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Council

Town backs \$500,000 fire truck acquisition

TRACY KIBBLE
Staff Reporter

Spending \$500,000 on a custom-built fire truck is a wise decision and one that was made on the advice of a fire safety expert, agreed all but one local politician this week.

Town officials, with the exception of Ward 6 councillor Ken Prentice, stressed utmost confidence in fire chief Bill Brown and his ability to make a decision that would benefit the safety of the municipality.

Last week, Prentice questioned Brown's recommendation that the town buy an expensive, made-to-spec new pumper aerial fire truck.

He said the town needed to be more "creative," and could look at leasing "surplus fire equipment" from a cash-strapped municipality instead.

Prentice also questioned whether Brown had made a "proper, informed" decision.

Brown however, told Prentice that he has spent more than four months pouring over research and drawing up specs for a truck designed for the town's needs exclusively.

"If trucks from other municipalities would work I wouldn't have spent so long drawing up specs," Brown insisted.

And Ward 1 councillor Ivanka Bradley defended Brown's decision.

"You can't always cut corners and save costs. We're talking about lives here and we can't afford to take chances. We need a well-tailored vehicle. I would hate to see a life lost while we test out another municipality's truck," Bradley said.

And Ward 5 councillor Bob Ancheril said Prentice had his "nerve" questioning the word of a fire safety expert, when he and none of the councillors have the education and background to make the call.

"That's the chief's job. If you want a truck from somewhere else, you go and find one," Ancheril said.

"Taxpayer's money is well spent on this," Ancheril added.

And Ward 3 councillor Nick Tatone said the chief has always, in the past, made cred-

ible decisions. "The fire chief has always done extremely well in this town and he says the town needs this truck now. I think we should bite the bullet. Nobody wants to spend

\$500,000, but we have to," Tatone added. But Prentice, who voted against the purchase, insisted there are "many unknowns with such a large expenditure." Prentice added the purchase

would end up costing the municipality more than \$500,000. "Today's debentures are tomorrow's taxes," he said. Despite Prentice's concerns, council voted to support the fire

chief's request and purchase the truck.

Prentice told 'do homework' on fire truck

Ward 6 councillor Ken Prentice should "do his own homework" before jumping on a decision made by the town's fire chief, said fire services adviser for the Office of the Fire Marshal, Boyd Finger, this week.

Finger, who works for the Ministry of the Solicitor General in Brampton, told the Weekender that Prentice "should seek some advice from the appropriate people," before deciding the purchase of a new truck is not a wise choice.

"I'd welcome a call from him," Finger said.

