

2022 Fire Department Budget - Discussion Document

Introduction

The Alexandria Fire Department (AFD) is a full service department that provides life safety to 21,000+ residents (39,000 Summer) who live, work and play in our city.

Our motto is “Professional...Dedicated...Role Models”. We are driven by life safety, incident response and stabilization, property conservation while maintaining a strong community spirit and service. We collaborate with many partners in the community.

The Big 4 that is the cornerstone to AFD is; Do your job – Treat people right – Give all-out effort - Have an all in attitude...Be FULLY INVOLVED.

The AFD firefighters provide and protect; life safety, fire suppression, fire prevention and education, technical rescue, fire systems inspections, disaster response and mitigation, emergency management plans and procedures.

We deliver this variety of emergency services through our most valuable resource, the firefighters themselves. We continuously put forth a recruiting effort to find volunteer firefighters – this is and will be our on- going challenge in the future.

One of our strong suits is fire prevention and education throughout the community. We are committed to the safety and prevention in the community through various platforms; public speaking and community events, social media, numerous tours, visits, Safety Day Camp, Operation Graduation, Open House, Big Vehicle Day-we dare say that we impact *thousands* of people each year in some fashion.

We excel at emergency management by providing planning, training, table top discussions, exercises and LIVE drills. During the incidents we tend to establish Incident Command and Unified Command. We are strong collaborators with many community partners. The AFD station has become a hub and central training facility for Regional and Sub Regional EM training and endeavors.

PBB Inventory & Costing Estimate

Program	hrs/yr	%
Administrative		35%
Emergency Management		20%
Fire Prevention / Fire Education		20%
Community Awareness, Branding and Support		12%
Fire Incidents / Fire Trainings		7%
Fire Inspections		5%
Fire Investigations		1%
Total		100%

Based on 1.0 FTE



The following includes some of the activities within each program element noted in the PBB estimate table above:

Administration – The Fire Chief is responsible for a significant administrative workload. There are reports that need to be filed for fire calls, township fire levy calculations, and a great deal of human resources work/consultation involved with a large volunteer fire department.

Emergency Management – When disaster strikes, whether manmade or natural, the AFD Firefighters respond. The Fire Chief is the designated Emergency Management Director for the City of Alexandria that works closely with the Douglas County Emergency Management Director and other collaborative partnerships for Planning, Mitigation, Training and Exercises.

Fire Prevention / Fire Education – Fire prevention is the key to saving lives and property, Prevention / Education is the first step in AFD's commitment to saving lives and property. We make an impact by participating and holding numerous Public Education events, especially during the month of October (Fire Prevention Month)-approximately 2000 students come through the station for educational events.

Fire Incidents / Fire Training - Our vision is to be a high performance emergency response and mitigation system that meets the current and future needs of the City of Alexandria and its community members in response to all emergency situations, accidental, natural or manmade. Our mission is to serve the community and protect lives and property through the provision of professional fire and rescue services.

Our strength is in the training and preparedness that the AFD members consistently and proficiently train on.

Community Awareness, Branding and Support - This is our WHY. We choose to serve this community with compassion and genuine concern for the community in all aspects of public safety. We are committed to providing the utmost comprehensive response and customer service that we can. We are at 85+ community events; either providing education, awareness or support.

Discussion for 2022 Changes

- i. The Addition of 1.0 FTE Staff member.

Detailed Breakout Budgets (As Applicable and Beneficial to depth of conversation – New activity/changes/staffing, etc.)

101-42500-50101	Full Time Regular Employee	Amount
Deputy Emergency Management Director - FD/EM Administrative Asst. 1.0 FTE \$29.75 x 2080		\$ 61,880.
101-42210-50401 building -\$ 8000., historically have not used that.		
101-42210-50404 equipment + 6661, SCBA bottles-cycle through vs CIP this will be our 3 rd rotation		
101-42210-50447 clothing + 4000., New fire fighter's initial turnout, Class As		
Sale of Ladder 28-Glenwood-Carlos-List with Brindlee		
TOTAL		\$61,880.

