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Winsted

Residents question truck appropriation

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WINSTED — Several residents questioned selectmen Monday on a proposed $9,000 appropriation in next year's town budget that would be the first monthly payment for a $500,000 aerial ladder truck.

Voters had rejected spending $510,000 for such a truck at a referendum in August 1990. And Charlene LaVoie, the town's community lawyer, suggested that such an expense would need the approval of voters at another referendum.

However, Mayor William H. McCabe contended that selectmen can propose items for the town budget they consider important, regardless of the referendum vote.

Selectman Brian W. Sullivan said residents had already voted on the fire truck and that the appropriation should not be included. He said the $9,000 payment would commit the town to paying $500,000 for the truck over the next five years.

Under the purchase plan, the truck would be ordered new and delivered after June 1, 1993. The first $9,000 monthly payment would fall in June 1993, the last month of the fiscal year. An entire year of payments would begin with the new fiscal year on July 1, 1993.

Former Selectman David A. Cappabianca suggested Monday night that selectmen put an entire year's payment of $105,000 for the fire truck in the 1994-95 town budget to "let residents understand the full impact" of the expenditure.

In other business Monday:

• John Forrest, a co-chairman of the town manager search committee, told selectmen that the committee has received 67 applications and reduced them to 29. He said final recommendations will be made to selectmen on April 20.

• Selectman Walter D. Miller suggested that the town appoint a charter revision commission with a view to having a strong mayor form of government instead of a town manager system.

"Thirty years of town managers is a folly," Miller said.

Selectmen took no action on appointing a charter revision commission, but McCabe said such a commission might be considered at a future meeting.