

August 2018

**SUMMARY REPORT**



**NORTH ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA**

**POLICE DEPARTMENT STAFFING REVIEW  
FIRE DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE & MANAGEMENT AUDIT**

*Prepared by:*



**FITCH & ASSOCIATES, LLC**

**2901 Williamsburg Terrace #G ■ Platte City ■ Missouri ■ 64079**

**816.431.2600 ■ [www.fitchassoc.com](http://www.fitchassoc.com)**

**CONSULTANT REPORT**

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## Executive Summary

This review has found that the City is currently appropriately protected by the police and fire departments. However, certain challenges exist for both, which limit the ability for public safety services to be provided in the most effective and efficient manner. The specific findings and recommendations are incorporated here, while detailed analysis and discussion is included in other sections of this report.

### Police

**FINDING:** Current Personnel Are Insufficient to Staff Required Patrol Needs.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Fitch recommends the assignment of two additional FTEs to the Patrol function.

**FINDING:** Patrol Supervision is Insufficient.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Fitch recommends a minimum of four Sergeants be assigned to Patrol to enhance the level of direct supervision available for this basic law enforcement role.

**FINDING:** Proactive Patrol Requires More Resources – More Hours Must Be Liberated.

**RECOMMENDATION:** To ensure the capability of an effective proactive patrol function, supervisors must adjust field patrol activities to free-up more time for community engagement. The addition of 2 FTEs to patrol, as well as ensuring a supervisor is available – both of which are recommended above – provide the resources and supervisory oversight to meet this recommendation.

**FINDING:** Administrative Staffing is Greater Than Required.

**RECOMMENDATION:** It is recommended that the existing administrative sergeant be reassigned from administrative duties to road patrol in order to minimize the fiscal impact of overall staffing changes recommended here.

### Fire

**FINDING:** Increasing call demand and lower participation rates among paid on-call personnel impede the department's capability to provide current levels of service on medical first responder incidents.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The City should increase current pay rates to increase participation rates by paid on call personnel. A pay rate adjustment, for on-call and station-based shifts, should be at least 20% or greater to address the initial problem.

## **Introduction**

Fitch and Associates (*Fitch*) was engaged by the City of North St. Paul to undertake evaluations of both the Police Department and Fire Department – though the focus on each was purposefully different.

The Police Department assessment was to evaluate staffing levels, especially as related to road patrol and the ability to enhance the Department’s capability for proactive policing. This staffing study considered existing levels of demand, current budgeted and actual staffing levels and consideration of resource allocation among administration and the patrol function.

The Fire Department’s evaluation was to evaluate overall management and effectiveness of the department – largely focusing on its performance in meeting community needs for both fire and EMS services.

Recommendations for both departments are offered for City Council consideration.

## **Methodology**

From a qualitative perspective, Fitch was on-site and met directly with key stakeholders from both departments, as well as the city manager's office. There was also an opportunity to directly observe operations of both agencies.

