Village of Oak Park

Fire Department Organization Assessment

Report Presentation

October 14, 2025

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Key Engagement Objectives

- Conduct an organizational assessment of the Fire Department to assess:
  - Current staffing
  - Facilities
  - Equipment/apparatus
  - Operations
  - Revenue sources
- Develop recommendations to improve the efficiency of the Fire Department and accommodate long-term growth

Project Scope

- Review background **documents and data**
- Conduct individual **interviews**
- **Tour** fire stations
- Deploy electronic **employee survey**
- **Analyze** management, service delivery, risk, resources, staffing, and growth
- Prepare **observations and recommendations**
- Prepare **project report**
- Prepare **draft implementation action plan**

Major Observations

- The **22-person maximum and 16-person minimum** staffing levels are appropriate, given call volume and response times.
- The issue the department is having with overtime is due primarily to **vacancies and staff being off work** (for either workers' compensation illness/injury or paid time off).
- Maximizing the use of **over hiring and contracting for background checks** will shrink hiring times.
- Assess the need for the **fourth ambulance** after gathering additional years of service call data.
- Establishing an **ISF for fire apparatus** would help the Department manage high costs of purchasing and maintaining equipment and help plan for future needs.

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Employee Engagement Themes

1. Overall sense that the Department provides **excellent fire and EMS service** and is proud of its professionalism and top ratings.
   - The Department fosters a **service-oriented, well-trained, and supportive team culture**.
2. With rising service call volumes, ambulance availability, and ongoing staffing vacancies, the Department faces **operational strain**.
   - Prompted recommendations for a **fourth ambulance, a specialized squad unit, and increased staffing**, all while balancing financial constraints.
3. **Key challenges** facing the Department include:
   - Facility issues
   - Lack of a training coordinator
   - Perceived staffing shortages.

Employee Engagement Themes *(continued)*

4. The Department is facing **significant overtime costs** (exceeding $1,000,000 per year) due to staffing vacancies, injuries, and contractual minimum staffing requirements. Leads to work-life imbalances.

5. The Department's **facilities need significant upgrades**, with Station 2 being the most critical due to its age and uncertain future.

6. The Department ensures **quality and effective services** through a combination of **post-incident reviews, mentorship, regular evaluations, and open communication**.

    - Ongoing training, feedback from residents, and collaboration with Loyola Hospital for continuing education also support continuous improvement.

Employee Engagement Themes *(continued)*

7. **Recruitment delays,** especially background checks, have resulted in the loss of some viable candidates.
   - Suggestions for improving this situation include keeping applications open year-round, using an outside firm for background checks, expanding outreach efforts, and more effectively using the Board-approved “over hire” candidate lists.

8. The Department is **progressive in its use of technology**, with tools such as new monitors, thermal imaging cameras, iPads, and smartphone-based inventory systems enhancing operations.

9. The **ECHO program is working effectively**, providing crucial aftercare and follow-up support through social workers for community individuals with complex needs, such as mental health issues or housing instability.

Major Focus Areas

- Department Staffing and Personnel
- Facilities
- Apparatus and Equipment
- Operations
- Revenues and Expenditures

Major Focus Areas

Department Staffing and Personnel

- Continue to maintain the 16-person minimum staffing level.
- Hire a full-time training officer position.
- Calculate unit hour utilization (UHU) and compare to utilization standards.

Facilities

- Station 1 - expansion and facility upgrades
- Station 2 - feasibility study and possible replacement of station
- Station 3 – station renovations

Apparatus and Equipment

- Assess need for 4th ambulance after enough data is collected
- Explore funding and staffing for a 2-person squad vehicle
- Develop an equipment replacement fund for all fire apparatus

