



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 February 1, 2023

Held at the Franklin Fire Department

All Present:

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

Absent:

- *Councilor Olivia Zink*

The Meeting:

Chairman Starkweather called the meeting to order at 1831 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 made a motion to accept minutes. Councilor Paul Trudel abstained, quorum was not met. Chairmen Starkweather made a motion to accept minutes at the next meeting, Councilor Trudel seconds motion, motion is carried.

Agenda Item II

Chief Foss discussed the current Fire department statistics. The current statistics discussed are from Calendar year 2022, they recap all the incidents that occur in the City of Franklin.

The incidents by time of day, highlight that between the hours of 1000-1400 (10am - 2pm) 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. 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. In 2012 the department was roughly doing 1700 calls a year and now in 2022, the department does 2300 calls with only an increase in 2 members due to the contact with the Andover Fire Department roughly 4 years ago, that is a 35% increase in calls. Concurrent incidents happen 25% of the time another call is occurring simultaneously within the City. This means that the City is either calling mutual aid, requesting off duty staff or stacking calls to help cover the incidents. Chief Foss also discussed the incidents per ward and the type of incidents that occur in the City. The busiest ward is Ward 3 followed by Ward 2 and Ward 1 but also covers all of Andover EMS calls as well as any mutual aid needed outside of the City. We also receive mutual aid within the City. Rescue/EMS calls are our busiest at 74% (1723 calls) and Fire is 12% (280 Calls) and Service and the other 13% (311) are Service related calls. The "off Duty" statistics that occur during concurrent incidents or additional assistance is needed in the City which should be alarming. In 2022, 494 calls had a request for additional personnel and 370 of those times no one came in to help us out. Only 10% of the time is the City getting adequate Coverage. The Deputy and the Chief help to try and mitigate the calls by doing on call nights. Call staff only comes in for roughly about 3% of calls. Career Staff are paid a minimum of 3 hours to come in for an off-Duty call and sometimes even that isn't enough to entice them to come in because they are already burnt out from the overtime. Discussion was had about bringing in part time firefighters from other departments, this is a challenge because you may not find qualified people to fill the shifts, they may not have all of the standards needed, and just to train a full-time employee it takes a year for them to come on board.

Agenda Item III

Chief Foss discusses staffing concerns and the SAFER grant update. The City has lost 7 firefighters this year alone which has cost the City, the number one reason they left was workload, number two reason was pay. Across comparable departments a firefighter on average do 119 calls, in Franklin they currently do 166, that is 1 firefighter per call, on average a department has 2 or more on a call. In the City of Franklin, they are going on an average of 47 more calls and are underpaid based on the pay study by \$5.60 an hour. In order to be on par with the comparable departments and get down to 119 calls the City would need to hire 6 firefighters. Chief Foss intends to add 6 firefighters to his budget for the FY24 year but realistically knows this won't happen but it is a need for the department to add additional firefighters and also implement the pay study. Adding 6 firefighters would reduce the number of call backs and some overtime for the department by creating a 5-person 24-hour shift. Realistically speaking we desperately need to add at least 2 firefighters to sustain this year, then look at more next year.

The Chief also discussed the cost of what the City pays to lose a Firefighter. The cost of losing a firefighter is about \$22,800, and this year we lost 7 so the City of Franklin spent about \$160,000 this year. If the City of Franklin paid upfront to its employees and increased staffing it would reduce this "waste" of expenses.

Discussion was had about what expenses the firefighters pay out of pocket. Firefighters currently pay for their own AEMT, CDL license. The City has helped pay for Paramedic schooling for some staff, however they tend to leave after a year of finishing school because the pay is better somewhere else, which has less workload.

Retention Bonus was proposed to City Council and will be reviewed in Council meeting on Feb 6, 2023. The City Manager explained where the money appropriation is coming from and how it won't affect the City's budget and who is eligible to receive the bonus.

SAFER grant application that was submitted requesting two additional personnel for the Fire Department, the City did not receive. The only department in the State that currently is known to receive it is Belmont. The City still needs the staff and the Chief plans to not apply again this year however will look into it the following year, his guidance is based on conversations with other departments that stated, the grant process also is looking to see that the City is also investing in themselves when they are awarding.

Agenda Item IV

Chief Foss discussed what Capital Improvements the department needs. Ambulance 1, a 2012 apparatus, replacement is normally a 5-year cycle for departments, Franklin has always done a 10-year cycle which is coming up on 10 years for this apparatus. Ambulance 2, the newest, was purchased roughly in the summer of 2019, so there is roughly 3 years left to pay on it. It would cost about \$21,000 to get more life out of A1 which is mostly corrosion and paint work repairs. To order an ambulance it is currently on a two year wait time, the chief recommends ordering A1 within 2 more fiscal cycles and adding the \$21,000 to his budget to repair A1 to run safely for another 3 years.

The capital improvement committee decided that in FY29 when the Rescue and Ladder truck would need replacement, that it would make the most sense to do away with the rescue and combine the trucks and just replace the ladder truck.

Agenda Item V

Chief Foss discussed the Hazard Mitigation Plan, stating that in the March meeting he is going to ask Council to set a public hearing to update the plan, its completely grant funded with matching funds from salaries.

Agenda Item VI

Chairman Starkweather asked if there were any additional items that needed to be discussed. At that time no one had any questions or other topics of discussion.

Agenda Item VII

Chairman Starkweather and committee members agree to set the next for Monday April 11, 2023 at 6:00pm.

Adjournment

Councilor Paul Trudel made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 19:52 (7:52pm), Chairmen Starkweather seconds and motion was carried.