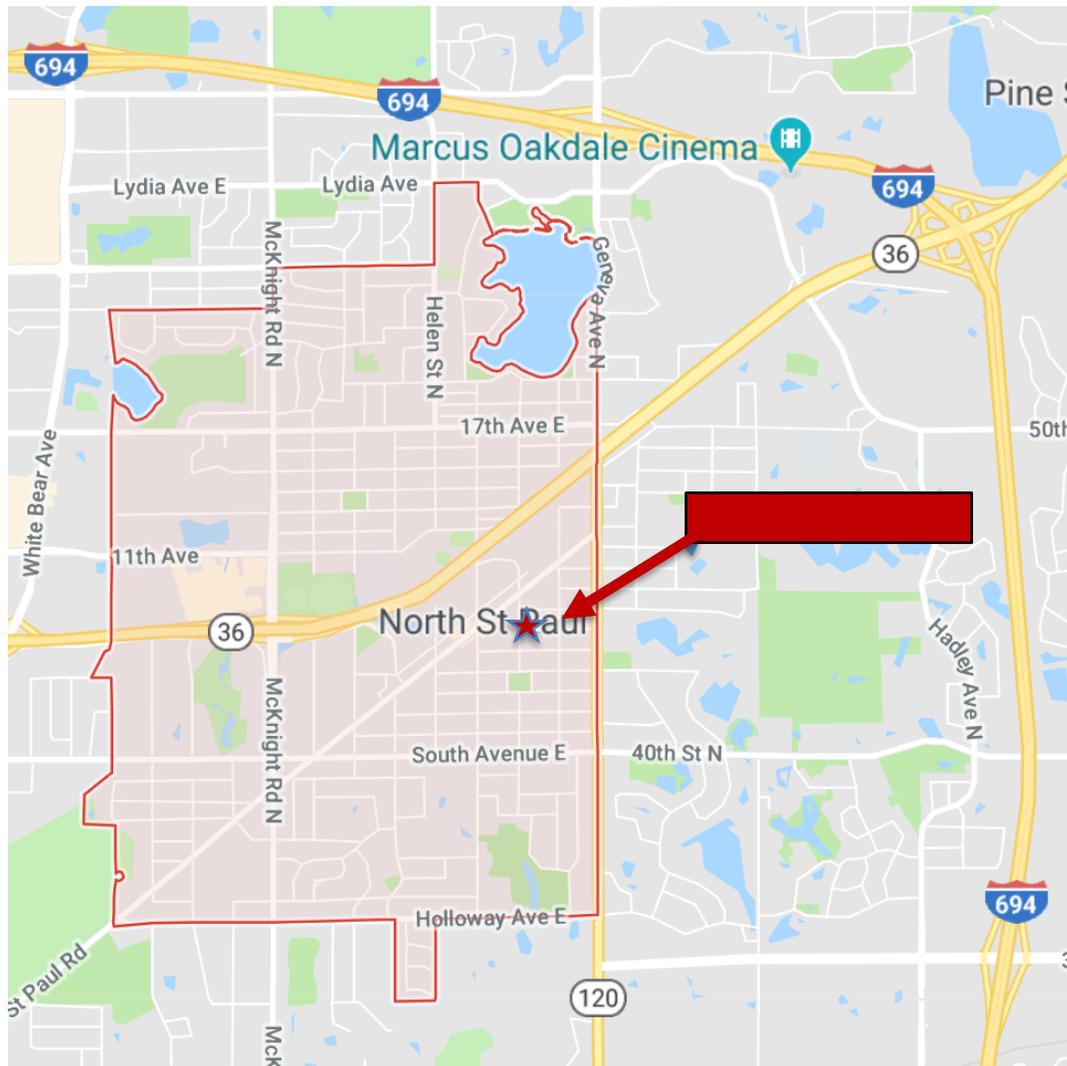
From a quantitative perspective, CAD data was obtained from Ramsey County Emergency Communications which dispatches for both the Police and Fire Departments. Data was received for 3 years – 2015 thru 2017. More detailed analysis on system performance utilized the relevant 2017 calendar year data.

The City provided significant information as requested by Fitch. This included staffing schedules, hours worked, etc. for both Police and Fire, as well as NFIRS fire reports for the Fire Department. As analysis was undertaken, and questions arose, city staff was responsive in clarifying or providing additional information.

## Community Characteristics

The City of North St. Paul Minnesota is located within the greater Minneapolis – St. Paul metropolitan area. With an estimated population of 12,444, the City encompasses 2.85 mi.<sup>2</sup> with a median household income of \$57,156.<sup>1</sup> As noted in Figure 1, the City's jurisdictional boundaries are essentially rectangular and bifurcated in the center by SR-36. With the public safety facility for both police and fire located in a generally central location which ensures major arteries for travel in all directions, response times for both agencies is quite strong.

**Figure 1: City of North St. Paul and Public Safety Facility Location**



<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau (2017). [Quick Facts for North St. Paul, Minnesota](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/northstpaulcityminnesota/PST040216). Accessed on May 24, 2018 at <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/northstpaulcityminnesota/PST040216>

## Law Enforcement / Policing Mission

Adequate and effective police services must include, at a minimum, all of the following police services:<sup>2</sup>

- Crime prevention
- Law enforcement
- Assistance to victims of crime
- Public order maintenance
- Emergency response

The problem lies in that the definition of these minimal services are strangely non-specific on what this means and how to determine the specifics, particularly in emergency response. It is set against this back drop that a fiscally responsible methodology must be established for setting appropriate workload. Uniform front-line police service, provided through the uniform patrol function, is the most vital function for all police services. It is the primary method of contact between the police officer and the community that he or she serves and a true barometer by which the effectiveness of a police service is measured.

