

Management Study

Goffstown Fire Department



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Executive Summary:

This assessment/study was conducted by reviewing the Goffstown Fire Department organizational structure, standard operating procedures, position descriptions, budgets, response statistics, current operational practices and previously drafted reports on staffing and service levels.

The process of this assessment is an opportunity to look at the way the fire department is conducting business and to measure the effectiveness of the organization against national best practices and standards. The goal is to report to the community the levels of services provided by the department and whether these levels of services are adequate for the community needs/desires. It is also a goal to determine whether the fire department is meeting the goals commensurate with today's emergency services responsibilities.

The assessment/study was supplemented by interviews with the Town Administrator, members of the Board of Selectmen, fulltime staff and part-time staff. Information was also received by a questionnaire completed by fulltime and part-time staff. Much of the following information has been provided over the years in previous department studies along with staffing proposals.

There was great cooperation from all facets of the community from the Board of Selectmen to the Town Administrator to all members of the Goffstown Fire Department. The community is fortunate to have a dedicated group of emergency responders who make up the Goffstown Fire Department. Although there has been turmoil within the department, all members continue to provide a high level of service to the community.

The most significant issues within the department as determined by the interviews and questionnaire are:

- a lack of leadership (not due to the caliber of the interim fire chief, but to the hesitancy to move forward due to the feeling of no support)

- lack of communication within the organization at all levels and outside the organization with elected officials and Town Administration, which has led to a feeling of non-support of the fire department.
- A mistrust between all parties has developed due to;
 - the communication issues,
 - the sudden exit of the previous fire chief,
 - proposal to change to a Public Safety organization,
 - significant change within the department (interim fire chief, operating procedures, certification requirements)
 - the defeat of the 24/7 staffing proposal
 - lack of a collective bargaining agreement with the Professional Firefighters of Goffstown.

The current administration of the fire department is looking for direction from town administration. They are hesitant to move forward due to the feeling of non-support and criticism of the department.

The previous fire chief has been listed as a cause of many of the issues. Research into the changes made indicate that the previous chief was advancing the department forward while increasing the professionalism of fulltime and part-time staff to meet the increasing demands for service. Change is difficult and, if not presented appropriately or phased in gradually, is hard to accept. It appears that the direction of the department was appropriate, but the way the plan was presented was deemed as a hard-lined take it or leave it attitude. This type of presentation is generally met with resistance. One thing was clear, the members of the Goffstown Fire Department are “starving” for some positive feedback and support from the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator. Collectively, the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator and fire administration must agree upon a clear direction for the department to move toward.

Scope & Methodology:

The Goffstown Board of Selectmen engaged the services of the Local Government

Center to conduct a study/assessment of the Goffstown Fire Department to include:

- A. Complete review of current fire department policies, procedures, levels of services, individual divisions (training, fire prevention).
- B. Complete review of any previous studies done on the fire department by inside or outside sources to include the previous fire chief and the recent recommendation to change to a public safety organization.
- C. Interview the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen to determine their thoughts on what levels of services they wish the Town to provide through their Fire Department.
- D. Interview selected full-time and call fire department staff to include the interim fire chief, training captain, head of fire prevention, president of the local IAFF and call officers.
- E. Prepare an overview of the community and a historical progression of the fire department to date.
- F. Compare of the Goffstown Fire Department to the fire departments in similar sized communities in NH in regard to the size of the department, staffing levels, equipment, apparatus, levels of services provided, budget, community make-up, tax base, etc.
- G. Recommend specific ways to improve the Fire Department services in a cost effective manner.
- H. Recommend ways to improve morale within the Fire Department.
- I. Review apparatus and facility needs and make recommendations for the Fire Department.
- J. Initiate discussion and outline a Strategic Plan for the Goffstown Fire Department.

Risk Management Representative Ronald P. O'Keefe over the course of five weeks conducted the interviews, reviewed fire department operations and reviewed provided information from the fire department and Town Administrator to complete this study/assessment.

Fire Department History/Background:

The Goffstown Fire Department like many fire departments in the country evolved from an all-volunteer organization with the tradition of “neighbors protecting neighbors”. With the growth and evolution of the community today’s Goffstown Fire Department has evolved into a “Combination” organization (fulltime and part-time) of highly trained, skilled men and women responding to a wide variety of emergencies and providing a varied degree of services while preserving the “neighbors protecting neighbors” tradition.

The better-prepared fire department a community has, the more vibrant the community will remain. Look at any critical piece of property within your community and determine the impacts if it were destroyed by fire. Look at your town offices, large commercial property, and historic or significant structure. Losing any one of those could place a community into trouble.

The fire service must constantly re-examine its role in society. 50 years ago, the primary role was fire suppression. In the 1970’s Emergency Medical Services was added. The 1980’s brought hazardous materials response and most recently have added natural disaster/emergency management and homeland security to a fire departments repertoire.

Issues:

- Level of Service: Needed and currently provided. What are the community’s needs?
- What is the current situation- low morale- lack of support above the level of fire chief.
- Staffing- 24/7 or daytime with F/T staff and nights/weekends with P/T staff.
- What are the emergency response trends in Goffstown?
- Is there a core: Mission-Value-Vision?
- What critical roles does the FD play into the community- Fire/EMS/HazMat/Emerg Mgt/Homeland Security
- Non Critical Roles- service calls, support to other depts.
- Fire Prevention/Pub Ed. Keep runs/losses/incidents down to keep costs down
- Apparatus- current and future

The benefits of conducting an evaluation of the fire department are to:

1. Promote excellence within the organization
2. Encourage improvement of services as the assessment continues
3. Provide assurances to the community and the members of the department that defined missions, goals and performance objectives exist.
4. Provide a detailed summary of the existing services provided to the community
5. Identify strengths and weaknesses within the organization
6. Make recommendations to address the deficiencies found
7. Improve communications both internally and externally
8. Initiate the process to develop a Strategic Plan for the organization
9. Improve morale and instill pride in the department.

Divisions of the Goffstown Fire Department:

Fire Administration Division is staffed by a permanent Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief and Secretary whose duties are:

- Strategic Planning
- Budget / Capital planning development and overview
- Standard Operating Procedure/General Order Development Administration & Enforcement
- Statistical Development
- Clerical Activities
- Assignment of Programs to Fire Prevention, Training, EMS and Operations Divisions

Fire Prevention Division is staffed by a permanent Lieutenant whose duties are:

- Plans review
- Fire and Life Safety Inspections
- Public Education
- Fire Investigation

- Juvenile Fire Setter Intervention Program
- Fire and Life Safety permits
- Blasting Permits

Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Division is staffed by a permanent Captain (who shares duties as the Training Officer of the department) and a part-time EMS

Administrative Assistant whose duties are:

- Emergency Medical Services Training
- Community EMS Education
- EMS Report Review

Training Division is staffed by a permanent Captain (who shares duties with the EMS Division) whose duties are:

- Fire and Rescue Training
- Community Education
- Grant Writing
- Department Safety Program
- Department Physical Fitness Program

Operations Division is staffed by two permanent Lieutenants, six part-time/Call officer positions (Captains and Lieutenants), nine permanent firefighter positions, thirty-one part-time Call firefighters, nine part-time EMS personnel and three per diem part-time firefighter positions who work out of three fire stations. The duties of the Operations Division are:

- Fire Response
- EMS Response
- Hazardous Materials Response
- Rescue Response
- Service Call Response (lock outs, odor investigations)
- Public Education and Fire Station Tours
- Fire Permits
- In Service Fire Inspections

Apparatus:

This author personally reviewed all apparatus. In addition, several reports and documents were evaluated including the Goffstown Fire Department’s 1997 and 2006 Apparatus Replacement/Capital Improvement Plans. The 1997 plan encompassed 25 years while the 2006 encompassed twelve years. Presently, Engine 4 and Hose 1 are slated for body upgrades, which will enlarge Engine 4’s body to allow for more hose capacity and compartment space. Engine 4’s existing body will be placed on Hose 1 to create a “rescue/pumper”. The oldest piece of fire apparatus in service is a 1982 quint (ladder/engine).

Normal life expectancy of fire apparatus varies from community to community. In a large urban environment, fire apparatus life expectancy could be as low as 7-10 years. In a community the size of Goffstown, fire apparatus life expectancy falls in line with accepted national standards of 20 years for engines and ladders while tankers and hose tenders may last 25-30 years depending on use. In some cases the practice of placing aging fire apparatus in less busy stations reduces repair costs and may extend lifespan.

Recommendations:

In reviewing the 2006 CIP Fire Apparatus Replacement Program, it was noted that payment for replacement apparatus is done in two or three year periods. The community may wish to explore bonding or lease/purchase programs over a longer period of 5-10 years to reduce the financial impact. Lease/purchase of fire apparatus can be an alternative to out right purchase. Depreciation accrue to the actual, commercial owner of the apparatus, while the fire department realizes savings in overall life-cycle costs

The current fire apparatus replacement program is as follows:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
L-1	Tank-5		Amb-1	Eng-5		Eng-1					Eng-4
Amb-2											
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026					
					Eng-6						
					Hose-1						

The current CIP has several replacements occurring over the next six years. Keep in mind that engines and ladders will require a refurbishment around the mid-point of their life expectancy. Engine -5 and Tank-5 may be able to be combined into an engine/tanker with 2,500 gallons of water**. It is recommended that the new fire chief evaluate the apparatus to determine future needs of the community.