Major Focus Areas

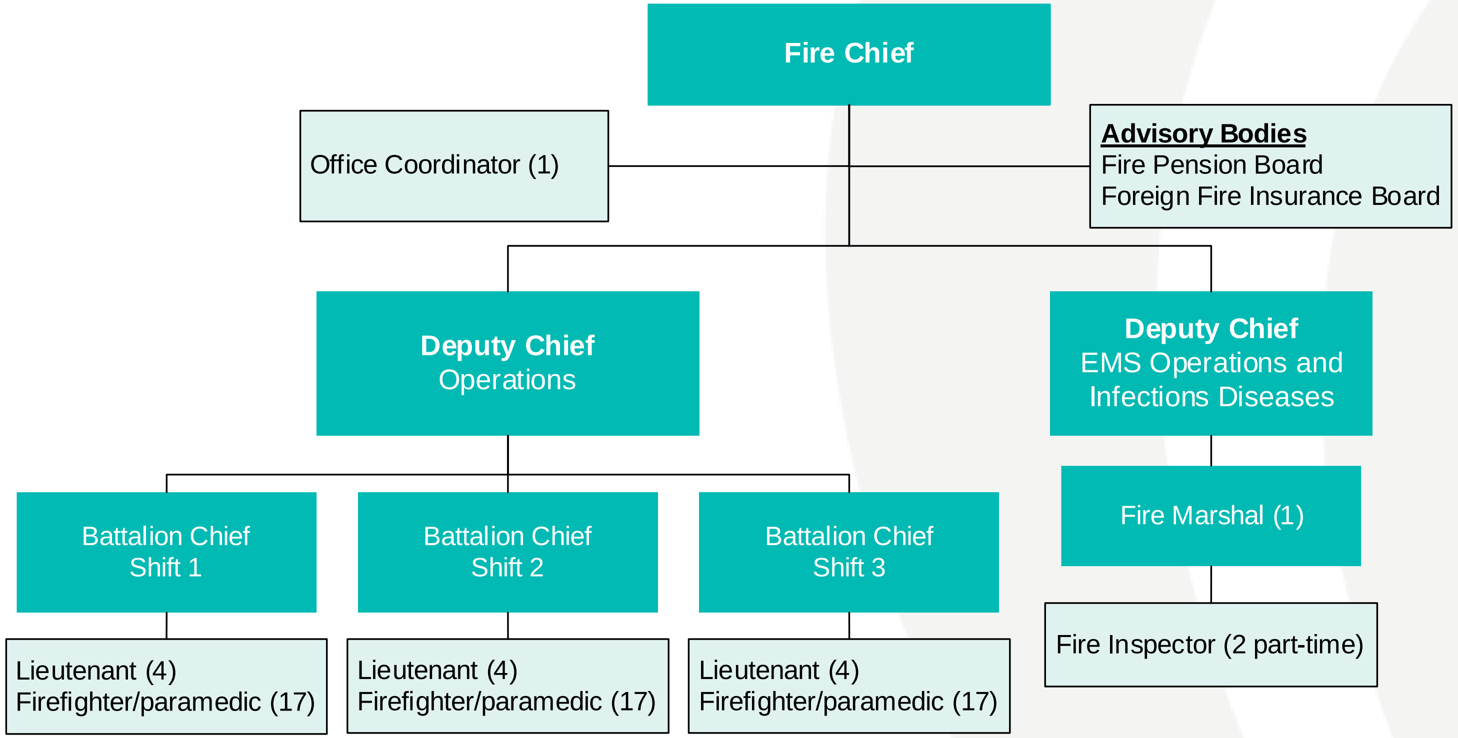
Operations

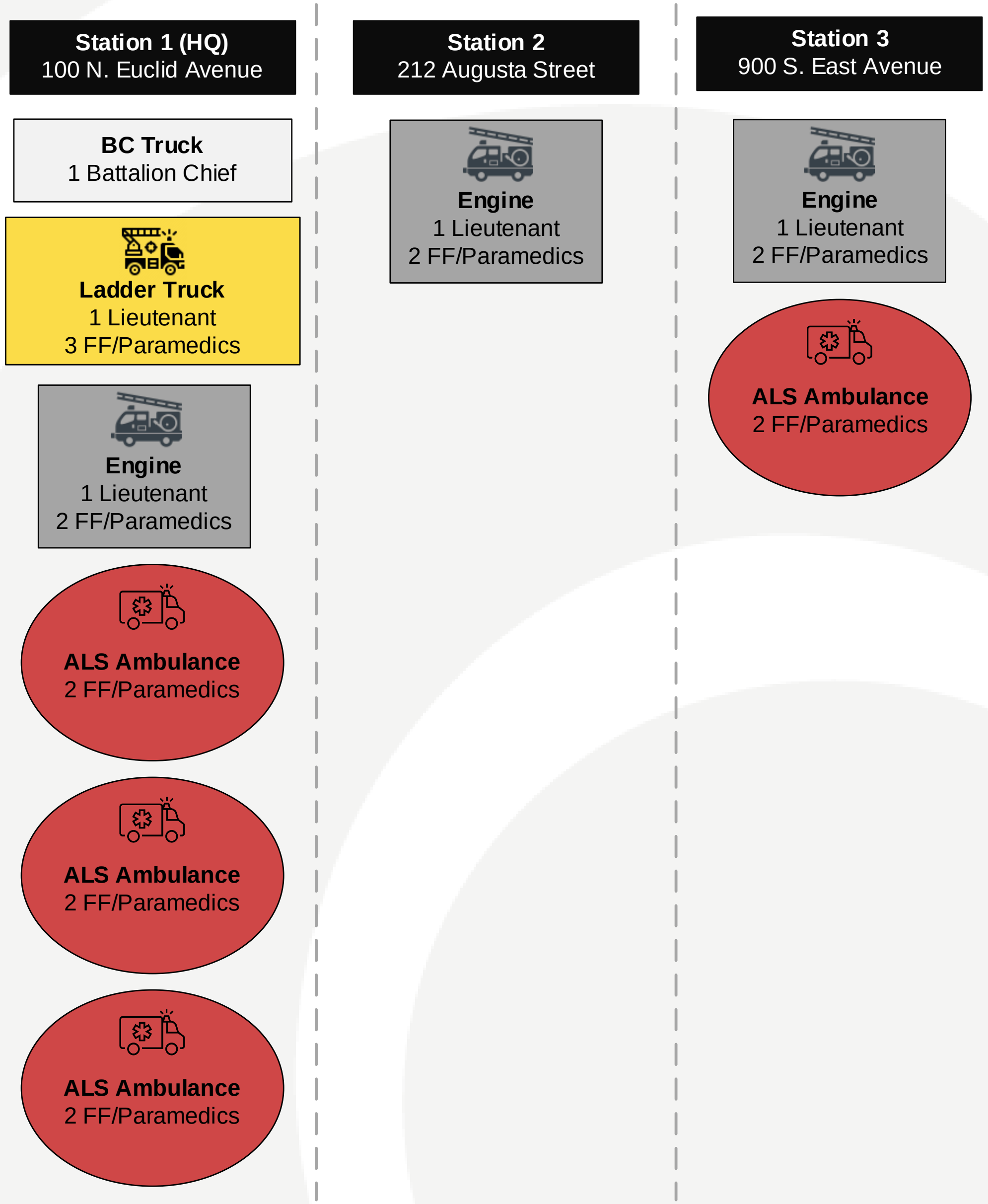
- Undertake a comprehensive community risk assessment
- Continue to expand and support ECHO
- Explore ways to expand public education

Revenues and Expenditures

- Monitor workers’ comp cost and invest in injury illness and prevention program
- Consider revenue enhancements such as fees for non-emergency calls to facilities and development impact fees
- Create a grants strategy for the fire department