Under the philosophy and principles embodied in contemporary criminal justice literature, front-line police service not only means reactive response to increased routine and emergency calls for service, but also includes more proactive community-based crime prevention activities, community problem identification, analysis, and the development of proposals and initiatives for problem resolution. While current literature does not provide clear indication of the appropriate target levels for the proportionality of reactive and proactive uniform patrol functions, it does expect that a police service will provide both forms of service.

It is important to understand that prolonged call response conditions adversely contribute to a deterioration of the quality of front-line service and results in delayed emergency call response, lengthy wait times, the severe reduction of the ability to perform proactive police patrol functions, cursory on-scene investigations and general poor customer service. "It's scary," said Amy McVey, an advisory neighborhood

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<sup>2</sup> Childs, P. C. (2008-2009). *Ontario police services act fully annotated*. Earls court Legal Press.

commissioner in upper Northwest. "Criminals can do a lot of damage in eight minutes. And they know they have the time. That's the scary part."<sup>3</sup>

As well, a condition of perpetual or heavily dedicated uniform call response activity does not assist individual officers in the development of intuitive investigation skills and abilities, or in performing crime prevention and problem-oriented policing initiatives. This has a direct negative effect on officer morale and on long-term capacity for officers to develop.

Aside from its being a measure of police efficiency, response time is tracked because the speed with which officers arrive can be a crucial factor in catching criminals. In some cases, quick responses can reduce the severity of injuries suffered by crime victims. Police response times also have emotional resonance in communities where stories of a long wait for the police can spread quickly and erode citizen confidence in their community's law enforcement capabilities.

Accordingly, communities must evaluate and determine their desire for proactive policing, and articulate specific performance measures that meet community expectations.

## Police Staffing

The police department has been authorized full-time equivalent of 18 sworn officers which includes the Administrative staff of Police Chief, Captain, Sergeant, Investigator and an SRO. The remaining sworn personnel are assigned to Patrol; however, the existing schedule reflects the Department is currently operating with two vacancies. While the Department's overall authorized strength has fluctuated somewhat over the past 10 years, as reflected in the Figure below, the Department's current authorization includes 4 civilian employees which brings the Department's total authorized FTEs to 22 personnel<sup>4</sup>.

**Figure 2: Police Department Budgeted Positions 2008 thru 2017**

	Sworn	Civilian
2008	18	3
2009	17	3

<sup>3</sup> McElhatton, J. (2004, May 12). Police Response time scary. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2004/may/12/20040512-102055-7787r/>.

<sup>4</sup> City of North St. Paul (2017). Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). P. 126.

	Sworn	Civilian
2010	18	3
2011	19	3
2012	19	3
2013	15	3
2014	15	3
2015	18	4
2016	17	4
2017	18	4

Patrol has the following basic schedule<sup>5</sup>. Officers work 12-hour shifts, with the basic Day Shift running from 0600 until 1800. The Night Shift runs from 1800 until 0600 the next day. For each of these shifts there are 4 officers assigned, with 2 assigned each day. The basic underlying schedule for each officer is 7 shifts over a 2-week period (Monday thru Sunday) for a total of 84 hours. Road Patrol also employs Power Shifts – with 1 officer currently assigned to the Day Power Shift from 1200 until 0000 hrs. However, by utilizing only a single officer, only 7 shifts are covered over a 14-day period. The Night Power shift runs from 1400 until 0200hrs and utilizes 2 officers to ensure coverage of at least 1 officer. This basic schedule is reflected in the Figures below.