A typical long-term replacement program would look like this:

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
L-1			Amb-1	Eng/ Tank-5**				Eng-1			
Amb-2				Combine into one unit							
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026					
Eng-4					Eng-6 Hose-1						

Some apparatus replacement has been pushed out an additional year or two. It may require an earlier replacement with the goal to spread large apparatus purchases out over a more routine program of 5+/- years per replacement.

*For apparatus to provide safe and dependable operation for this life span, a refurbishment is usually required somewhere around or slightly past the mid-point life span. These refurbishments can cost as much as 30% +/- of the original apparatus purchase price

** This would require a simultaneous upgrade to Station 17 to accommodate the larger apparatus.

Facilities

A thorough review was conducted at all three fire department facilities. As stated in the October 2003 Goffstown Fire Department Review & Planning Committee report, "all three fire stations were built to accommodate fire apparatus of their time. Unfortunately fire apparatus of today are larger to the extent of not having all of our fire apparatus fit into all GFD stations. GFD stations are not designed to house the administrative offices and ambulances. All available space is being utilized to capacity. In some cases there are areas being used for purposes that are prohibited by life safety and national codes. There

are no overnight accommodations at any of the three stations and living areas are lacking". The report further states " Because of restricted space, some apparatus in recent times has been built to fit the space". Consider this, fire apparatus are being designed to fit into the existing fire facilities and not designed to meet the emergency response needs of the community! Hundreds of thousands of dollars are being spent on fire apparatus that may not meet the existing and future fire protection needs of Goffstown.

Station 17, located in East Goffstown is undersized for today's fire apparatus, has no living quarters and a small office area. This fire station may be somewhat adequate for a call force station where members respond to take a piece of fire apparatus to an emergency, but most all other functions must be done at another station.

The facility has no fire separation between the office/living area and the apparatus storage bays. This is in violation of the National Fire Protection Association Life Safety Code and presents a hazard to the occupants. The apparatus bay vehicle exhaust system is old technology has been shown to not be effective in venting vehicle exhaust which contains toxic and carcinogenic particulates. Should the time or need arise to provide 24/7 coverage in this area, this station does not meet the current safety and space needs.

Station 18, the first municipal station, was constructed on Church Street with an unknown original construction date. The current Church Street facility was constructed around 1959 according to reports and information provided. Station 18 houses the department's administration and fire prevention divisions. The facility is woefully inadequate to accommodate the needs of today's fire service. The public has access to overhearing information being discussed that could be confidential. Files, desks and other areas must be locked to prohibit access by non-authorized staff and/or the public.

Station 19 the Pinardville fire station offers the most alternatives to renovate and meet the needs of the community. It has a large assembly area on the second floor that is used often for training and meetings. This area could be subdivided to accommodate sleeping areas and some office space.

There are significant Life Safety Code issues within this facility. Presently, EMS part-time staff work overnight and sleep at this facility. There is no fire separation between the apparatus storage area and the sleeping area. There is no hardwired/interconnected smoke alarm protection in the sleeping area. No carbon monoxide alarms were noticed.

This second floor area also has enough square footage to accommodate a large number of people for a class or function. With no fire separation between the hazardous apparatus storage area and the type of construction (Type III, non-combustible outer walls and non-fire rated interior walls), a code compliant fire separation or fire sprinkler system is necessary. According to staff, this issue was noted in an inspection conducted by the State Fire Marshal's Office in 2006. Failure to comply and make changes presents serious liability to the Town of Goffstown.

Recommendations:

All three fire stations are in need of immediate upgrades to meet fire and life safety codes. Upgrades are also needed to provide a more conducive work environment meeting the needs of today's fire/rescue services. Before 24/7 coverage can effectively and safely be considered, significant upgrades must be done. Prior to any investment into upgrades, it is recommended that a formal evaluation be made to the concept of a central fire station so located that it may cover the village and Pinardville meeting the four minute response time of the first arriving engine company and eight minute response time of a full first alarm assignment as recommended by the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710, for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, 2004 Edition. By conducting a formal evaluation for fire station locations, the community may realize a cost savings by needing two fire stations rather than three.

In order to meet safety standards for personnel, Pinardville and Church Street fire stations must be upgraded or added on to provide either office space or living/sleeping space. A short-term cost effective alternative to upgrading existing facilities is to consider temporary buildings such as those used at schools. These can provide temporary office or living space at Station 18, Church Street.

Reducing the size of the assembly space, converting this space to living quarters and/or office space while providing adequate fire detection and separation would provide the ability for short-term capability to operate 24/7 from at Station 19, Pinardville.

Consideration should be given to hiring a formal engineering consultant to evaluate the community for the best locations of fire stations. It may be possible to construct a "centralized" fire headquarters, designed to meet current and future needs where the community could be served by fewer stations with a realized cost savings. Three areas have already been given an initial review, the current site of the Public Works Department, the area opposite of the Villa on Mast Road and county property in the area of the Police Department.

Initial review of all three of these locations appear viable for a centralized location of a fire headquarters that can access Goffstown Village, Pinardville and East Goffstown with acceptable response time.

Standard Operating Procedures:

All organizations require a set of rules to govern and provide guidance to its members. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are a tool to communicate with members of the department in order to provide consistent operations, let them know what is expected of them, outline minimum standards and criteria and eliminate surprises. SOP's are essential for management of the organization. Consistent operations minimize risk and are paramount for safe and efficient emergency and non-emergency operations. Established procedures and rules allow members to make quick decisions based upon accepted standards with predictable outcomes.

A review of the departments Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) and the town's rules and regulations was conducted. The town's rules and regulations were in good order and covered the necessary issues from discipline to sexual harassment. The fire department's

SOP's were also in good order and appeared to cover most functions of the fire department.

Recommendations: Some SOP's were lengthy. Some information may be better formatted as a training bulletin and not a procedure. The SOP's evaluated followed accepted fire service practices and outlined minimum standards for staffing, training levels and response while outlining safety practices that follow national standards.

Staffing/Response:

The growth and evolution of the community in population, business and industry necessitates the growth and evolution of the fire department to continue the same level of service. With this growth come increases in response and increase in demands for services. This not only places a demand on the operational response division, but also fire administration, fire prevention and public education.

The community recently defeated a Town Warrant Article to fund the change to a 24/7 staffing of the fire department with five full-time firefighters per shift. The proposal would have added 10 new full-time firefighters at a gross cost of \$571,000.00 and a net increase to the fire department budget of \$230,000.00 after utilizing part/time Call firefighter wages and other associated fiscal lines.

Presently the fire department is staffed with a permanent force of ten firefighters (excludes administrative staff) Monday through Friday from 6 am to 6 pm. There is no full-time Monday-Friday nighttime coverage for fire protection. There is Emergency Medical Service coverage Monday through Sunday from 6pm to 6am, and there is fire protection coverage Saturday, Sunday and holidays from 6 am to 6-pm with either trained part-time/Call members or per diem firefighters. It was reported that there has been increases in "re-tones" for nighttime fire response along with issues in filling vacancies for night Emergency Medical Service positions as well as part-time/Call and per diem firefighter coverage. It was also reported that the per diem staff are at a minimal number and not 100% operational due to the amount of time required to learn Goffstown Fire

Department's equipment, apparatus and the community (these are members from other fire departments and not familiar with the Town of Goffstown). A significant amount of staff time is dealt with filling these shifts with qualified members.

Due to the issue with finding minimally qualified personnel to fill both the night Emergency Medical Service coverage and the weekend/holiday fire coverage there was debate during the interview process with staff that the change to a minimum training/certification requirement in order to cover a shift has created this staffing shortfall and created the need for per diem staff. Those interviewed readily admitted that fire apparatus responded at night with sometime 1 firefighter on board. This is a dangerous practice and a policy should be developed that if a minimum number of Goffstown Fire Department members do not respond, automatic aid is dispatched to the scene. In reality, the Town of Goffstown is using part-time employees to work a normal full-time type work shift.

The New Hampshire Fire Standards and Training Commission has determined minimum levels of training for fulltime firefighters working shifts. By mandating a minimum training level to work a shift, following New Hampshire Fire Standards and Training requirements the Goffstown Fire Department provides a consistently high level of service, provides a higher standard for safety and reduces liability to the community.

Looking at the current staffing of the Goffstown Fire Department it may appear to the average citizen that this is 24/7 coverage but when looked at closely, there are significantly different levels of service and protection. Daytime Monday to Friday coverage provides firefighter/EMT's with Level 2 firefighter training, EMT-Intermediate medical training and completion of the Goffstown Fire Department probationary firefighter-training program. Nighttime Monday to Sunday EMS coverage is a gamble with no guarantee of Advanced Life Support due to the qualifications of part-time staff that can be drawn from and the scheduling issues previously described.