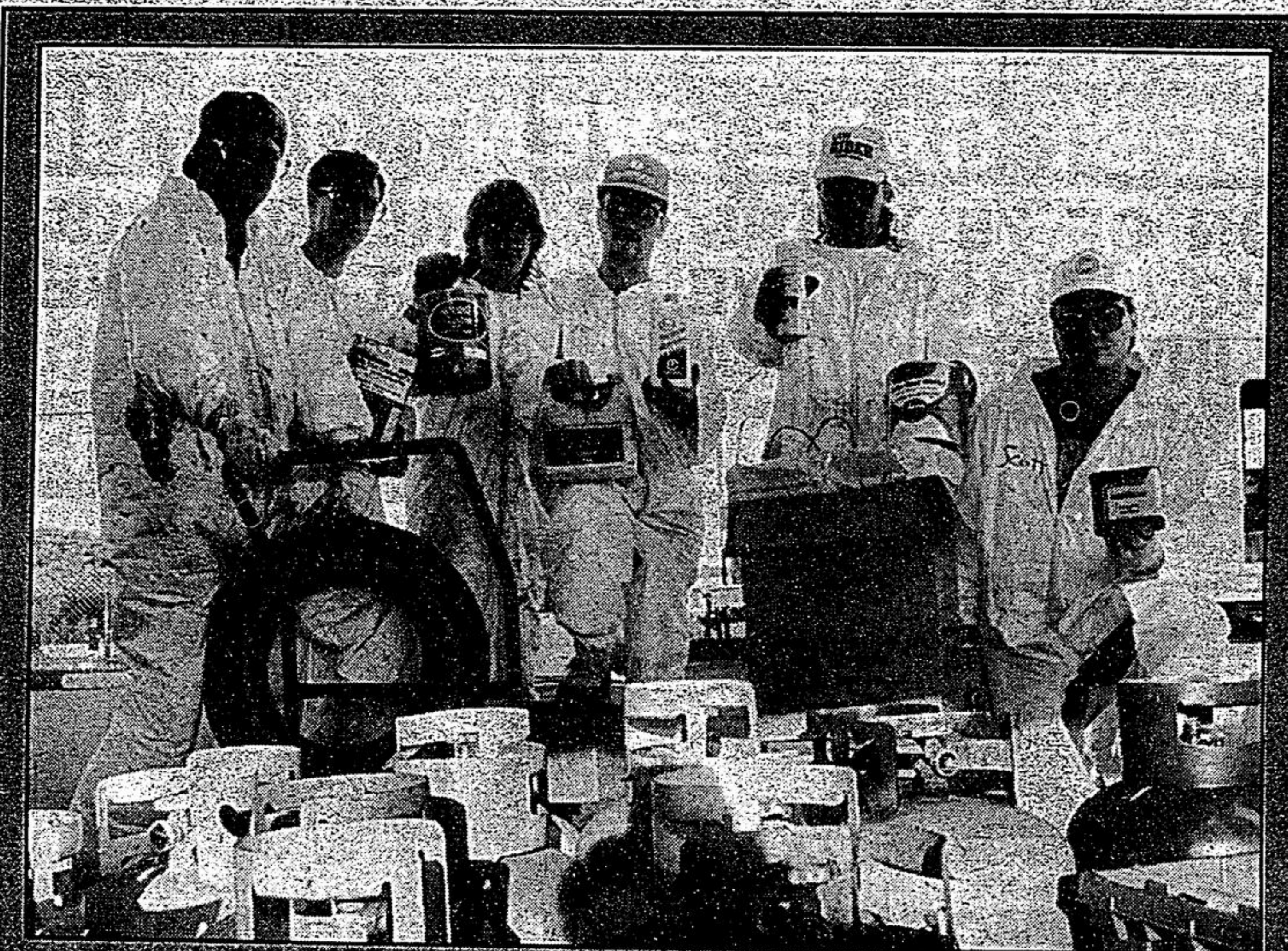
He added that Prentice's idea of an "equipment swap" with another municipality is completely off the wall because there are no trucks younger than 15 years that another station would part with.

"And what municipality would want this 20-year-old truck," that Stouffville currently owns?, added fire chief Bill Brown.

Finger, who offers advice to and oversees fire departments from across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), said Whitechurch-Stouffville needs a new truck in order to streamline its service, fight fires more effectively and keep up with new growth in the area.

"Stouffville's (20-year-old) truck needs to be replaced," Finger confirmed. He added that maintenance alone on older trucks could put the municipality thousands of dollars behind each year.

Finger also added that in case of a deficiency in the older (See page 3)



Hazardous helpers

From left, Fred Hermanson, Alex Toth, Jason Cameron help with the disposal of hazardous materials at the Stouffville Rec Centre this week.

Choko debate

Town renames street for fifth time

Taxpayers will once again pay the costs to rename a street that has already been renamed four times.

Taxpayers have spent more than \$1,200 to advertise the town's proposal to change Kennedy Lane North to Hakonson Lane, then Nicely Lane, then Springvale Lane, then Choko Lane.

All of these names were objected to by the two property owners on the street.

At a meeting Aug. 11 council then decided that taxpayers shouldn't have to spend money again to rename the street for the fifth time to Spring Vista Lane simply because of yet another objection by one of the two property owners.

It was decided at that meeting that the \$450

advertisement costs be absorbed by the objector. But in a subsequent closed door meeting, council rescinded that decision.

Local officials decided that the wrong message would be conveyed that if someone wanted to change the name of their street, all they have to do is pay for the advertisement costs. Council this week voted to pay the costs to rename Kennedy Lane North to Spring Vista Lane. The change is necessary to properly prepare for York Region's upcoming 911 emergency system, expected to be on-line next spring. Many streets in various regional communities are being changed to avoid possible confusion during potentially life-threatening emergency situations.



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