

# Firehouse may reopen

By DIANE RUGG  
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NEW BRUNSWICK — The city may reopen the Remsen Avenue firehouse after all, Mayor John Lynch said yesterday in an interview with The Home News editorial board.

Lynch's surprise announcement came only four days after city Business Administrator Stanley Marcinczyk told Councilman Edwin Carman that there

was no way the city could shoulder the financial burden of operating the firehouse. Citing financial reasons, the administration closed the firehouse on Dec. 1, giving residents two weeks' notice.

One week later, a 2nd Ward neighborhood group called the Concerned Area Residents met to oppose the closing of the firehouse. Since then, residents and Councilmen Carman and Joseph Vincze have asked for reports jus-

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tifying the closing.

Yesterday, Lynch said he had reconsidered his previous position, though he said he still believes the closing makes good financial sense.

"We don't need an overriding nega-

tive feeling in the community," Lynch said, talking about the 2nd Ward residents who have opposed the closing of their local Firehouse No. 4. "We may be able to reopen the firehouse. I'm

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meeting with the community group later this month to discuss alternatives. Prior to the closure, they should've been consulted. Our problem was we didn't have time. But it was the worst time of the year to do it."

Marcinczyk has repeatedly pointed out the cost overruns in the city Fire Department, calling it "the greatest per-capita expense in this year's budget." But Lynch said arguments from fearful community residents have changed his mind.

Second Ward residents feared that their lives and property would be endangered with a longer response time from the Joyce Kilmer fire headquarters.

Lynch said he would discuss with members of CAR reopening the firehouse as a fire facility or a police substation.

"The psychological factors involved

may be enough to reopen the firehouse," Lynch said. "I don't want a negative atmosphere."

Residents had expressed doubts that the closing would be "temporary," as it was initially termed.

Last month, the mayor said the city considered using the old firehouse as a repair shop.

Fire Chief Leo Harkins justified the plan based on consolidation of better equipment at the fire headquarters on Joyce Kilmer Avenue.

Last night, CAR spokesman Kenneth Heuston, who is a foreman and 18-year-employee in the city Public Works Department, was pleased to hear the news. "We plan to meet with the mayor on January 19 to discuss whether it will be a firehouse or a precinct," said Heuston. "If you've elected someone to office, he's got to pay attention."

Heuston said there have been patrolmen in the 2nd Ward since Monday. "We know we're a minority group. But we're still human beings."