A similar issue occurs with the part-time/per diem firefighter coverage during weekends and holidays. According to Goffstown Fire Department Standard Operating Procedures, a

part-time/Call Firefighter who wishes to work a shift has to only be FFI A&B, basic EMT, a driver of the unit/station assigned and have passed local Goffstown Fire Department training criteria. The level of training and decreased service capability is significant and is an increased liability to the community. A resident looking at an ambulance or fire apparatus arriving at their residence does not know the difference in qualifications. A lesser-trained firefighter may be placed into a compromised situation where he/she does not have the requisite training to safely operate at the emergency but under duress and standards of care is required to act.

Copies of the New Hampshire Fire Academy Firefighter Level IA, IB and Level II are included in the appendix. It takes a significant time commitment (296 hours) to meet New Hampshire's minimum levels of firefighter training for permanent personnel. New Hampshire Fire Standards and Training Level II Firefighter certification, (not required by the Goffstown Fire Department for part-time/Call members to cover a shift), includes daily fire department response issues such as how Incident Command or management is handled, Vehicle Rescue & Extrication, Flammable Liquids and Gas Fires along with Flashover Recognition and Combined Operations (how fire companies engines, ladders and rescues work collaboratively to safely mitigate the emergency). By having part-time/Call staff work shifts without this minimum training presents a safety issue to members of the department, a liability to the community and a significant difference in operations depending on the day/time of the week.

The following segments were taken from the October 2003 Goffstown Fire Department Review & Planning Committee; "Even though we don't refer to call firefighters as volunteers they are in a way volunteering to become part of this organization. After all, they generally have other careers that provide support for themselves and their families. Today a firefighter needs to be committed to the service. They need to be able to leave at a moments notice and sometimes be gone for hours. Training is continuous and an essential element of providing a safe and effective firefighter, and/or EMT. It is difficult to find the numbers of individuals to fill the ranks of the call force." (p.6) "It is our recommendation that the department should, as soon as possible, establish immediate response to emergencies 7 days per week 24 hours per day. With the growth of our

community we should no longer accept the level of risk that an all call force provides after 6PM. A consistent paramedic service needs to be a component of immediate response for medical emergencies as well". (p.12)

A significant statement was made to where the community should be headed with fire department staffing when in a June 2, 2004 report to the Board of Selectmen a group of twenty-four part-time Call firefighters stated " Many of us have come to the realization that we can no longer work our regular jobs, spend time with our families, enjoy our hobbies, complete routine tasks around our homes take a vacation, attend training, respond on calls and cover the stations." The report further states " It should be clearly understood that the issues that we are bringing forth are not a reflection upon Chief Carpentino. These issues have existed for many years in the Fire Department, but have not been addressed by prior administrations."

Recommendations:

- Develop a Short-term strategic plan to incrementally increase the permanent force to 16 to provide four shifts of four firefighters for one 24/7 station and to 24 permanent firefighters to provide two 24/7 stations
- Actively advertise and recruit community members (focus in the East Goffstown section) to maintain a level of 30+/- trained part-time/Call firefighters and firefighters/EMT's.
- Cultivate and utilize qualified members of the Call force to fill full-time vacancies
- Immediately change from only Emergency Medical Service night coverage to Fire/Emergency Medical Service trained night coverage. The community is currently compensating Emergency Medical Service personnel for this. Improved coverage for the same money can be provided.
- Re-evaluate the ability to utilize less qualified part-time/Call staff effectively. Consider that not everyone can spend 296 hours for fire training and 100+ hours for emergency medical training but can be an asset to the organization.
- Develop a Standard Operating Procedure requiring minimum safe staffing on a fire apparatus before it responds to an incident.

- Hire a part-time or work-study clerical position.
- Develop a Long-term strategic plan for additional full-time firefighters to provide 9-12 full-time firefighters per shift (four per station) while incorporating trained part-time/call to fill 3 vacancies per shift (one per station).

Since 1975, the past 5 fire chiefs have recommended the town be protected by a core of permanent firefighters working shifts 24/7 with a trained paid/call force to assist in filling shift vacancies and to provide support services during large scale or multiple operations. This is termed "Combination" type fire department and typically provides the best services in the most cost effective manner. In comparing the Goffstown Fire Department to similar sized communities in the area that provide 24/7 full-time coverage, it is noted that the current Goffstown Fire Department budget compares somewhat equally to those departments providing 24/7 coverage. The existing Goffstown Fire Department budget is adequate enough to provide 24/7 coverage from one and possibly two fire stations.

Consequently, if the above is immediately done, the part-time/Call firefighting staff would be significantly reduced to fund the additional full-time staff. Either the part-time Call pay would have to be reduced or the numbers reduced and the Call Force would be relegated to a "support service" function. This goes against the tradition and feelings of the community as evident in the recent vote.

A significant issue, which must be addressed, is response time to fire and medical emergencies. Goffstown Fire Department 2006 statistics show that daytime Monday to Friday 6AM-6PM average response* to fire and emergency medical incidents are;

Station 17- Fire 8:08 EMS 7:40
 Station 18- Fire 4:29 EMS 4:02
 Station 19- Fire 4:40 EMS 4:34

Night response are;

Station 17- Fire 13:33 EMS 10:46
 Station 18- Fire 11:01 EMS 9:59
 Station 19- Fire 6:33 EMS 4:27

* Response Time = time dispatched to time at scene

** Due to the limitations of the fire department's computer program, data was not available to determine which stations fire apparatus arrived on scene first.

To better understand the benefits of these figures, a fire doubles in size every minute and in a cardiac arrest situation, clinical death occurs at 6 minutes and biological death occurs at 8 minutes. Looking at these statistics, there is an increased chance of surviving the incident with the daytime average response time. The advantage of night Emergency Medical Service coverage from Station 19 can be seen. There is a significant difference with the night and weekend response times when there is less Emergency Medical Service coverage (from one station only) and fire coverage is done utilizing the paid/call force.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the community provide 24/7 full-time coverage by initiating a hiring process and staffing plan as determined by the new fire chief which would initially staff one to two stations, Station 19, Pinardville or/or Station 18, Church Street (see sample plans below) with a combination of full-time firefighters and trained part-time/Call members. By having full-time and part-time members work together, will help to build trust, mend relations and provide cost effective 24/7 fire and EMS coverage to a growing community. * Overtime for full-time staff may be required if part-time/Call staff are not available.

The recent reports on 24/7 coverage looked at staffing only one fire station, either Station 19, Pinardville or Station 18, Church Street. This does provide around-the-clock 24/7 coverage with full-time staff and will decrease some response times but will increase others. Note that collective bargaining will be required with the professional firefighters.

Sample Shift Staffing One Station:

Stations 18 or 19-

- Shift staffing of 4-5, 24/7 per shift.
- 1 full-time lieutenant/EMT, 2-3 full-time firefighter/EMT-I or Paramedic, 1 part-time/Call firefighter if budget allows.

- Maintain a minimum of a full-time officer and 2 full-time EMT's with 1 advanced life support EMT at all times.
- Utilize trained part-time/Call firefighters FF2/EMT & Driver/Operator to cover one full-time firefighter vacancy. By requiring a minimum level of certification, will reduce community risk, keep a minimum level of service and provide incentive to part-time/Call members to attain this level of certification.

Station Staffing = maximum of 5 staff, minimum of 4 staff in a combination of:

- 1 Full-time officer, Lieutenant/EMT
- 3 Full-time firefighter/EMT-I (2 driver/operators) fill one vacancy with a part-time/Call firefighter FFII/EMT
- 1 Part-time/Call firefighters (minimum FF IA & IB trained if budget allows)

Sample Shift Staffing Two Stations:

Stations 18 & 19-

- Shift staffing of 3-5 per station or 6 -10 on duty 24/7 per shift.
- 1 full-time lieutenant/EMT, 2 full-time firefighter/EMT-I or Paramedic, 1 part-time/Call firefighters if budget allows.
- Maintain a minimum of a full-time officer and 2 full-time firefighter/EMT's with 1 advanced life support EMT at all times per station.
- Utilize trained part-time/Call firefighters FF2/EMT & Driver/Operator to cover one full-time firefighter vacancy per station. By requiring a minimum level of certification, will reduce community risk, keep a minimum level of service and provide incentive to part-time/Call members to attain this level of certification.

Each Station = maximum of 4 staff/minimum of 3 staff in a combination of:

- 1 Full-time officer, Lieutenant/EMT
- 2 Full-time firefighter/EMT-I (1 driver/operator) fill one vacancy with a part-time/Call firefighter FFII/EMT
- 1 Part-time/Call firefighters (minimum FF IA & IB trained) if budget allows

Station 17: If Budget allows, it is recommended to initially staff this station during peak response times as determined by annual statistics with eventual migration to 24/7 coverage:

- 3 part-time/Call firefighters
 - 1 officer, Captain or Lieutenant,
 - 1 FF II/EMT, 1 FF IA&B with at least 1 who is a qualified driver/operator. *This allows for immediate response to both fire/EMS calls EMS transport with advanced life support would be provided by either Station 18 or Station 19 staff.*

Note: although Station 17 has the longest response times, it is the least busy station. With the staffing of Stations 18 and 19, reduced response times in this area will be realized.

