

Hiawatha to Seek Funding for Public Safety Equipment

(KNZA)-The city of Hiawatha will seek federal funding for the purchase of more than \$338,000 in public safety equipment.

The Hiawatha City Commission Monday evening voted unanimously to move forward with submitting a pre-application to USDA Rural Development for a loan and grant.

A majority of the funding would be used to purchase of a new 1,000-gallon pumper truck for the fire department at a cost of more than \$254,000, which would replace the current 1974 truck.

The remainder of the funding would be used to purchase equipment for the police department. That would include two used Highway Patrol vehicles, a new phone system, four tasers, and six in-car digital video cameras.

City Administrator Lynne Ladner says the city currently has \$30,000 available to go toward the purchase of the new fire truck. She said the city is eligible for about \$50,000 in grant funding, with a 20 or 40-year loan funding the remaining amount needed for purchase of the public safety equipment.

Ladner was directed to set up a meeting with Hiawatha and Padonia Townships to see if they would help with the purchase of the new fire truck, which is used on rural calls.

Mayor Crosby Gernon noted 28 percent of the Hiawatha Fire Department's calls are outside the city limits, but the townships are only providing 10 percent of the funding for the department.

Gernon says he doesn't think its fair that city taxpayers continue to have to subsidize fire protection outside the city limits

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