Department Staffing





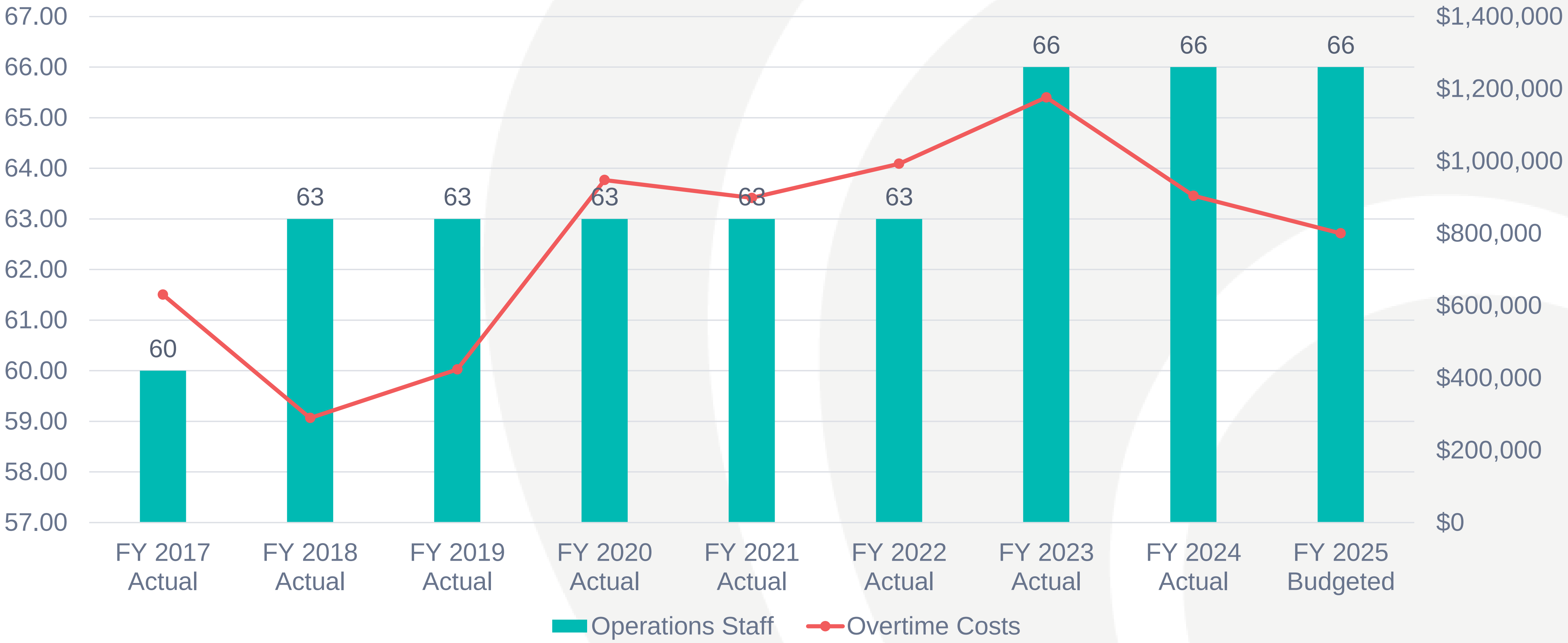
Occurs when all 22 sworn personnel are on duty

Historical Fire Department Staffing

Positions	FY 2017 Actual	FY 2018 Actual	FY 2019 Actual	FY 2020 Actual	FY 2021 Actual	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Budgeted	FY 2025 Budgeted
Administration FTE									
Fire Chief	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Deputy Fire Chief – EMS and Infectious Diseases	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Deputy Fire Chief – Operations	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Intern		0.25	0.25	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fire Marshal	-	-	-	-	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Fire Inspector (2 civilian part-time)	-	-	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Office Coordinator	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Administration Total	**4.00**	**4.25**	**5.25**	**5.00**	**6.00**	**6.00**	**6.00**	**6.00**	**6.00**
Operations FTE									
Battalion Chief	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Lieutenant	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	12.00
Firefighter/Paramedic	45.00	48.00	48.00	48.00	48.00	48.00	51.00	51.00	51.00
Operations Total	**60.00**	**63.00**	**63.00**	**63.00**	**63.00**	**63.00**	**66.00**	**66.00**	**66.00**
Grand Total Fire	**64.00**	**67.25**	**68.25**	**68.00**	**69.00**	**69.00**	**72.00**	**72.00**	**72.00**

Source: Village-adopted budget documents.

Historical Operations Staff and Overtime Costs



Source: Village-adopted budget documents; FY 2017 overtime data not available.