The National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710 recommends staffing of 4 firefighters per engine and ladder-company. The Goffstown Fire Department should strive to meet this standard.

Staffing/Budget Comparison- Goffstown FD vs. Similar Size

NH Communities:

Much of the following information has been presented in previous reports (2003 Goffstown Fire Department Review & Planning Committee, 2004 Goffstown Fire Department 24 Hour Staffing Plan Options Report and the 2006 Full-Time and Combination Fire Departments in New Hampshire Providing Immediate Coverage Report by Bruce Kling).

This information presented was taken from the 2006 Wage, Salary & Benefit Survey for Municipalities, a report completed by the New Hampshire Local Government Center. The Municipal Employment Data (p.9) breaks municipalities into population size categories. Only two sections will be used, populations of 15,000-24,999 and populations of 10,000- 14,999. The Town of Goffstown falls into the first category with a population of 17,804. In comparing Goffstown to most similar sized communities it is noted that it is somewhat unique when examining staffing for fire and Emergency Medical Services. When compared to all eight municipalities in this category, Goffstown is the only community that does not provide 24/7 fire and EMS services.

The following data from the 2006 New Hampshire Local Government Center Wage, Salary & Benefit Survey for Municipalities provides a comparison:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u># Fire Stations</u>	<u>24/7 Staffing #</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Goffstown	17,804 pop	3	N/A	\$2.26 mil
Bedford	20,738	1	5 per shift	\$2.38 mil
Hooksett	13,240	2	6 per shift	\$2.08 mil
Pelham	12,485	1	4 per shift	\$1.26 mil
Milford	14,860	1	N/A	\$.404mil
Windham	12,565	1	4 per shift	\$2.03 mil

Only the Town of Milford, with 3,000 less population, does not provide 24/7 permanent fire/EMS coverage. Of the 21 municipalities with populations between 10,000 and 24,999 only four (Goffstown 17,804, Milford 14,860, Amherst 11,527 and Raymond 10,639) do not provide full-time 24/7 fire and EMS coverage.

Strategic Planning:

The fire chief is responsible for the strategic vision of the department. They must work in cooperation with all facets of the department and community to create a compelling plan for the fire department. A fire department that does not change becomes stagnant, lowers morale and stifles employees. The goal is to design a strategic plan, which maps out the future direction of the fire department in identifying services and needs of the community. The fire department must identify the type of environment they operate in and determine how they are to achieve goals and objectives collectively as a team, ensuring the welfare of the customers they serve. Planning is a continuous process. The challenge is to educate department members and the public on why the change is necessary and involve department members and the community in embracing and implementing the change. The key is to incorporate change methodically with true purpose, planning and especially with foresight. It should be the goal to create an organization that is receptive to change. The fire service overall must develop into a proactive agency rather than a reactive one if they are to maintain themselves on the leading edge.

The new fire chief should be tasked with assembling a planning group to identify strategic issues while developing a well balanced short-term 1-3 year and long term 4-10 year plan that includes a staffing plan, levels of service, apparatus replacement program, and facilities renovations with the investigation into a centrally located fire headquarters.

A model Strategic Plan should include:

- Mission Statement with a department slogan
- Vision Statement
- Fire Department Values and Ethics Statement
- Department Strengths & Weaknesses
- List of Strategic Issues

Population Growth

Levels of Service per Division (prevention training etc)

Staffing Plan- Short & Long Term

Facilities Plan

Under each category should be defined goals, objectives and work plans to obtain these.

Cost Saving Measures/Recommendations:

- Replace Ladder 1 and Ladder 6 with one aerial or tower unit. This results in one less unit to purchase and maintain.
- Conduct an internal ISO analysis of the department and community and prepare for an ISO visit/evaluation to potentially reduce the ISO rating of the community. This will not reduce the budget, but may reduce the cost of insurance to property owners.
- Following the apparatus replacement program, replace Engine 5 and Tank 5 with one Engine/Tanker with 2000-2500 gallons of water.
- Maintain a minimum staffing of permanent firefighters (4-6) and utilize trained part-time Call firefighters to maintain shift staffing of (6-8). The utilization of part-time/Call firefighters reduces costs in benefits.
- Submit Safer grant applications for staffing to reduce short-term costs

- Investigate combining the Fire Prevention Bureau with the Town Building/Code Inspection department to streamline inspection/permit services.
- Evaluate the pay scale for part-time/Call positions. Consider one pay level for Capt, one for Lieutenant, one for those who meet the minimum training levels to cover shifts and one for all other positions. Compare full-time vs. part-time wage scales.

Conclusion:

- Hire a Fire Chief with the vision/leadership and communications capabilities necessary to fit the Town of Goffstown. Support from town administration (BOS & TA) to move the department forward is crucial.
- Finalize a collective bargaining agreement between the Goffstown Professional Firefighters and the Town.
- Incorporate the Call/Part-time members into department training and operations. Provide department-wide training in conjunction with a social event to generate camaraderie among all members of the department.
- Reinforce that everyone is a “Member” of the Goffstown Fire Department both permanent and part-time/Call staff.
- Improve communications within the organization and with town administration.
- Conduct community outreach/public relations to educate the community on the needs of the Goffstown Fire Department.
- Develop a short-term strategic plan 1-4 years that addresses the 24/7 issue to include a staffing plan that effectively meshes the FT & Call members to provide 24/7 coverage of fire and Advanced Life Support Emergency Medical Service response.
- Conduct a preliminary analysis of the Goffstown Fire Department to determine areas that have improved and areas that can improve to reduce the ISO rating from a 5/9 to a minimum of a 5 and potentially a 4.

References:

Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines, John lee Cook Jr., PennWell Publishing, NJ, 1998

Chief Fire Officers Desk Reference, John M. Buckman III, Jones & Bartlett Publishers, Boston, 2006

Wage, Salary & Benefits Survey, 2006, New Hampshire Local Government Center

National Fire Protection Association 1710 Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments, 2004 Edition

National Fire Protection Association 1201 Standard for Providing Emergency Services to the Public, 2004 Edition

Firefighter IA

NFPA 1001, 2002 Edition
84 Hours

New Hampshire
Division of Fire Standards & Training

Course Description:	1. Emergency First Care	8 hours
	2. Personal Protective Equipment	4 hours
	3. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus	16 hours
	4. Building Search & Rescue	4 hours
	5. Firefighter Orientation & Safety	4 hours
	6. Fire Behavior	4 hours
	7. Ropes & Knots	8 hours
	8. Forcible Entry	8 hours
	9. Fire Department Communications & Fire Prevention & Public Education	4 hours
	10. Salvage/Overhaul	4 hours
	11. Fire Cause I & II	4 hours
	12. Basic Wildland Firefighting	<u>16 hours</u>
	Total Hours	84 hours

Recommended Prerequisites: None

Recommended Order of Delivery: Firefighter IA should be scheduled in the order listed above in order to meet appropriate safety prerequisites. Hazardous Materials Operations and Basic Wildland Firefighting can be scheduled at any time within the Firefighter I Course.

Firefighter IB

NFPA 1001, 2002 Edition
108 Hours

New Hampshire
Division of Fire Standards & Training

Course Description:	1.	Hazardous Materials Operations	24 hours
	2.	Building Construction	8 hours
	3.	Fire Extinguishers	4 hours
	4.	Ladders	12 hours
	5.	Water Supply I	4 hours
	6.	Sprinklers	4 hours
	7.	Fire Hose I	20 hours
	8.	Fire Streams	8 hours
	9.	Ventilation	8 hours
	10.	Fire Control I	<u>16 hours</u>
		Total Hours	108 hours

Recommended Prerequisites: Firefighter IA

Recommended Order of Delivery: Firefighter IB should be scheduled in the order listed above in order to meet appropriate safety prerequisites. Hazardous Materials Operations can be scheduled at any time within the Firefighter I Course.

*CPR certification must be obtained before Firefighter I certification can be granted.

(American Red Cross or American Heart Association, certification must include training for Adult, Child & Infant CPR)

It may be necessary to include a CPR class for students without this certification. This can be done in either FFIA or FFIB modules.