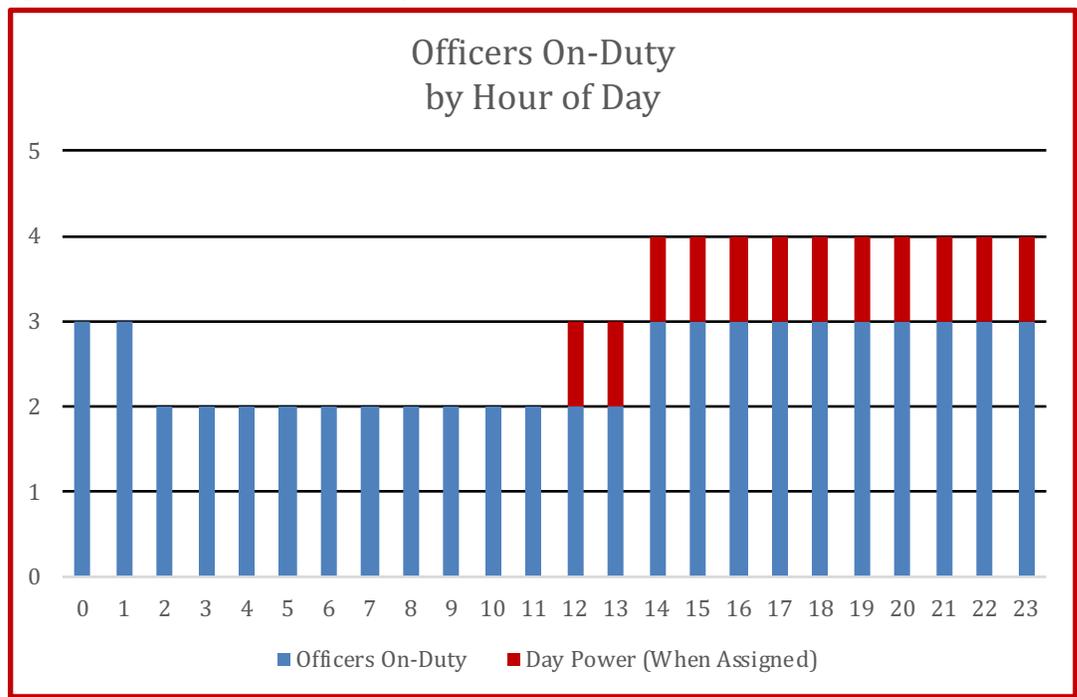
**Figure 3: Basic Patrol Schedule – Tabular Format**

Hour of Day	Day Shift	Night Shift	Night Power Shift	Typical / Base # Officers On-Duty	Day Power Shift (When Assigned)
0		2	1	3	
1		2	1	3	
2		2		2	
3		2		2	
4		2		2	
5		2		2	
6	2			2	
7	2			2	
8	2			2	
9	2			2	
10	2			2	
11	2			2	
12	2			2	1
13	2			2	1
14	2		1	3	1
15	2		1	3	1

<sup>5</sup> Derived from 2018 NSPPD Patrol Schedule Pending Report dated March 27, 2018.

Hour of Day	Day Shift	Night Shift	Night Power Shift	Typical / Base # Officers On-Duty	Day Power Shift (When Assigned)
16	2		1	3	1
17	2		1	3	1
18		2	1	3	1
19		2	1	3	1
20		2	1	3	1
21		2	1	3	1
22		2	1	3	1
23		2	1	3	1

Figure 4: Basic Patrol Schedule - Graphic



As reflected in the information above, this reflects a basic schedule that provides a total of 60 hours in patrol time over a 24-hour period minimum, or 72 hours in patrol time when the Day Power shift is staffed. On an annual basis this reflects either 21,900 of assigned patrol time or 26,280 when the Day Power shift is staffed.

**Hours of Work**

Analysis was also done for work and leave hours utilized by officers during 2017. Some employees did not work the entire year; therefore, we limited this analysis to the 14

officers who worked 2,000 or more hours during the calendar year as reported by the Department.

The figure below summarizes hours worked and various paid leaves by category. Of particular note is the capture of court time. Agencies vary on how they handle that requirement. For the City of North St. Paul, court time is done almost exclusively while officers are off-duty, and therefore captured with the overtime hours reflected below.

**Figure 5: Average Hours Worked Annually Per Officer**

	AVERAGE HOURS Per EMPLOYEE
<b>Regular Hours</b>	
Hours Worked	1,748
Training	60
Holiday	96
Vacation	101
Sick	87
Sub-Total	2,092
<b>Overtime Hours</b>	
Regular OT	54
Extra-Duty	28
Training	32
Sub-Total	114
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,206</b>

### Current Demands for Service

In 2017, the Police Department handled 8,475 incidents as reflected in the CAD data. The figure below reflects the incident type from CAD, sorted in descending order of frequency.

