

That Fire Question.

Editor Pioneer:

Some time since you called on the "mayor," in your paper, for an explanation of the failure of the board of trustees to furnish fire protection as voted at the town election last spring. As it is quite fitting that the board should give an account of their stewardship in this matter in some way, and as the papers furnish the most convenient method, I am glad that your columns are open for this purpose. There seems to be the greater need of this explanation because I am satisfied that a greater number of the electors in so expressing their wish in the matter, did not have a very accurate knowledge of the state of the finances of the town. With so unanimous a vote on the question it would certainly be proper for the board to carry out the wishes of the town, if possible, and nothing would have pleased the board better than to have done so. But as soon as we commenced to investigate the matter, we found that the town was not in condition to undertake the purchase of adequate and satisfactory fire protection. For the one remaining town hall bond and the outstanding warrants, amounting to about \$750, which is the whole amount levied by the town, for town purposes, and this is also about as high a levy as the town is allowed by law. It would take the proceeds of one levy to pay the debts already incurred.

Now the cheapest satisfactory fire apparatus obtainable (a hand engine) would cost, with hose and other equipments, \$1,000, and two cisterns about \$500 more; or \$1,500 complete. A complete tank system would cost about the same amount and probably a little more. While a steam engine would cost from \$2,500 to \$3,000, and with \$500 for cisterns, you have an outlay of \$3,000 to \$3,500. A steamer necessitates an additional expense of about \$500 annually, for fuel and care, which item alone, would take two-thirds of a year's total revenue, to say nothing of paying for the apparatus and the other necessary town expenses. Adding to the cost of either of these outfits to the present indebtedness of \$750 and you plunge the town into a much heavier debt than it has ever had, and the board could not think it wise to so over-burden the taxpayers, much as the protection is needed; and were satisfied that the town must agree with them.

As I have said, the last levy will pay the present indebtedness and will thus permit of the purchase of fire apparatus the coming fiscal year.

The board came to this conclusion, only after a careful investigation of the matter, having spent considerable time in consideration of the matter, and having taken pains to glean what information could be secured from all sources; so that a data will be at hand for an intelligent and satisfactory choice of apparatus and the furnishing of an adequate water supply.

WATSON E. BOISE,
President Board of Trustees.