Firefighter II

NFPA 1001, 2002 Edition
104 Hours

New Hampshire
Division of Fire Standards & Training

Course Description:	1. Incident Command System	16 hours
	2. Vehicle Rescue & Extrication <i>Scene Lighting, Jacking & Cribbing</i>	16 hours
	3. NH Basic Rescue Skills <i>Special Rescue Situations Review</i>	16 hours
	4. Water Supply II & Hose II	4 hours
	5. Foam Fire Streams	8 hours
	6. Fire Control II <i>Flammable Liquids & Gases (16 hours)</i> <i>Combined Operations (12 hours)</i>	28 hours
	7. Fire Detection, Alarm & Suppression Systems and Pre-Incident Survey Inspections	4 hours
	8. F. D. Communications II <i>Radio Comm. & Incident Reports</i>	4 hours
	9. Flashover Recognition & Simulator	<u>8 hours</u>
	Total Hours	104 hours



NEW HAMPSHIRE

Local Government Center

Employee/Volunteer Questionnaire

Goffstown Fire Department Service Evaluation

Use additional paper for your responses

1. List the strengths of the GFD

2. List the weaknesses of the GFD

3. What do feel is being done correctly at the GFD

4. List the top 3 issues you feel the GDF is facing today and provide your solutions to the issues.

5. On a scale from 1-10 with 1= low and 10= high, what level is your morale with the department?

6. Do you feel you or the department is doing everything you/it can to show the taxpayers the worth of the GFD? If not, why?

7. Realistically, what do you feel could be done in the next month to improve morale?

COV

Town of

Goffstown,

New Hampshire

24 / 7 Fire EMS Committee

Interim Report

November 27, 2006

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1. The Committee

The Board of Selectmen established this committee to respond to the charge of Article 28 from the 2005 Annual Town Meeting.

"Shall the Town direct the Board of Selectmen to prepare and present a plan that proposes 24-hour Fire and EMS staffing of at least one (1) of the fire stations seven (7) days per week? This plan shall include the use of a system that utilizes full-time and call force employees working a regular work schedule not to exceed 45 hours per week. The proposed plan shall be all-inclusive and be presented as part of the Town's 2006 Budget process. The proposal shall have an effective date of July 1, 2006 as the start date of this staffing system."
(Obviously the year would change to 2007 throughout this article.)

The committee began with stakeholder meetings of volunteer participants brainstorming issues to respond to the charge of the above-cited article. The Budget Committee & CIP / Planning Board group met on October 16, 2006 at Mountain View Middle School. The Full-time Fire Department employees met on October 17, 2006 at Goffstown High School. The EMT's, dispatchers and call firefighters met on October 24, 2006 at Mountain View Middle School. Lastly, the residents group met on October 26 at Mountain View Middle School. Thom Linehan and Dan Reidy, both from UNH Cooperative Extension, facilitated these meetings.

Each stakeholder's group elected two members to be participants in the 24 / 7 Fire EMS Committee. This group consisted of Sue Tremblay and Fred Plett representing CIP / Planning; Ed Hannigan and David Shaughnessy representing EMT's; Gail Labrecque and Felix Pelchat representing residents; Eric Geissenhainer and Steve Fournier representing the budget committee; Mark Germana and Roger Beaudoin representing call firefighters; Bill Connor and Patrick Laforge representing full-time firefighters; and Teri Gage and Michelle Provencher representing dispatchers. David Shaughnessy subsequently resigned, and the Committee accepted his resignation at our meeting of November 16, 2006.

The committee first met on Thursday, November 2, 2006 at Mountain View Middle School. The group elected Michelle Provencher and Felix Pelchat as co-chairs of the group. Teri Gage was elected secretary. Subsequent meetings were held each Monday during the month of November in the Mildred Stark Room at Town Hall and each Thursday at Station 19. Each meeting started at 6:30 p.m. All meetings were open to the public.

2. Interim Recommendations

The 24 / 7 Fire EMS Committee recommend to the Selectmen:

2.1. Schedule

Replace the work schedule of full time firefighters from the current 6 AM to 6 PM, 7 day a week schedule, to a 4 shift schedule covering 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. Maintenance of the current schedule is very inefficient in providing 24-hour coverage. It is clear that labor negotiations need to take place to make this happen.

1 The precise form of the 4-shift rotation is a matter of negotiation with significant
2 input from a new fire administration. It would entail rotation of shifts on a schedule
3 involving all full time firefighters / EMT personnel.

4 2.2. Additional Full Time Personnel

5 Hire 10 additional Firefighter / EMT personnel such that one station shall be staffed
6 with a core of 5 full time Firefighter / EMT personnel 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
7 The 10 additional personnel, plus the current 10, will result in a complement of 20
8 full time personnel, operating 5 per shift, over 4 shifts.

9 This recommendation does not do away with the need for a call force by any
10 means. The call force would be needed to augment full time personnel. Further, it
11 is recommended that a 6th position at the station chosen for the full time personnel
12 be staffed by a call force member, which is already in the budget. Coverage for
13 vacations, sick time and other absences of the full time personnel would also be
14 filled with call force personnel.

15 The net annualized cost of this recommendation, as shown on Attachment A to this
16 interim report, is approximately \$230,000 per year, using 2007 budget offsets. At
17 an 8¢ per \$100,000 impact on the tax rate (a 2006 Budget Committee calculation),
18 this results in an 18.4¢ per \$1,000 tax valuation, or a cost of \$46 per year on a
19 typical home with a \$250,000 evaluation.

20 The location of the full time force is to be determined by the new Fire Chief. The
21 intent of the 24 / 7 Fire EMS Committee is to have one station covered 24 / 7 with a
22 5-person core of full time personnel.

23 Of the 5-person full time force on each shift, each should be cross-trained to be
24 both Firefighter and EMT capable. Further, one of the 5 should be a fully trained
25 and certified paramedic.

26 Call force personnel may be trained either for EMS or Firefighter duty, but should be
27 encouraged to cross train.

28 2.3. Impact of a lesser number of full time personnel

29 Although the number of additional personnel recommended, 10, could possibly be
30 pared back by relying more on call force personnel, such an approach would not
31 guarantee 24 / 7 coverage – the lower the number of full time personnel, the more
32 the difficulty in maintaining 24 / 7 coverage. This is especially true given our
33 recommendation to go to a 4-shift rotating schedule, where the number of full-time
34 personnel on each shift day and night should be the same. In light of the small
35 incremental cost of hiring the full slate of 10 additional full-time personnel, the
36 Committee strongly recommends that all 10 be hired.

1 2.4. Ramping

2 Of course, it is expected that the hiring of the 10 personnel may take some time,
3 and may be on a ramping schedule. While this is anticipated, phasing in the hire of
4 these new personnel over the course of more than a year is not recommended. So
5 some coverage by call force may be inevitable in the short run. This would also
6 ramp the costs of hiring some, so that the first year tax impact may be less than the
7 Committee is recommending.

8 The committee recommends a warrant article to cover the fully annualized cost of
9 the built out force of 20 full-time personnel so that the voters are fully aware of the
10 cost of implementation that will be required.

11 2.5. Central Station

12 The Committee strongly recommends planning for a Central Station. When such a
13 Central Station exists, the five-person core should be transferred to this station.

14 Discussions took place among committee members about Pinardville, Station 19,
15 and / or Church Street, Station 18. Station 19 has more room, but most of the call
16 force comes to Station 19 as well. Thus, more equipment could be mustered if the
17 personnel were located at Station 18. The Chief could choose to split personnel to
18 partly cover Stations 18 and 19. Neither Station 18 nor Station 19 is ideal.

19 The Committee recommends authorization of monies for planning and engineering
20 of a Central Station. It is noted that the Capital Improvements Committee had in its
21 recommendations \$75,000 for just such a purpose. The Committee recommends
22 that the Selectmen reinstate this item in light of the 24 / 7 Fire EMS Committee
23 recommendations for additional personnel, and in light of the fact that new tower or
24 ladder trucks will not fit any of the existing stations.

25 Many towns have used consultants to analyze town fire and EMS functions. The
26 Committee is aware that the Selectmen have considered doing so for Goffstown.
27 We recommend that the Selectmen do so.

28 2.6. Repair / Refurbishment of the Existing Stations

29 It may very well be the case that repair and refurbishment will be needed to put the
30 existing stations in working order. The 24 / 7 Fire EMS Committee did not have
31 sufficient time to delve into such details in time for this interim report, given the short
32 time horizon we have had since our formation (we first met on November 2, 2006).
33 All stations are undersized for apparatus likely to be needed in the future.

34 Construction of a central station will substantially mitigate the amount of work
35 needed at the other stations. This is so because the other stations will become
36 auxiliary in nature.

1 2.7. Additional Revenue Sources must be considered

2 The impact of the 24 / 7 Fire EMS Committee recommendations on taxpayers could
3 be mitigated by consideration of non-tax revenue sources. These could include, but
4 not be limited to, imposition of fees for ambulance non-emergency transfers; fire
5 prevention service fees, and fees for false alarms and other nuisance calls. Also,
6 impact fees may be applied to construction of new facilities, and refurbishment to
7 the extent that station refurbishment increases the capacity of the Fire Department
8 to respond to emergencies.

9 Furthermore, SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response) grants
10 must be applied for. This is precisely the point of the SAFER grants, to assist towns
11 in achieving 24 hour staffing to provide adequate protection from fire and fire-related
12 hazards.

13 2.8. Privatization of the EMS Functions

14 It is recommended that the Town of Goffstown retain EMS services as a municipally
15 staffed function. We recommend against privatization. EMS services are self-
16 sustaining, because the revenues cover the costs. The Committee
17 recommends to provide at least one paramedic per shift and to increase the
18 training of other shift personnel which will raise the classification of such fees, thus
19 providing additional revenue.

20 By retaining the EMS functions as a municipally staffed operation, greater
21 coordination between Fire and EMS functions are possible than when the EMS
22 services are privatized.

23 2.9. Call Force Recruitment and Development

24 It is recommended that a new Fire Chief be hired at least partially based on his or
25 her skills in integrating full time staff with call force personnel, and that the Chief be
26 charged with vigorous recruitment, retention and development of such personnel.

27 It is the belief of the Fire / EMS Committee that the recommendation for a rotating
28 shift schedule for full time firefighters will allow training schedules during night shifts
29 where both full time and call force personnel may participate. This may result in
30 greater bonding and force cohesion. Furthermore, the overall impact of the Fire /
31 EMS Committee recommendations should improve the outlook of all Firefighter /
32 EMS personnel, as they see essential town Fire and EMS services get the attention
33 that they have long needed and deserved.

1 **3. Longer Term Recommendations**

2 3.1. Continuation of the 24 / 7 Fire / EMS Committee

3 Although no committee should be perpetuated beyond its need, the Committee
4 does see a need for its existence beyond this interim recommendation to the
5 Selectmen.

6 The Committee should work with any Interim Chief and the new permanent Chief to
7 implement these recommendations.

8 3.2. Town Growth and Long term apparatus study

9 Items for future consideration:

- 10 • Long-term population growth trends for the town, as a whole and how it might
11 affect different areas of town;
- 12 • Fire and EMS apparatus needs,
- 13 • Additional revenue sources, and
- 14 • Longer-term station needs.

Town of Goffstown
 24 / 7 Fire EMS Committee
 Interim Report
 Appendix A

Town of Goffstown
24/7 Fire / EMS Committee
Cost of 24/7 Implementation

Hire 10 new Fire / EMS Personnel:

Cost per Firefighter, Mid-range	\$54,000
Startup Costs per employee:	<u>3,100</u>
Total first year cost	\$57,100

10 Employee Cost:

\$571,000 \$571,000

Offsets (From Budget Numbers)

	2006 Budget	2007 Budget
20-42201-41180 Fire - EMS Call Wages - Duty	\$130,000	\$130,000
20-42201-44150 Fire - EMS Clothing and Uniform	2,980	3,000
20-42201-44330 Fire - EMS Physical Examinations	3,200	6,500
20-42201-44340 Fire - EMS Hep B Protection	1,550	700
20-42201-47950 Fire - EMS Other Supplies - Turnouts	7,570	7,570
20-42201-50245 Fire - EMS Radios	1,700	1,700
20-42201-42200 Fire / EMS FICA	8,060	8,060
20-42201-42250 Fire / EMS Medicare	1,885	1,885
20-42201-42600 Fire / EMS Unemployment Compensation	40	40
20-42201-42700 Fire / EMS Workers Compensation	4,000	4,000
10-42201-41170 Fire Operations - Call FF Wages - Incidents and Training	8,000	8000
10-42201-41180 Fire Operations - Call FF Wages - Duty	77,865	150,000
10-42201-44150 Fire Operations - Clothing and Uniforms	1,800	1,800
10-42201-47900 Fire Operations - SCBA Equipment and Repair	500	500
10-42201-47950 Fire Operations - Other Supplies - Turnouts	2,000	2,000
10-42201-42200 Fire Operations - FICA	4,828	9,300
10-42201-42250 Fire Operations - Medicare	1,129	2,175
10-42201-42600 Fire Operations - Unemployment Compensation	1	2
10-42201-42700 Fire Operations - Workers Compensation Premiums	<u>2,232</u>	<u>4,300</u>
Total Offsets:	<u>\$259,340</u>	<u>\$341,532</u>

Net Cost, 10 new Firefighters:

\$311,660	\$229,468
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Cost per \$1,000 of Evaluation:

0.249	0.184
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Cost per Typical Home assessed at \$250,000:

\$ 62	\$ 46
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Respectfully submitted to the Selectmen of the Town of Goffstown on the 27th
Day of November, 2006 by the members of the 24/7 Fire EMS Committee:

<u>Name</u>	<u>24/7 Fire EMS Committee Office</u>	<u>Stakeholder Group</u>	<u>Signature</u>
Felix Pelchat	Co-Chair	Residents	_____
Michelle Provencher	Co-Chair	Dispatchers	_____
Teri Gage	Secretary	Dispatchers	
Steve Fournier		Budget	
Eric Geissenhainer		Budget	
Roger Beaudoin		Call Firefighters	
Mark Germana		Call Firefighters	
Fred Plett		CIP / Planning	
Sue Tremblay		CIP / Planning	
Ed Hannigan		EMTs	
Bill Connor		Full Time Firefighters	
Patrick Laforge		Full Time Firefighters	
Gail Labrecque		Residents	

Goffstown Fire Department Review & Planning Committee

October - 2003

The Board of Selectmen established a committee to do a comprehensive review of the Goffstown Fire Department. The goal of the committee is to study the current services and make recommendations for future planning purposes. The committee is diverse in membership. Edward Hunter retired Fire Chief was appointed chairman. Also serving as members are Chief Paul Nault, Call Deputy Chief Gossett McRae, Lt. Bill Connor, Selectman Bob Wheeler, Selectman Hank Boyle, Goffstown Citizens Bob Dunn and Jeremy Dupuis.

The first meeting was held on 4/23/03 and it was decided to meet twice per month on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. It was decided that we would invite experts as guests to answer questions the committee members may have regarding the topics of discussion.

The committee wanted to hear from similar departments that have experienced growth of their communities and increases in calls for service. Four communities were invited to a session to tell of how they grew to meet the demand and community expectation. The Fire Chiefs from Bedford, Londonderry, Hudson and Merrimack were gracious enough to attend. They shared many aspects of their departments. As their communities grew there came a need for more personnel, new stations, billing for service, and added service. At the same time, all four departments had to maintain a strong call force of personnel and shared their methods to do that.

The committee felt it would be helpful to compare Goffstown with other communities. A survey was conducted of communities in NH. The focus was on towns with similar populations but some neighboring communities were included. The results are on an attached spreadsheet as appendix A.

During the course of the meetings the following topics were discussed at length. Our determinations and recommendations are given in the summary section of this report.

GFD General History: A history of the GFD was shared among the group. This was done in both written and verbal form as recalled by committee members. The committee felt it was important to review the past and show how we got to where we are today. A look at where the Fire Department has been gave a sense of perspective especially for those reviewing the department for the first time.

Stations were built in locations volunteer firefighters lived and worked. The first municipal fire station was built on Church St. The date of the original station was unknown. However the current fire station was constructed in 1961. It was shared with the Police Dept. until sometime in the late 60's

During the 1950's a group of volunteers built a station on Mast Rd. near the current Pinardville Station. This station was rebuilt by the Town of Goffstown in the mid 1960's.

In the mid 1970's the East Goffstown Civic Assoc. was formed with the objective of building a fire station in East Goffstown. The station was built by volunteers and became the third municipal fire station in 1975.

There were no fulltime staff and only volunteer firefighters provided fire suppression service. At some point in time (nearly 50 years ago) a fulltime fire Chief was hired. He was the only fulltime person until the early 1970's. At that time, principally because fewer volunteer firefighters were available during the day, two fulltime firefighters were hired. One had duty on Church St. and the other in Pinardville.

The following charts describe the growth of the department in terms of fulltime staff and number of calls.

Fulltime Staffing of the Goffstown Fire Department
 (Information based on a survey of "Town Reports" for the years listed)

Year	Fulltime Employees	Fulltime Staff & Firefighter Positions
6	7	Fire Chief, Firefighters (6)
7	10	Fire Chief, Firefighters (6), Training /EMS / Fire Prevention Captain, Station Lieutenant, Station Captain
8	10	Fire Chief, Deputy Chief (fire prevention), Firefighters (6), Training / EMS Captain, Station Captain,
9	13	Fire Chief, Deputy Chief (fire prevention), Secretary, Firefighters (6), Senior Career Firefighters (2), Training / EMS Captain, Station Captain
5	13	Fire Chief, Deputy Chief (fire prevention), Secretary, Firefighters (6), Senior Career Firefighters (2), Training / EMS Captain, Station Captain
6	13	Fire Chief, Facilities Captain, Secretary, Firefighters (5), Senior Career Firefighters (2), Training Captain, Station Captain (EMS), Fire Prevention Lieutenant
7	13	Fire Chief, Facilities Captain, Secretary, Firefighters (5), Senior Career Firefighters (2), Training Captain, Station Captain (EMS), Fire Prevention Lieutenant
8	13	Fire Chief, Facilities Captain, Secretary, Firefighters (5), Senior Career Firefighters (2), Training Captain, Station Captain (EMS), Fire Prevention Lieutenant
9	13	Fire Chief, Facilities Captain, Secretary, Firefighters (5), Senior Career Firefighters (1), Training / EMS Captain, Station Lieutenants (2), Fire Prevention Lieutenant
3	14	Fire Chief, Secretary, Firefighters (5), Senior Career Firefighters (3), Training / EMS Captain, Station Lieutenants (2), Fire Prevention Lieutenant