**Figure 6: 2017 CAD Incidents – Police**

Problem Description	Count
TRF - Traffic Stop	1,943
AMA - Assist Medical Agency	924
SUS - Suspicious Activity	514
AST - Assist Citizen	439
DOC - Disorderly Conduct	358
PCN - Previous Case Follow-Up	275
ALA - Alarm Sounding	237
WEL - Welfare Check	212
ANC - Animal Complaint	195
DOM -Domestic Fam Relationship	184

Problem Description	Count
THF - Theft	183
AFA - Assist Fire Agency	172
DSB - Disturbance Noise Comp	164
PRK - Parking Complaint	159
TSI - Traffic Safety Init	146
HRS - Harassment Report	144
911 - Investigate 911 Hangup	132
AOA - Assist Other Agency	129
APD - Accident Property Damage	127
CDP - Criminal Damage Property	115
INV - Investigate	112
EDP - Emotionally Disturb Pers	106
DGC - Dangerous Condition	101
FRD - Fraud or Forgery	87
THA - Theft From Auto	83
JUV - Juvenile Incidents	74
WAR - Warrant	73
PPV - Police Proactive Visit	69
RPR - Recovered Property	67
BRG - Burglary	66
MVT - Motor Vehicle Theft	64
NAR - Narcotics	60
CIV - Civil Problem	51
ASS - Assault	50
LOC - Lockout	50
AHR - Accident Hit and Run	48
SHP - Shoplifter	46
DKP- Drunk Person	44
MSP - Missing Person, Juvenile	44
FGT - Fight	42
ADM - Administrative Detail	41
VOP - Prot Order Violation	34
SIP - Suicide In Progress	33
DIS - Dispute Disagreement	30
ODE - Off Duty Employment	30
AWI - Accident With Injuries	27
DKD - Drunk Driver	25
WPN - Weapon	23
FWK - Fireworks	22
COD - Code Enforcement	16
ROB - Robbery	14
SHF - Shots Fired	13
LOS - Lost Property	11
CAB - Child Abuse	8
TRP - Transport	8
ABV - Abandoned Vehicle	7

Problem Description	Count
COE - Community Outreach Event	7
CSC - Crim Sexual Conduct	7
SOL - Solicitor	6
POR - Predatory Offender Reg	5
DOA - Death Investigation	4
CMT - County Maintenance	3
MTG - Meeting Officer Assigned	3
GRF - Graffiti	2
HRI - Hit & Run Acc w/Injuries	2
VIC - Vice Prostitution	2
PLR - Prowler	1
TEST CALL	1
TOW - Tow	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8,475</b>

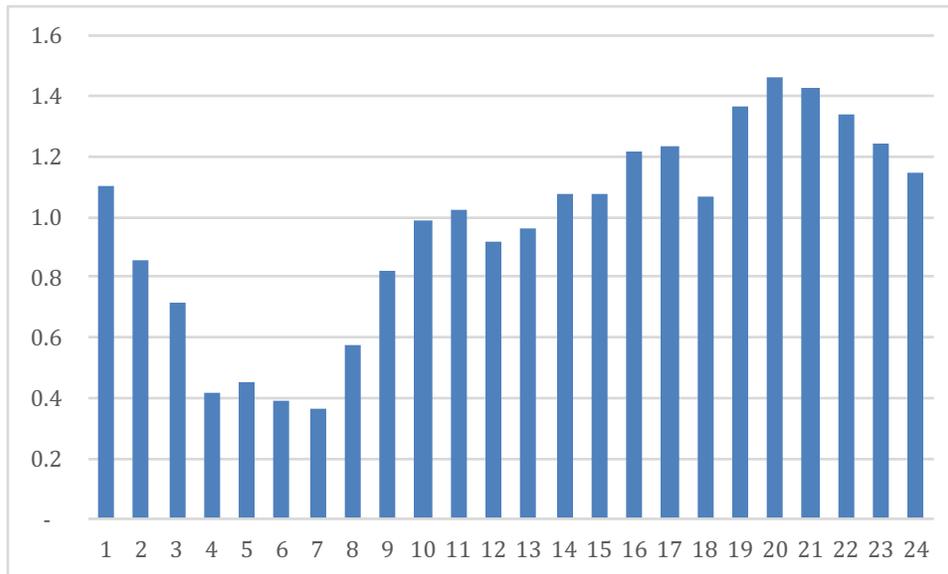
The distribution of calls by time of day also followed a typical temporal distribution. The 2 figures reflect this information in both tabular and graphic forms. Overall, the Department experienced an average of 23.2 calls per day in 2017.

