00 Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing at approximately 3:43 p.m. Vice-Chair Gilles seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Ryran Traylor, Chairman

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Ashley Gilles, Vice-Chair

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Jarrod Fletcher, Commissioner

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Jason Lovett, Commissioner

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Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk