City will replace 33 vehicles with lease agreement

Council expects to save $500,000 in 10 years, update its aging fleet

By JACK FICHTER
Tavern Mac and Cheese

CAPE MAY — The city’s fleet of vehicles should look different by the end of the year.

City Hall received approval to enter into a lease agreement with Enterprise Rent-a-Car for 33 vehicles. The city has been self-insured for its police cars to limit use in other departments. Enterprise offered a proposal to Cape May to provide 33 vehicles for $169,000 for between 60 months at a total annual cost of $35,340 with a one-time fee of $17,000 at the end of the lease for the city having an option to purchase the vehicles through Enterprise’s auctions.

At an April 4 council meeting, City Manager John Driscoll thanked Police Chief Stephen Dorff for his work in getting the work on the fleet management plan on track.

Mullinck said the contract provides significant upgrades to the city and safer vehicles.

The city participates in the National Joint Power Alliance known as In-Vehicle Technology Services that offers cooperative pur- chase of vehicles and other items.

The resolution noted Sourcewell has entered into a national cooperative purchasing agreement for fleet management services, fleet management software, and a cooperative purchasing program.

The city will save considerable cost in replacing the city’s aging vehicle fleet.

The agreement stipulates the city will lease the 33 vehicles for a term of up to 60 months at a total annual cost of $35,340 with a one-time fee of $17,000 at the end of the lease for the city having an option to purchase the vehicles through Enterprise’s auctions.

City Hall took the opportunity to replace the city’s fleet of vehicles and return to 33 vehicles as it participates in the National Joint Power Alliance known as In-Vehicle Technology Services that offers cooperative purchase of vehicles and other items.

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As a result, animal shelters across the country are seeing an influx of animals as pets. Former Animal Shelter Manager Tony Mezzavilla is an exception.

Judith Davis-Dunhour said there was a significant decrease in the number of animals being surrendered during the pandemic, with the first quarter of 2023 seeing a significant increase. The shelter cares for stray animals, community control, and the public, as well as surrenders from owners. Davis-Dunhour said that in 2019, before COVID-19, 811 animals were surren- dered at the shelter in the first quarter of the year, whereas 176 animals were surrendered during the same quarter in 2021-22, the latter being due to COVID-19.

Another 26 dogs were surren- dered in the first quarter of 2022. That jumped to 32 dogs in the first quarter of this year.

“Of the 147 dogs surrendered in the first quarter, we are seeing a significant increase in the number of surrendered dogs,” Davis-Dunhour said. “As of last week, the shelter had about 46 dogs and 200 cats. The shelter has 65 percent versus 55 percent occurrence rate for dogs, which is helped by microchips in the animals, and for cats, it’s the cats that are found in the shelters. Davis-Dunhour said many dogs that are surrendered have a behavior issue or the owners claim they do not have enough time to spend with their pets due to their work schedule. Other reasons dogs are surrendered include the owners having financial problems or issues with a landlord, Davis-Dunhour said. “By the end of 2020, we had significantly less dogs surrendered, and I think that is because people were home, as any behavior problems they had were dealt with,” she said. “They didn’t have the guilt body was home.”

Davis-Dunhour said overall in 2020, 69 dogs were surren- dered, which was normally around 150 pets per year would be surrendered. For the year, the typical number of dogs that are surrendered to the shelter was 112, and that number has remained consistent for the last several years.

Davis-Dunhour said that Cats are surrendered due to the owners moving in or finding a new property to lease and that will allow cats, allergies, or the birth of a baby. Davis-Dunhour said, “We have to place eight or nine cats for every dog,” she said, and noted the shelter is currently about 24 dogs over capacity. A local myth involves some residents buying a cat at the beginning of the busiest season and surrendering or abandoning the animals at the end of sum- mer. Davis-Dunhour said that Cape May invests in pooled fund management to allow investing in city funds in the New Jersey Asset and Equipment Management Plan (NJAMES) in order to increase higher interest rates.

Councilman Matt Kozak added that Cape May has reservations as to whether investments in NJAMES would be insured after but after discussion with council, approved the move April 4 in a unanimous vote. During public comment, former council-woman Stacy Sheehan asked whether the city could invest without informing council.

Councilwoman Maureen McDade said the CFO could invest $1 million in city funds without informing council.

Chesil Glenns-Vaughn said the $1 million threshold was the last recommendation from city auditor Leon Costello. McDade said she wanted to check with the city’s CFO and his expertise.

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CAPE MAY — Cape May Council approved amending the city’s cash management plan to allow investing in city funds in the New Jersey Asset and Equipment Management Plan (NJAMES) in order to increase higher interest rates. The agreement stipulated that in order for a city fund to be invested in the plan, it must have at least a minimum balance of $395,740 inclusive of a one-quarter of the year. She said noting the shelter consisted of 21 employees, 21 retired persons, and 46 individuals. Cape May invests in pooled fund management to allow investing in city funds in the New Jersey Asset and Equipment Management Plan (NJAMES) in order to increase higher interest rates.

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