

Town balks at proposed fire contract

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Officials say economic uncertainties make it hard to support three-year pact

Town of Saukville officials have had recurring concerns about the rising cost of fire protection provided by the Newburg Fire Department, a stance underlined last week by a reaction to a three-year contract proposal submitted by the department.

A letter from Fire Chief David Geidel said department officials are aware of the financial constraints municipal officials are facing.

“We have been trying to hold the line on our spending because of the economic times,” Geidel said.

He said the department has also delayed its apparatus-replacement schedule by five years to minimize the tax impact.

“We cannot push off replacing trucks past 25 years,” Geidel said.

With that preface, he said the department is proposing no increase in the 2013 fire contract, followed by a 2% in 2014 and 3% in 2015.

The department’s 2012 fire contract was for \$170,000, and a 4% increase was proposed for the next contract.

“The fire department wanted to give us a heads up on what they were thinking,” Town Chairman Barb Jobs said.

Town Board members said they would gladly support the zero-increase contract for 2013, but had problems backing the proposed increases for the upcoming years.

“How do we know we will be able to raise taxes next year? We don’t have a crystal ball,” said Supr. Curt Rutkowski.

The department handled 38 calls in the township last year, including two structure fires. The year before there were 42 calls.

The town receives fire protection from four neighboring fire departments, with Newburg serving as the lead agency.