GFD Alarm & Call History
(As documented by "Town Reports")

	2002	2001	1996	1995	1994	1989	1987	1983	1979	1966
Fire related	109	84	250	260	245					
Rescue / EMS	964	800	659	672	609					
Hazardous Condition	102	69	129	71	63					
Service Calls	149	142	149	93	100					
Good Intent	120	117	52	56	26					
False Alarms	205	176	164	151	170					
Severe Weather	3	5	2	7	4					
Misc / not classified	3	5	22	24	28					
Annual total	1637	1398	1427	1334	1245	1133	1050	678	366	99
inspections	1036						599	112		35

Current Status: The committee reviewed the current condition of the department and how it serves the public. There are fourteen fulltime positions. This includes the department chief, a training officer, and fire prevention officer. The remaining personnel are split to three stations for daytime coverage only. The stations are staffed by fulltime personnel Monday thru Friday 6AM – 6PM. On Saturdays, Sundays and holidays stations are staffed by part-time firefighters from 7:30AM – 5:00PM.

After these duty hours no one is in the stations. Personnel respond from their homes to the stations where they respond on emergency vehicles. The majority of these firefighters are referred to as “call firefighters”. Each firefighter is issued a radio pager that is kept on their person or in their home. When fire apparatus or ambulances are dispatched the alarm is sounded on the audible voice pager by emergency dispatchers at the police department.

The department provides services during most any emergency occurring in Town. Fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials and rescues are the major types of emergencies. In addition, fire loss is kept in check by aggressive fire and safety code enforcement as well as public education.

Fire Suppression: Fires are responded to differently depending on its location and type. Apparatus closest to the alarm are dispatched. If the fire is outside the fire hydrant districts all three stations may be dispatched to provide for water needs.

Fulltime firefighters are required to be certified level 2 firefighters by the State of NH. In addition fulltime firefighters must be trained as drivers of all apparatus and EMT's. Call firefighters are required to pass a GFD recruit firefighter program, with encouragement to become certified and most do become certified to the first level.

One fire officer is always on call from their home. Their responsibility is to respond to a variety of emergencies and public needs. They issue fire permits and answer questions of the public or the dispatchers. No one else is specifically on duty from their home to

respond to emergencies. If you are available, you respond. The numbers of those that respond vary with the time of day, day of the week and other variables. The number of call firefighters assigned to a station varies. Ideally, there would be 15 assigned to East Goffstown and 30 at each of the other two stations. In reality the numbers are considerably less. When a fire is reported after duty hours it is these numbers of personnel Goffstown relies on. It is reported that personnel shortages during an alarm are not uncommon. On occasion delays in response occur and not all dispatched apparatus responds.

Even though we don't refer to call firefighters as volunteers they are in a way volunteering to become part of this organization. After all, they generally have other careers that provide support for themselves and their families. Today a firefighter needs to be committed to the service. They need to be able to leave other obligations on a moments notice and sometimes be gone for hours. Training is continuous and an essential element of providing a safe and effective firefighter, and /or EMT. It is difficult to find the numbers of individuals to fill the ranks of the call force. Goffstown is not alone in this position. Across the State and Nation the fire service finds it increasingly difficult to recruit and maintain call and volunteer firefighters.

Recently the National Fire Protection Association developed two standards for fire department response. One addresses fulltime departments and the other is for those that have volunteer, call or combination departments. Because they are new and in some cases difficult to fund, only a few departments are in compliance. The standard for fulltime departments is the only one that addresses the issue of response time to a fire. We did review a video that summarized the standards and the importance of having such standards.

Fire Apparatus was discussed at length, determining that the number of fire trucks is adequate. Since the mid 1970's a plan to replace fire apparatus was instituted within the capital improvement budget process. The plan is based on a 20 year replacement cycle. Since fire trucks started using diesel engines it was the plan to extend the life to as much

as thirty years with a complete apparatus refurbishment. However, refurbishment has met with mixed results and may not be an option for every apparatus. There was some concern within the committee that 20 years may be too long a period to keep a truck. With the increase in vehicle use since the 20 year plan was developed, longevity of vehicles may need to be revisited.

EMS: In 1979 the GFD was given the responsibility of emergency medical services. Goffstown Emergency Medical Services Assoc. purchased an ambulance and trained emergency medical technicians. All were trained to the basic EMT level.

Fulltime firefighter personnel staffed the ambulance during regular duty hours and volunteers responded to calls after hours and weekends. Today, two fully stocked and equipped ambulances are maintained. One is housed at the Village station and the other in Pinardville. Personnel are trained to three levels of medical service, basic, intermediate, and paramedic. The basic level is commonly referred to as BLS (basic life support) The intermediate level allows a person trained to that level to provide a limited number of advanced protocols. The paramedic level is known as ALS (advanced life support) The paramedic is trained to use a wide variety of cardiac drugs and other life saving medical protocols.

During weekday duty hours, 6AM to 6PM, fulltime staff provide emergency medical services which usually includes at least one paramedic on duty. EMTs are on duty from their homes from 6PM until 6AM. Chief Nault explained his concern and need for covering those hours. However, the committee, as well as Chief Nault is concerned for the long term effectiveness of this program. Historically it has been difficult to get and keep EMS crews for after regular duty hours.

Response time for an ambulance and crew is critical to saving lives. In most cases, if a person's heart stops, brain death after six minutes is very likely. The response time for an ambulance in Goffstown, six minutes or less varies with the time of day. During duty hours, with immediate response, an ambulance arrives 61% of the time under 6 minutes.

After hours, only 33% of the time does an ambulance arrive within the six minutes. The average response time during duty hours is 4 min.,36 seconds. After hours 8 min., 59 seconds.

Under normal and usual circumstances, when a dispatcher sends an ambulance to a call, it is expected that they will confirm a responding ambulance within six minutes. If this does not occur a second ambulance is dispatched. This delay is referred to as a "retone". The committee had concern that in May of this year there were 12 retones. In June there were 8 and July had another 11. All of these "retones" occurred at night. This meant that the six minutes had passed before an ambulance responded.

The EMS coordinator from Catholic Medical Center, Mr. Rich Delair attended a meeting to discuss today's expectation of those providing EMS. He is familiar with Goffstown as CMC is Goffstown's resource hospital. He explained that the standard today is advanced life support. Mr. Delair's recommendation was that somehow Goffstown establish a consistent ALS service.

Our survey of other departments similar to Goffstown showed that advanced life support was the standard service provided. During the week Mon. – Fri. from 6AM – 6PM there is generally one paramedic on duty in Goffstown who responds to critical calls anywhere in Town. After hours and weekends there are a few call paramedics. They may or may not be available from their home to respond.

In 2001 ambulance service in Goffstown became a fee based service. Billing for ambulance transport was instituted. A private billing company is contracted to manage the billing process. The revenues collected are used to support EMS.

Hazardous Materials: The GFD responds to hazardous materials incidents. Personnel are primarily trained to the operations level. When an incident requires more expertise a hazardous materials team is called in from Nashua FD. This is an arrangement through Souhegan Mutual Fire Aid of which Goffstown is a member. Each year an assessment is

paid to SMFAA for the availability of the team referred to as SMART, (Souhegan Mutual Aid Response Team).

Assistant Chief Roger Hatfield of Nashua attended a meeting to answer committee questions relating to hazardous materials response. Chief Hatfield explained the role of Goffstown and what to expect when the Nashua team is called for assistance. Primarily, when Nashua is called we need to provide support for their team. This includes decontamination and keeping the public safe.

Fire Prevention & Education: The increase in fire calls is disproportionate to the increase in population. This suggests that code enforcement and educating the public is an effective method of reducing fire loss and the frequency of alarms.

The resources for providing these services have been taxed in recent times to keep pace with Goffstown's growth. The fire prevention officer conducts inspections and coordinates inspection programs. He also does the clerical duties relating to all code enforcement. When there is an emergency he is expected to respond as well. In some cases he may be the only person available. This makes it difficult to keep appointments and serve the public when emergencies arise.

Facilities: All three fire stations were built to accommodate fire apparatus of their time period. Unfortunately fire apparatus of today are larger to the extent of not having all our fire apparatus fit into all GFD stations. GFD stations are not currently designed to house the administrative offices and ambulances. All available space is being utilized to capacity. In some cases there are areas being used for purposes that are prohibited by life safety and other national codes. There are no overnight accommodations at any of the three stations and living areas are lacking.

Apparatus is stacked one behind the other requiring one to be moved before the other is moved. Because of the restricted space, some apparatus in recent times has been built to fit the space. Older apparatus has routinely been rotated into secondary positions when

replaced. At the Village station this cannot happen next time the first out engine is replaced. The current frontline attack truck will not fit in the secondary position. Space constraints simply do not allow it.

The department has two rescue boats. Until recently, both hung from the ceiling joists and lowered to the apparatus below as there is no floor space available. At the Pinardville station this method continues. At the Village station due to apparatus modifications the boat no longer would pass under the overhead door as the truck exited the station. As a remedy, a wooden shed was added to the back of the station to house the boat on a trailer.

The committee was invited to listen to presentations from engineering college students who did a study of two of the stations for renovations. However unofficial these studies were, they were interesting and informative. The Pinardville station was the only one of the two stations studied, that a renovation would be feasible. The Church St. Station did not fair well and the students determined it should be rebuilt.

Municipal Alarm System: The GFD owns and operates a municipal alarm system. The system was put in place more than fifty years ago as a way to report fires. Alarm boxes were placed on street corners and buildings. With the first municipal fire station being in the village, the system only served the village area. As the Town grew the system expanded. This expansion was primarily to serve municipal buildings in Pinardville and East Goffstown.

This system currently includes three alarm circuits. These hard wire circuits serve the village area, Pinardville section and East Goffstown. All circuits report back to the dispatch center within the Police Department. Nearly 50 alarm boxes are connected to the system. The majority are servicing public and privately owned buildings. However, there are a few remaining "street boxes" that are available to the public to report a fire. Private businesses do not get charged for use of this system.

The department does not own proper equipment such as a bucket truck to service the wire installed on utility poles. Also lacking are trained technicians to make repairs. A ladder truck is used to service the system. When further repair assistance is needed a private contractor is hired from Hampton, NH or Massachusetts.

From time to time, however rarely, the system may be out of service for several hours, and signs are hung on the alarm boxes stating they are out of service. However, if an automatic detector senses fire and automatically trips an alarm box that is out of service, the signal will not be sent. The committee felt this was a huge liability for the Town.

Today, fires and other emergencies are more commonly reported by phone. Of course, more recent technology, such as cell phones, increase the ability to report a fire early. There are also other methods of reporting fires from automatic alarm systems via telephone lines. The current municipal system may not be the most reliable system available.

Public Education & Opinion: The committee discussed on several occasions what the citizens of Goffstown knew about the department and how services were provided. The general feeling was that the public is not aware of how the department works and that more attention should be given to educating the public. The members of the committee that had no ties to the department learned much from our review and voiced their concerns.

The committee has initiated a survey process with Dr. Mike Dupris of St. Anselm College. This is similar to the ongoing surveys done for the Police Department in the past. This process could provide information that will help the department serve the public.

Summary and Recommendations :

The following conclusions of the committee are intended to be conceptual in nature. Most topics were discussed in more specific terms. However, the committee felt that the detail and methods of meeting these objectives is the responsibility of the Goffstown Fire Department administration and elected officials.

It is our recommendation that the department should, as soon as possible, establish immediate response to emergencies 7 days per week 24 hours per day. With the growth of our community we should no longer except the level of risk that an all call force provides after 6PM. A consistent paramedic service needs to be a component of immediate response for medical emergencies as well.

In regards to facilities, living quarters need to be constructed to house emergency personnel. The department does not have reasonable facilities for over night station coverage. This is also an opportunity to construct a facility that will accommodate the size of today's apparatus and department administrative needs. In order to provide immediate response that serves the community as a whole, and at a reasonable cost it should be built at a geographically central location.

The three existing fire stations provide a vital role in supplying a neighborhood station and a vital pool of call firefighters in these areas. It is recommended that these stations be maintained for these very reasons.

Fire apparatus needs to be maintained for an extended period of time. Given it's cost, many years of service from a truck is expected. A plan to replace apparatus every 20 years should be maintained. It is however understood that a continual evaluation of equipment is necessary to assure safe and effective apparatus. Should a specific apparatus need replacement prior to the anticipated 20 years, the administration should propose an earlier turnover.

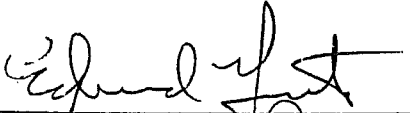
The municipally owned and operated alarm system needs attention. If the system is to continue to be utilized a plan needs to be put in place to maintain it. There are options the department should consider that will reduce current liabilities to the Town. These options include the following. Provide a budget for training and equipment to maintain the system. Abandon the system and as we know it and contract with a private company to provide a new system along with it's maintenance. Arrange for maintenance with a local resource.

It is our recommendation that the fire prevention officer be a dedicated position. This person conducts important business of the Town. Appointments need to be met and conducted as any other business would. He should be available during business hours both for the public as well as the schools.

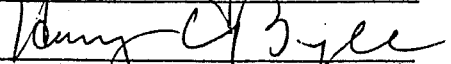
Continuing a public survey process would be beneficial. This will help get information out to the Goffstown Citizens and public opinion back to the administration.

The services of the Goffstown Fire Department have extended from fire suppression to emergency medical services, hazardous materials and code enforcement. The emergency calls for service have steadily increased from 400 in 1980 to 1600 calls in 2002; a 300% increase. The addition of personnel and the extension of duty hours has not kept pace. The duty hours for immediate responses are essentially the same as they were 25 years ago. As important, is the level of service provided. Although there has been progress in providing new levels of service, more needs to be done to keep pace with today's standards. The committee feels strongly that these recommendations are necessary and the resources to implement them should be provided.

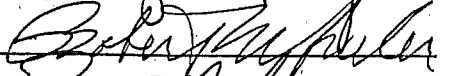
Signed: Edward Hunter, Committee Chairman




Henry Boyle, Selectmen Chairmen



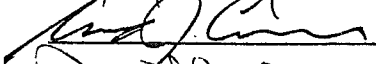
Robert Wheeler, Selectmen (Assigned to FD)



Paul Nault, Fire Chief (retired 9/30/03)




Bill Connor, Fulltime Lieutenant



Bob Dunn



Jeremy Dupuis



Gossett McRae, Deputy Chief *(resigned from the committee stating reasons
other than the work of the committee)*

NH Fire Department surveys, Appendix A

TOWN	POP.	TAX BASE	SQ.MILES	TAX RATE	EQUAL RATE	FIRE CALL	EMS CALLS
Merrimack	26000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1070	1326
Londonderry	24000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Hudson	23000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bedford	20000	1.8Bil.	32	\$19.56	72%	291	866
Laconia	17341	N/A	26	\$21.70	93%	989	1936
Goffstown	17000	649Mil	37	32.92	57.50%	370	946
Clarmont	14000	\$504 Mill	42	\$36.70	93%	278	296
Windham	13500	\$1.196Bil	27	\$18.15	81%	636	727
Durham	13000	\$389Mill	25	\$41.48	57%	995	669
Exeter	13000	\$1.1Bil	26	\$20.82	94%	1694	1328
Amherst	12521	\$1.2 Bil	34	\$20.62	94%	366	0
Somersworth	12000	\$563Mill	10	\$22.65	86%	664	337
Hooksett	11721	\$722Mill	36.3	\$25.27	70%	573	818
Franklin	8500	\$369Mil	29	\$24.70	100%	406	950
Weare	7776	\$363Mil	63	\$26.28	N/A	242	345
New Boston	4400	\$238Mil	32	\$24.75	68%	89	165
Dunbarton	2400	\$147Mil	32	\$24.78	69%	121	80

TOWN	BUDGET	# STATIONS	AMB. SER.	EMS LEVEL	STA COV.	FULLTIME FF	PAID ON CALL FF	ISC RATII
Merrimack	4.6Mil	3	Y	ALS	24Hr	42	20	N/A
Londonderry	\$3.6Mil	3	Y	ALS	24Hr	48	17	N/A
Hudson	N/A	3	Y	N/A	24Hr	44	20	N/A
Bedford	\$1.58Mil	1	Y	ALS	24 Hr	17	12	5/9
Laconia	\$2.4Mil	2	Y	ALS	24 Hr	28	8	3
Goffstown	\$1.57Mil	3	Y	BLS/ALS	12Hr	14	52/38EMS	5/9
Clarmont	\$1.3Mil	1	N	ALS	24 HR	18	20	4
Windham	\$1.4Mil	1	Y	ALS	24 HR	16	13	8
Durham	\$2.1Mil	1	N	ALS	24 HR	25	10	4/9
Exeter	\$1.8Mil	1	Y	ALS	24 HR	25	21	N/A
Amherst	\$278 K	2	N	N/A	*	2	45	9
Somersworth	\$1.1Mil	1	N	N/A	24 HR	13	15	4
Hooksett	\$1.7Mil	2	N	BLS	24 HR	29	4	4/9
Franklin	\$1.1Mil	1	Y	BLS	24 HR	13	27	4/9
Weare	\$175 K	3	Y	MIX	0	0	43	9
New Boston	\$121 K	2	Y	INT	0	0	0	N/A
Dunbarton	\$56 K	1	Y	INT	0	0	0	9

* Business
Hours