



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

Wednesday, October 13, 2021

Held at the Franklin Fire Department

All Present:

- *Mayor Jo Brown*
- *Councilor Bob Desrochers*
- *Councilor George Dzujna*
- *Chairmen Ted Starkweather*
- *Chief Michael Foss*
- *Deputy Chief David Hall*
- *City Manager Judie Milner*
- *Administrative Assistant Nicole Havey*

The Meeting:

Chairman Starkweather calls the meeting to order at 15:16.

Chief Foss thanks everyone for coming and makes a motion to combine agenda items I and III, Chairman Starkweather approved

Agenda Item I & III

Chief Foss discussed the current Fire department statics and staffing shortages with the need to add additional firefighters to the Career Staff.

The current statics that Chief Foss discusses for the FY22 Quarter 1 are the incidents that occur in the City of Franklin. Currently for Q1 the Fire Department has responded 526 incidents, of that 123 of those incidents are concurrent incidents occurring simultaneously. This means that the city is either calling

mutual aid, requesting off duty staff or stacking calls to help cover the incidents. The Fire Department will stack multiple calls when feasible to do so. Chief Foss also discussed the incidents per ward and the type of incidents that occur in the City. The Fire department covers the 3 Wards in the City of Franklin, but also covers all of Andover EMS calls as well as any mutual aid needed outside of the City. Currently the City has a contract with Andover to cover their EMS calls. As a result of the contract, the City of Franklin receives 80K dollars which covers the additional two-day time firefighters that we have on staff. In the City of Franklin, the Fire department handles Rescue/EMS, Fire, Service and Misc. calls, 77% of the calls received are Rescue/EMS related.

The Chief discussed statics about the “off Duty” assistance that is required when concurrent incidents or additional assistance is needed in the City. For these 148 incidents you may need 1, 2, 3 or more than 3 members to come into the station for coverage. For these requests the city receives only 17% adequate coverage, 21% partial coverage and 62% no coverage. The City is seeing a high percentage of no coverage because of burnout/fatigue, or low pay so employees have second jobs on their days off.

Mayor Brown asked if it would be more effective to hire more staff? Chief Foss proposed that the City would need to hire two more firefighters, and transitions the current day time firefighters and the two new ones to 24hours shifts, which would give each shift 4 firefighters on at all times. With this proposal however, the Chief stated that the City really needs to hire 6 firefighters to have 5 firefighters on duty at all times. This would also cut back on the amount of OT that the City is currently paying out to is current Career Staff.

The chief also discussed that the City of Franklin had applied for a SAFER grant that would have assisted the City in hiring additional Career Staff but the City of Franklin was denied the approval. The Chief is going to follow up on this, as it seems we may not have passed the first set of criteria for this grant which is based on the City’s population.

Chief Foss discusses the current staffing requirements and the payrates for the City compared to other departments within the State of NH. On average the City of Franklin’s firefighters are handling 30 more calls per person than other comparable departments in the State and they are being paid -\$4.48 dollars less on average. In order to add two additional firefighters, the City would need to budget roughly 180K in additional funds for the next upcoming year’s budget. If the City could make some additional adjustments to the current pay scale for the department, it may reduce turnover rates within the department. Every time there is a turnover within the department of a firefighter it cost the department an additional 8K for gear and additional cost for training.

Councilor George Dzujna, asked when do people start paying for themselves and we see a return on investment? Deputy Hall addressed this question by stating that it can take a couple of years with someone, but that does very based on the individual’s experience. If someone has more experience it could take 6 months to a year. Someone with little to no experience within a Fire Department it takes longer.

Mayor Jo Brown asked what was the difference between an AEMT and an EMT Basic and how that effects the pay scale and department? Chief Foss answered by stating that the City of Franklin requires that within a year of hire we require a firefighter to be an AEMT. This is because an EMT Basic is only allowed to give certain medication and provide minimal services to a patient. Some departments within the state actually give their AEMT's a yearly stipend for having that license.

Agenda Item II

Chief Foss discusses the current Fire Hydrant Ordinance that was proposed at the last City Council meeting and was tabled. Chief Foss would like to resubmit the new updated ordinance to the council with the support of the Fire Committee. The ordinance addresses private and public hydrants and the need for testing and maintenance within the City. Currently the private hydrants are not being tested and the ordinance would require annual records of testing be completed and shared with the Municipal Service Director. A letter to the property owner and a confirmation form was given to each member at the meeting to review.

Agenda Item IV

Chief Foss moves on to the next agenda item; and briefly discussed the EOC upgrades, stating that they are almost completed. At the next meeting a tour of the facility will be done for everyone to be able to see the upgrades.

Mayor Jo Brown, did ask if all the upgrade allowed the department to function properly in the new space? Chief Foss addressed this by stating that it is an improvement to be able to function, but the building will need to expand in the not-so-distant future. In order to do this a 15k study would need to be conducted and approved by the council to see if the building is structurally sound to build up and/or out. City Manager stated that currently the city as 15K in the budget that could possibly be used for the study, and if we are looking at it for the fire department we should also see if the would be able to include one for the police department as well.

Agenda Item V

Chief Foss discussed briefly the AFG grant and that Deputy Hall has begun implementing it.

Agenda item VI

Chief Foss discussed the potential sale of the building that houses Lakes Region Mutual Aid Communication Center. Currently the building that LRMA is in is owned by the State of NH and Governor Sununu stated recently that the property will be going up for sale. With that the Commissioner of Safety stated the Governor will find a place to move all the LRMFA dispatch to when and if a sale happens.

Agenda item VII

Chief Foss discussed the need to upgrade the current boat. He referenced that he proposed a capital improvement worksheet for the boat which would happen in FY23 for 20K. He is looking for support to upgrade the boat this year FY22 using the Turcotte fund, as there is potential to trade the current boat in and receive a decent trade in value. If a trade for \$6000 can be obtained, the amount needed from the Turcotte fund would be roughly \$13,500. Chief Foss will update the committee once he has confirmation that a trade will be able to be made.

Agenda item VIII

A doodle poll will go out to all new council members in January to set a meeting date.

The meeting is adjourned at 16:27.