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Calls for Service

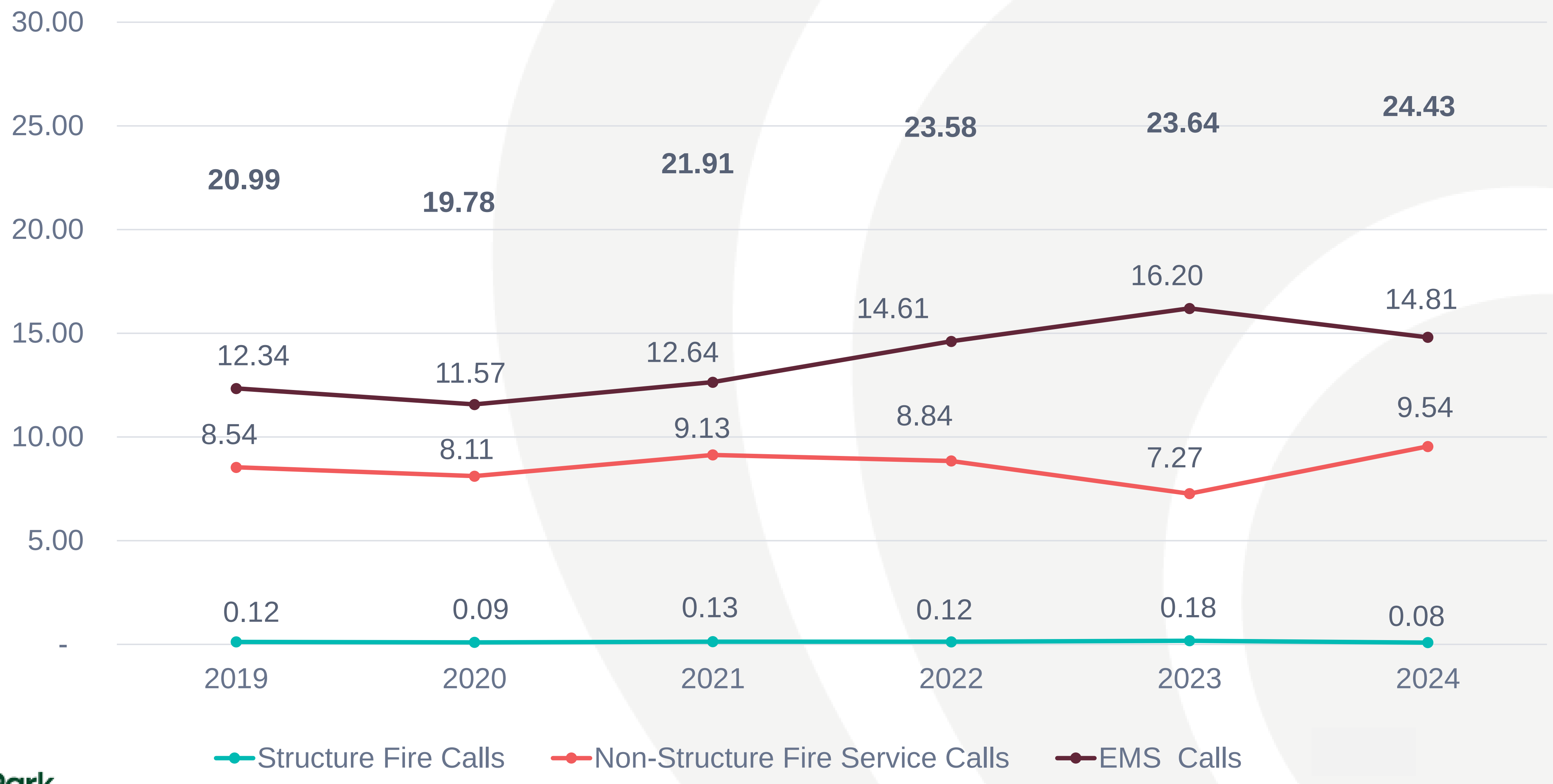
Annual Calls for Service

Year	Structure Fire Calls	Service Calls	EMS Calls	Total
2019	42	3,116	4,504	**7,662**
2020	34	2,961	4,223	**7,218**
2021	47	3,334	4,615	**7,996**
2022	45	3,228	5,333	**8,606**
2023	64	2,652	5,913	**8,629**
2024	30	3,483	5,405	**8,918**

Average Daily Calls for Service

Year	Structure Fire Calls	Service Calls	EMS Calls	Total
2019	0.12	8.54	2.34	**20.99**
2020	0.09	8.11	11.57	**19.78**
2021	0.13	9.13	12.64	**21.91**
2022	0.12	8.84	14.61	**23.58**
2023	0.18	7.27	16.20	**23.64**
2024	0.08	9.54	14.81	**24.43**

