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Prom Night Fire Truck Ride Draws Controversy

Questionable use of city equipment, caught on film, draws controversy in Horton.

The picture, small, black and white and placed among eight others of Horton High School students attending prom, may have gone mostly without scrutiny, placed on page five of the April 26th edition of the Horton Headlight.

However, the picture, showing two female students standing beside the Horton City fire truck that took them to prom, did catch the attention of taxpayers, who brought it to the attention of City Commissioner Ken Krug.

During Monday night's meeting of the Commission, Krug said he was recently in the middle of farm work when he received what was at first a confusing phone call from a private number. Two women were on the line, with one inquiring how the firetruck could be reserved for her daughter's use during the next prom.

Krug says they weren't seeking a commissioner, but the Horton Fire Chief, a role Krug held for many years until the year 2000.

Once the call ended, he realized what had happened: the truck had been improperly used for personal reasons(Play Audio :16 seconds)

City Attorney Kevin Hill agreed that the prom ride was improper, saying the City should allow no such usage, or rental, of city equipment, based on a number of issues, including liability and even sales tax(Play Audio :19 seconds)

City Clerk Candy Schmitt said the city personnel manual addresses such usage, and she has already discussed the issue with Horton Fire Chief Lamar Shoemaker.

She says a copy of the manual is being emailed to him, based on Shoemaker's statement that his department does not have a copy, meaning the volunteer firefighters were unaware of the policy.

Hill will review the policy, with Schmitt, and make sure the wording makes clear the difference between personal, and public use, of city equipment.

There are no penalties expected for the prom night use of the fire truck.

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