BUDGET DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Additional FTE (Deputy Emergency Management Director/FD/EM Administrative Assistant):

What have you done already to alleviate/assist Admin tasks? We have enlisted and brought in Julie from the City Hall front desk on 1 - 2 days a week for 2-3 hours at a time. Julie is very organized and task driven. We were able to bring the Records and Retention up to compliance; something that hasn't been done for 30 years here. We were able to put in place processes for efficiency. The downside of this; it required me to work in tandem; which essentially took me away from my other duties that I am tasked with. At current, we have not been able to train Julie on reporting the fire reports and entering them into the Image Trend (MFIRS). We haven't been consistent: with liquor store, Covid, Vault rearranging and Document research also taking up her time. We keep in communication of what days will work. Works good and can suffice, but not my vision.

Kevin's transition to FTE split between AFD and APD-I think that this is and has been a good move for the city. Kevin strictly was tasked at 28 hrs – with the advent of adding him to the APD side-it moved him to FTE. At the front side he spends a good portion at the APD as that building was neglected and need some substantial repairs. We have a good system that allows him to work and each facility to accomplish tasks. He is not micromanaged. I sign off on his time card. For me, it is a titch more work in approving the charges to verify whether AFD, APD. (Blue paint example)

What has changed since Julie was hired as the County EM? In the time that Julie has been there, she has tackled many topics and is finding her new “normal”-this has increased the EM load on the city side in developing plans (Mobile Home Parks, Relay for Life, Special Events, Weather, etc). The city has quite a few resources, population and buildings. Each EM component has a different flavor and demographic to cover. Julie brings PIO knowledge to the EM position and EOC-Operationally and Command wise leans to AFD and APD (Law). At current, DCEM Julie does have a Deputy EM Director in Mark McCabe that assists her. The workload due to COVID with Julie and Mark has magnified this, along with the downtown fire. Currently we are working on updating the 5 year Mitigation Plan.

Duty Crew Update: Eventually, as the volunteer ranks have a hard time in recruiting volunteer firefighters, a modified duty crew will need to be researched. The average response number was 27 firefighters 5 years ago; now 24 is the average. Currently, we are on scene 39% within 320 seconds-89% with 540 seconds. Our response time is taking longer. Average is now 6 minutes 50 seconds (410 seconds). The average response has slowed down a minute in the last 5 years. The response issue is more acute on weekends when we routinely have 12-15 firefighters that do not respond (sports, family, leisure, etc). The last 4 firefighters sworn in took 2 ½ years to get, 3 (Pat Solyntjes, Scott Gronholz, Chris Eddy able to retire with full benefits in 6 months., Joe Waldorf at anytime-over 20 some years. There were 208 calls last year, and we are currently 10% ahead of last year in calls.

There is more research that has been conducted on the duty crew concept including cost estimating, discussion outlines, benefits, response models>positive and negative impacts. The average tenure for current generation is 9.76 years of service, that is down from 13 years of service from 20 years ago. Firefighting as a whole is declining nationwide in recruiting volunteers. There is an estimated loss of 5 -8 % of volunteer firefighters yearly nationwide. The current trend is departments exploring and putting on a modified full time crew. This still holds true in 2021 as we have just sworn in three firefighters (April 12, 2021).* (To get these firefighters, we had to extend the eligibility time for response to 10 minutes.) We also now have two female firefighters on the roster. As a growing city and ranked in many areas, and seeing how trends have gone in the fire industry, across the state- it's a move that will be needed as the 'volunteer approach' has been dwindling for years.

We have dual income families, we have competing priorities outside of work (sports, family, leisure, etc.) –these are some of the hurdles to enlisting volunteer firefighters.

To be honest, we're also figuring out we need to practice what we preach. We always say in the fire service and volunteering: your family comes first, your work comes second. We as a fire service may be third [or] fourth on that list.-we have seen this change coming over the last 10-15 years.

1) This has been tried before by other depts.: It has not been very successful. (gear in own vehicle)
- Self dispatching to a scene as a department/individual is not recommended.

-May have fire fighters with gear arrive on scene with no truck or equipment (happened Leaf Valley example);

-Truck response may be delayed as waiting for a full complement of firefighters.