Average Daily Calls for Service



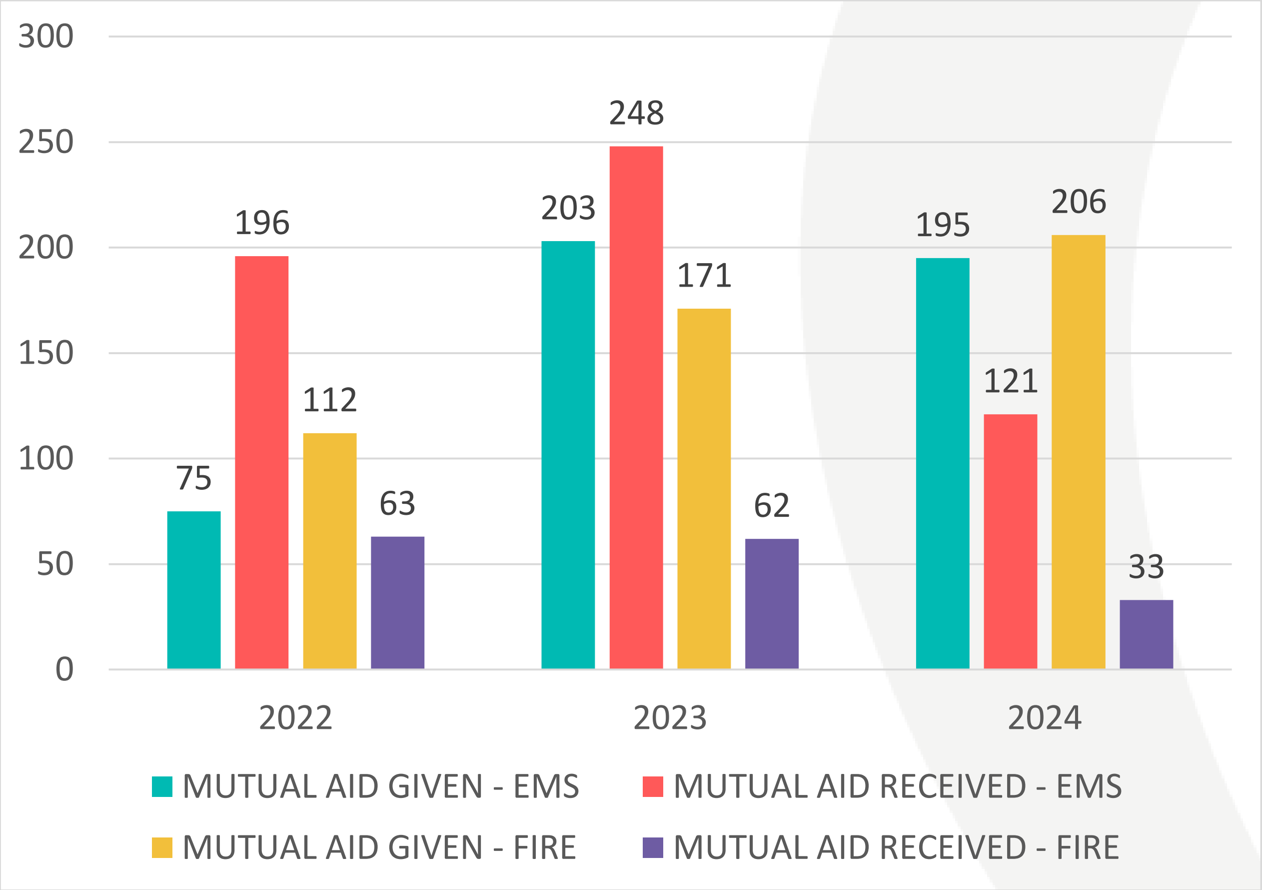
Response Times

Percentage of Response Times Under Six Minutes

Year	Month											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
2017	94%	93%	94%	91%	92%	91%	92%	94%	94%	94%	94%	95%
2018	95%	94%	93%	94%	90%	92%	93%	92%	93%	96%	92%	95%
2019	93%	93%	95%	93%	91%	92%	92%	94%	95%	94%	90%	93%
2020	91%	93%	93%	95%	95%	94%	93%	93%	94%	92%	93%	95%
2021	92%	87%	89%	93%	92%	92%	92%	92%	90%	93%	94%	90%
2022	93%	90%	91%	94%	94%	97%	81%	79%	91%	94%	95%	94%
2023	95%	93%	89%	89%	88%	87%	88%	88%	95%	92%	96%	96%
2024	93%	93%	92%	92%	87%	95%	88%	94%	95%	96%	96%	97%

