

Ti Emergency Squad wants new HQ

► Emergency Squad to take over site for \$1 and build a new headquarters

By LOHR McKINSTRY

Staff Writer



Ticonderoga Emergency Squad wants to move its headquarters from Depot Street to Champlain Avenue, where the old Ticonderoga Civic Center once stood. The town has agreed to turn the property over to the squad as long as it meets certain benchmarks for construction. The old building would be sold.

Lohr McKinstry / Staff Photo

TICONDEROGA — Members of the Ticonderoga Emergency Squad believe the old Civic Center property would be a great place to build a new headquarters.

The Ticonderoga Town Council has agreed to give the squad the old Civic Center property on Champlain Avenue for \$1, but with conditions.

The squad has to raise the money to build a new headquarters within two years and must finish construction within two years after that.

Emergency Squad President Dennis Johnson said the group will agree to the town's terms. He said they have a tight budget, and last year their revenue matched their spending at \$124,000.

"We are looking to keep our costs as low as possible. The only monies that are received from any township are from Putnam," in Washington County, south of Ticonderoga.

EXPENSES, REVENUE

The squad has had response problems during the day, he said.

"We have a dilemma, as many squads do, that being the daytime coverage is very short-handed. There are people out of town working or people here that just cannot leave work. Unfortunately, we have been looking at the possibilities of having a paid daytime shift. This is still up in the air."

He said they raise some funds from "soft billing" of ambulance patients.

"We take what the insurance company gives. We are also looking at other options. We have looked at other squads, and some have the residents pay a small, nominal fee each year."

Construction funding for the new building would hopefully come from grants, he said.

"We have some people inside this community that are experts in these grants, that have volunteered to help with this. We have had a great outpouring of people that are willing to help us, and we appreciate this."

VACANT LOT

The Civic Center had been a Ticonderoga Central School building and was conveyed to the town by the School District in 1969.

The Civic Center lot sits at the top of Artillery Park, which the town will continue to own.

"The park has to remain parklands," Town Supervisor Robert C. Dedrick said.

The Ticonderoga Civic Center was torn down in 2001, and only a vacant lot now sits where the three-story brick building was located.

The Emergency Squad has tax-exempt status as a non-profit entity, so they would not pay taxes on the property, Johnson said.

"By the town conveying this property, it takes a piece of property that is currently not on the tax rolls and leaves it as such."

Dedrick said a covenant in the deed from the School District states that if the property is ever sold, the district must receive the money.

"If we do sell this for \$1, the Ticonderoga Central School would get that \$1."

He said he saw about 20 active volunteers at a squad meeting.

"They seem to be gung-ho on this, and that's good."