



CITY OF FRANKLIN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Fire Department
"The Three Rivers City"

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Michael J Foss, Fire Chief/EMD

David J Hall, Deputy Chief

Fire Committee Meeting

Monday April 10, 2023 at 6:00pm

Held at the Franklin Fire Department

All Present:

- *Chairmen Ted Starkweather*
- *Mayor Jo Brown*
- *Councilor Paul Trudel*
- *Councilor George Dzjuna*
- *Councilor Oliva Zink*
- *City Manager Judie Milner*
- *Chief Michael Foss*
- *Administrative Assistant Nicole Havey*

The Meeting:

Chairman Starkweather called the meeting to order at 1809 pm. Chief Foss thanks everyone for coming and for supporting the department.

Agenda Item I

Previous meeting minutes from October 17, 2022 were reviewed by committee members. Chairman Starkweather addressed Agenda item I Councilor Olivia Zink made a motion to accept minutes with correction on page 3 to add space between "15 years", Chairmen Starkweather seconded motion, motion carried.

Agenda Item II

Previous meeting minutes from February 1, 2023 were reviewed by committee members. Councilor Paul Trudel made a motion to accept minutes. Councilor Zink abstained, Chairman Starkweather seconded motion, motion was carried.

Agenda Item III

Chief Foss discussed the current Fire department statistics. The current statistics discussed are from Fiscal Year 2023 Quarter 3, they recap all the incidents that occur in the City of Franklin.

The incidents by time of day, highlight that between the hours of 1300-1700 (1pm - 5pm) are the busiest hours which extra support during that time is given by the inspectors, the Deputy and the Chief. The time of Greatest Vulnerability is from 1900-2300 (7pm-11pm) because staffing goes down to a 3 man shift at 1900 (7pm) and they still stay busy and staff often doesn't come back to cover station. Getting 4 people on board is a goal for the budget season. Incidents by days of the week show that even if the City upstaff during the weekdays it wouldn't benefit the City because it is busy evenly Sunday through Saturday. Concurrent incidents happen roughly 22% of the time another call is occurring simultaneously within the City. Franklin is set up for one call at a time, unfortunately sometimes the crew needs to be split, an off-duty call is toned or we are calling mutual aid. Rescue/EMS calls are our busiest at 75% (378 calls) and Fire is 19% (95 Calls) and Service and the other 6% (32) are Service related calls. During the quarter 83 calls out of 505 the city requested "off duty" assistance. Out of the 83 calls 61.4% (51) of the times we get no coverage, so normally you will see increased time on calls or injuries due to short staff. We do get partial coverage 20.5% and only 18.1% of the time are we getting adequate coverage. If we can add 4 people on shift 24/7 you will see less call backs happening. If we go to Concord Hospital normally the whole shift (3) is going because you typically need 2 EMT's in the back and a driver due to the type of call that requires transport to Concord. A call to Concord is about an hour and half where the ambulance will be out of the City of Franklin.

Chief Foss discussed the Fire Inspection Division statistics, they did roughly 1695 inspection related services in the City for a Calendar year. From February 2022 through February 2023 they did 1789 inspections. Discussion was had about Fire calls dropping due to the amount of inspections that they are doing. Since 2013 to 2023 there has been an increase in inspections due to economic development that has been a major factor in the increase. In the FY25 budget after the Fire Department sees an increases in Career Firefighters, we will look at increasing the staff for Fire prevention due to the increase in work on Code Enforcement. Discussion was had about a new hire being shared between planning and zoning and code enforcement to alleviate burden on both departments. The next statics that was shared was the ISO ratings effect on insurance rates. The ladder truck within the City decreases home owner insurance rates, if the City were to get rid of its residence would see an increase in rates.

Councilor Trudel had questions about the life expectancy of the ladder truck. Discussion was had about how it was discussed at late meeting, and it would be FY29. The possibility of replacing it during that time would be to combine the Ladder and Rescue to save money as they are due to be replaced at the same time. We also struggle to staff both the ladder and rescue apparatus at one time.

Agenda Item VI

Chief Foss proposed skipping to agenda item VI because discussion was being had about Capital Improvement Items needed. The next major item that needs to be replaced is Ambulance 1, the council had previously agreed to try and get 3 more year out of it. In order to do this \$21,000 needs to be invested into it to repair paints and corrosion issues. Doing this would allow the ambulance to go onto a different payment cycle. In the budget council will see that an additional \$21,000 was added to EMS/Rescue Apparatus line. Discussion was had about the build taking 2 years to build a new ambulance, and pricing is changing and you won't have a final price until the build is completed.

Agenda Item IV

Chief Foss jumped back to Agenda Item IV, staffing concerns. Discussion was had about the new pay scale study that the Council will be looking to implement in the new FY24 budget. The Chief is behind this new pay scale as the department will benefit as we are struggling to fill open positions with qualified personnel because the pay to work load per person ratio is higher than other comparable departments that do less calls but have a higher pay scale. The number one reason people leave is because workload across comparable departments a firefighter on average do 119 calls, in Franklin they currently do 166, that is 1 firefighter per call, on average

result in a department has 2 or more on a call. In the City of Franklin, they are going on an average of 47 more calls per firefighter and are underpaid based on the pay study by \$5.60 an hour. In franklin the firefighters work harder for less money, two ways to fix that is, one to fully fund the pay study that City Manager proposed to council and two, add 6 firefighters to the budget, realistically he would like to see at least 2 firefighters add to have 4 firefighters on staff 24/7.

Discussed the cost of losing roughly \$160,000 last year when the City lost the 8 firefighters, when the City could have taken those funds and put it back into the employees it had for regular pay or further training. Due to the knowledge and lack of experience due to pay scale, the City is having to mandatory employees more frequently. The City has qualified candidates calling wanting to work for us however when they hear the pay scale they don't apply, if the pay scale is increased we would see more qualified candidates.

The Retention Bonus that was approved by council, was a huge prop for employees, but if the pay scale doesn't get approved we could see further loss of employees.

Agenda Item V

Chief Foss discussed the FY24 Budget updates, which includes additional staff increase and an increase on the Ambulance budget line for repairs to A1.

Agenda Item VI

Chief Foss stated he had one late item to discuss, which was the Fire Alarm system that is being taken down. The City no longer has the staff to maintain the antiquated system. Currently all the City building and schools are off the system they are monitored by a 3rd party. July 1, 2023 there will be tags on the master boxes stating they are out of service and residence have been notified multiple to come off the system.

Agenda Item VII

Chairman Starkweather and committee members agree to set the next for July 17, 2023 at 6:00pm.

Adjournment

Councilor Paul Trudel made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 19:00 (7:00pm), Chairmen Starkweather seconds and motion was carried.