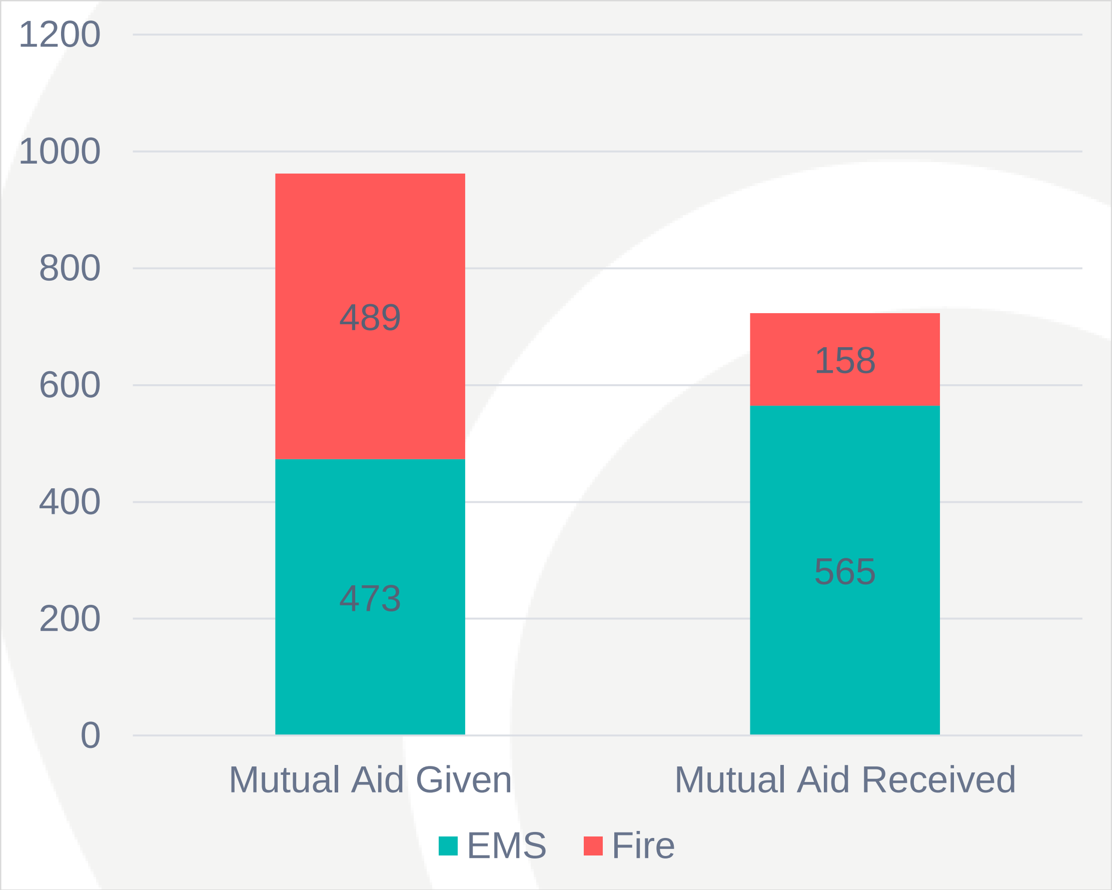
Mutual Aid

EMS and Fire MA Given and Received



Total MA Given and Received

(CY 2022 – 2024)



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Draft Implementation Action Plan

- Incorporates each recommendation in the project report
- Guides implementation and prioritizes recommendations
- Identifies suggested implementation steps, priority level, and responsibility of action

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation Steps	Priority	Person Responsible	Comments
1					

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Key Recommendations Recap

- Continue to maintain the 16-person minimum staffing level.
- Hire a full-time training officer position.
- Calculate UHUs for ambulance and fire apparatus and compare to utilization standards.
- Review recruitment operations related to
  - Diversity
  - Background/screening checks
  - Firefighter training
- Assess the need for the fourth ambulance after gathering additional years of service call data.
- Explore funding opportunities and staffing requirements for a two-person squad vehicle.

Comments and Questions

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Thank you

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