**Figure 7: Incidents by Hour of Day - Police**

Hour of Day	Incidents	Avg. Incidents / Hour
0	402	1.1
1	311	0.9
2	261	0.7
3	152	0.4
4	164	0.4
5	142	0.4
6	134	0.4
7	210	0.6
8	301	0.8
9	362	1.0
10	373	1.0
11	336	0.9
12	350	1.0
13	392	1.1
14	393	1.1
15	443	1.2
16	450	1.2
17	389	1.1
18	497	1.4
19	533	1.5
20	522	1.4
21	489	1.3

Hour of Day	Incidents	Avg. Incidents / Hour
22	452	1.2
23	417	1.1
Total	8,475	23.2

**Figure 8: Average Incidents per Hour - Police**



## Current Performance

### Response Time

The Department overall response times to incidents is quite good. For all incidents, the 911 center takes an average of 2:05 to process the call and assign an officer. The total time from receipt of the 911 call until an officer is on scene averages 5:55 minutes. However, based on the significant number of traffic stops, representing approximately 22% of all activity, these calculations may not be the best representation of response time performance. Therefore, we also evaluated only those events classified as a police emergency – incident types, such as medical assists, robbery, assaults, suspicious activity and others. In total, these represented 2,728 or 26.9% of all calls for service. For these emergency incidents call processing times averaged 2:55 seconds and the total time from 911 call until an officer arrived on scene was 7:06 on average and 15:22 at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile.

### Time on Task

Analysis also evaluated the average amount of time for officers to handle an incident – defined as time from when the 911 calls was received, or incident created in CAD, until

officers cleared the scene. For all incidents the total time on task was 21:07, while for all emergency calls only the time on task was very similar at 21:01. The figure below, based on CAD data, reflects the number of incidents each officer was assigned in 2017 and their respective time on task.

**Figure 9: Officer Assigned Incidents & Time on Task**

Officer ID#	Count	Avg. Time on Task
3909	775	00:17:54
3910	1	00:24:16
3921	571	00:19:54
3922	1,242	00:19:20
3923	263	00:18:44
3924	1,128	00:20:10
3925	207	00:44:43
3926	1,699	00:15:13
3927	1,713	00:14:23
3928	1,457	00:16:54
3929	1,147	00:15:51
3930	1,515	00:16:38
3932	22	03:19:05
3935	1,084	00:20:15
3937	412	00:20:26
3950	330	00:24:09
3951	603	00:23:27
3952	279	00:22:26
3960	53	00:36:21
3961	14	00:17:41
3962	6	00:17:21
3963	154	00:34:09
NSPDMDC	7	00:08:08

