

Hyde Park to purchase 10-wheel dump truck, plows

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(Photo: Courtesy photo)

HYDE PARK – The town is borrowing up to \$230,000 to purchase a new dump truck for the highway department.

This will be the Hyde Park Highway Department's first 10-wheel dump truck. The new truck, which includes snow plows, will replace a six-wheel truck that was taken off the road because it was over 18 years old and considered unsafe to drive, said town highway Superintendent Walt Doyle.

The new truck, just like the six-wheeler, will be used to plow snow and haul crushed stone and blacktop. But the 10 wheeler can haul a lot more.

"It's a lot more cost effective because a six-wheel doesn't hold as much as a 10-wheel," Doyle said.

The Town Board on June 16 approved borrowing the money for the new truck. The town will borrow the money by issuing bonds. The town plans to pay back the loan over 10 years, said Town Supervisor Aileen Rohr.

The town plans to consolidate that loan with one it made last year. That's when the board borrowed \$350,000 to purchase a six-wheel dump truck with plow, two pickup trucks and computer equipment.

The town expects to pay approximately 1-percent interest rate on the loan over the 10-year period, Rohr said.

The board typically borrows funds when the life of a purchase is over one year, the supervisor said. The town's operating budget this year is \$8.83 million.

But before the board can actually borrow the money for the new truck, it must wait to see if the borrowing could be subject to a permissive referendum or popular vote. Town residents have 30 days from June 16 to petition for a townwide vote on the borrowing.

A resident seeking such a vote must present to the town clerk within that time period the signatures of at least 102 eligible voters living in Hyde Park, said town Clerk Donna McGrogan. That number is 5 percent of 2,029 Hyde Park residents who voted in the 2010 gubernatorial election — which is based on a state-mandated formula.

Ed Freeman, 66, a Hyde Park resident, said Friday he was not aware the board members approved borrowing the money to buy the truck but was comfortable with their decision.

"I think they are making good fiscal decisions," he said.

The town is able to borrow at a low interest rate due to its good credit rating, Rohr said. Moody's Investor Services recently affirmed Hyde Park's Aa3 credit rating. An Aa3 rating is considered a "high-grade" investment grade, according to Moody's.

Had the rating been downgraded, it would have increased the interest rate on the town's existing bonds for road work and the police/court facility, said town comptroller Tom Carey.

"If it was downgraded we probably would have been paying at least 1-percent higher which nowadays is pretty substantial," he said.

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