

SLT to purchase boat for fire, medical calls

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe hopes to have a dedicated fire boat on the water this summer.

The City Council on Tuesday agreed to allocate up to \$75,000 for a used vessel. The money would come from the emergency medical services fund.

The fire department had a boat starting in 1999, but it was decommissioned in 2015. The repairs would have been more than what the boat was worth so it was scrapped. For the past couple of years firefighters have used one of the city's two police boats when possible.

However, as Battalion Chief Jim Drennan told the council on May 2, using the police boat is like trying to do fire work from a police car – it's ineffective.

A fire specific boat will allow medical treatment to be performed inside a cabin area, as well as fight fires.

A new boat can cost \$400,000. That's why firefighters have been diligent about looking at surplus property.

With the OK by council, it means the department can pull the trigger when an appropriate vessel comes available. They are looking at boats that have only been in fresh water and are most likely from the Coast Guard.

South Tahoe responds to calls from Emerald Bay to Cave Rock around the clock. Most police boats are on the water 9am-5pm, and not always seven days a week. The Coast Guard operates out of Tahoe City and Tahoe Douglas Fire also has a boat.

The boat is expected to be moored at Lakeside Marina.