-Cancer Mitigation: We have smoke extractors/policy to wash; covered with smoke, soot, carcinogens-off gas in vehicle; drag home to kids and breathe in more often.

-Correct: Housing choice to get on is not priority (albeit, it was my first criteria to the real estate agent in 1993)

-Space and Parking at scenes: Congestion from Personal vehicles.

-Covered by Workers Comp when pager goes off...vehicle accident, I was told when I was in a crash that the department would not cover or back me (Chief Ellingson)...is that true? Increased cost to city?

-Anticipate FF would drive faster / slower dependent on call.

2) Warehouse-2nd station with Unit 21 and spare gear.? The win would be that it would extend the bubble that way (Bloomington FD example; 4 minutes but have 6 stations throughout city). To gain 1 or 2 that live on that end of bubble-not a full truck? Not a horrible idea for Interstate rescues (day-Douglas Machine)...I don't know if the plus out weigh the costs and logistics at this time.

3) Duty Crew- I will update my numbers, etc. What would be a call number to be the catalyst-some AFD will say we don't need a DC.-fires don't justify (fire calls might not), what are we leaving on

table-inspections, Pub Ed, Medical- FD but get called for a lot of Pub Safety...everyone wants to have the coverage and have someone to call...what if can't get the people to volunteer, or don't want to pay. What is the cost?

4) 1 Large district-Alexandria FD with Garfield as Station 2, Forada Station 3 (right now they are running at 20-24 with retirements also on the horizon), LOGISTICS: Culture, identity, standardized equipment (radios, scba, LDH, Relief-AFD 8200/Garfield 1600/Forada 600), Chain of Command...at current 237 firefighters in county. (this is a multi agency, multi year discussion. Sidenote: this is similar to Automatic Aid. This has been discussed over the last few years. We have mutual aid agreements that we use. Using an Auto Aid or a MABAS (Modified Mutual Aid Box Alarm System)-AFD is in the center so we would be requested for all calls of the 11 other departments (aerial)(tactics).

5) NFPA 1710 and NFPA 1720 set response standards for Fire Departments, ISO plays into this with 360/540 sec (90%) of calls.

Regarding: APD-There is instances, but our/my preference is not to run into buildings with no fire. The door is opened and that introduces Oxygen and if in the pre growth or incipient stage can cause flash over. This is a fine line. Great resource and usually turns out ok, but there have a been a few times-I bit my tongue. Fire typically doubles in in size, intensity and degrees every minute. Historically we have 60 room/contents-structure fires a year consistently, we have 25-30 extrications yearly (golden rule is 1 hr from page to definitive care), 7-12 grass/wildland fires, 12 vehicles fires, 28% off calls are alarms (about 50)...so let's pick a number approximately 50% of time should have a "quick response".

5.5) With Covid, we had 3 AFD that work from home on computers...could they do their work at the fire station and able to respond (given a stipend of sorts)..3 doesn't fill a truck., could cause a riff of why does he get and not me.

6) Do you wear earrings? Are you going to be here for 20 years?>my 2 interview questions. At current, we have robust screening committee that does a really good job-Tom Jacobson has reviewed/modified the process, the legality of questions asked. I don't think the Screening committee at this point in time is the "glitch"-it is the **number** of the applications that are coming in and/or some application "quirks". We currently have no applications on a wait list.

Agreed that if ever moved to a Duty Crew or otherwise-a different hiring committee would be put in place.

Info for the NFPA standards:

City population per sq mile – 14,156. / 17.8= 795.3 residents per square mile

County only population per sq mile – 24,064 / 117.2 = 205

City/County population per sq mile – 38,220/117.2 = 326.11

A very rudimentary proposal (in its infancy): Over 3 years, add 4 FTE Firefighters, 12 total over 3 years., work shift....10a -6 p x 4 days=32 hrs, 3 hours combo training with volunteers, 35-36 TL.>remaining 4 for callback, reduced overtime. (no more paying people overnight to sleep, etc as traditional models have been). Call times: 1) 4 pm 2) 12 noon 3) 2 pm 4) 6 pm 5) 7 pm
Salary: APD starting officer or market: 52,500 – 60,000 + benefits.