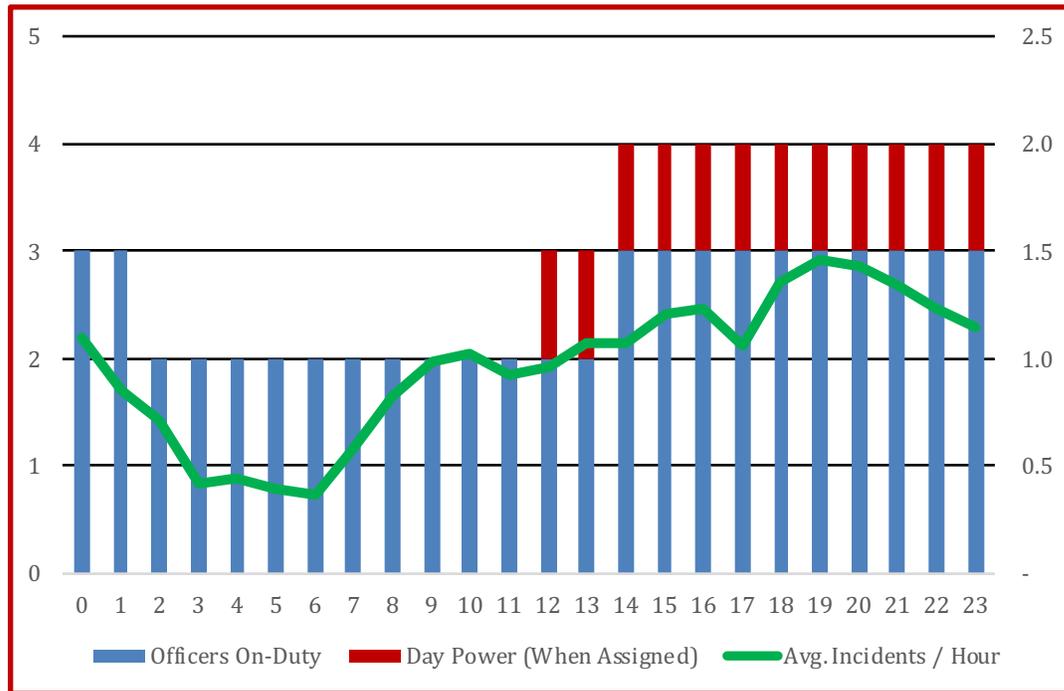
## Analysis

### Patrol Officers Deployed vs. Calls for Service

The figure below provides a graphic representation of officers on duty for patrol against the calls for service demand by hour of day. Careful examination will reflect that the primary axis on the left side of the graph, reflecting the number of officers on-duty, is double that of the secondary axis on the right side of the graph which reflects average calls per hour. This 2:1 relationship between the primary and secondary axis is interesting as it reflects, based on average demand for services by hour of day, the ability to assign both patrol officers to the incident is quite high.

One will also note there is a fairly consistent correlation between existing staffing levels and demands for service when considering only base level of officers on duty. Recalling that the Day Power Shift, which is only staffed approximately 50% of the time, provides a greater capacity of officers available during the busiest hours of the day.

**Figure 10: Officers on Duty (Left Axis) w/ Avg. Incidents per Hour (Right Axis)**



**Officers Available Versus Staffing Needs**

To assess the required number of full-time equivalent positions required by the Department, the figure below calculates the required annual hour needed for both the current minimum schedule and that of the more ideal schedule where the Day Power Shift would be filled every day. Employing the historical average hours worked by officers of 1,748 hour per year, the requirement is for 12.5 FTEs to staff the current base /minimum schedule and a total of 15 FTEs to staff the more ideal schedule which provides a Day Power Officer at all times. However, these numbers are a bit ideal. It assumes that Department can manage their schedule sufficiently well to disperse time-off (vacation, sick, etc.) throughout the year. It assumes all positions are fully staffed and that attrition and hiring are kept to a minimum. It also assumes there are no long-term disability among officers that would significantly impact the base schedule.

**Figure 11: Staffing Calculation for Patrol**

	Current Ideal w/ Day Power Shift	Minimum w/o Day Power Shift
Basic Daily Schedule	72	60
Annual Staffing Requirements	26,280	21,900
Avg. Hours Worked	1,748	1,748
Officers Required	15.0	12.5

Of course, we do note from Figure 5 above that overtime among all officers, as reflected in 2017 payroll information, is relatively low – approximately 2 hours per week per officer. Accordingly, the City should consider the ability to absorb some variance in time-off and short-term disability by employing overtime from remaining officers.

As noted previously, the Department currently has only 11 officers assigned to patrol with two vacancies from their authorized strength. Of these patrol positions, 9 are patrol officers with 2 holding the rank of Sergeant. Therefore, the base schedule only has 1 supervisor on-duty for only a single shift, typically the Day Power Shift from 1500hrs until 0130 hrs.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are derived from the analysis above and directly address issues within the current staffing model.

### **Current Personnel Are Insufficient to Staff Required Patrol Needs**

As reflected in Figure 11 above, there is a deficit of current personnel when compared to the required number of FTEs to properly staff patrol positions under two scenarios. While current staffing for Patrol is currently 11 with an authorized strength of 13, there is a need for a minimum of 12.5 FTEs assuming no daytime power shift, or a required 15.0 FTEs if the goal is to fully staff the daytime power shift. Figure 8 reflects the variance between these two scenarios with an overlay of average incidents per hour.

From a policy perspective, the City should decide if there is a need for the daytime power shift. To staff that shift, arguably to handle the increased call volume during the hours from 1200 till midnight, will require more resources. While the City's demand, as reflected by calls for service, shows this demand across all days, the current budgeted FTEs only permit to staff these shifts – at best – 50% of the time. To meet a consistent staffing of the daytime power shift will require the filling of the two current positions

and an additional two FTEs assigned to Patrol – for a total of 15 FTEs on a Patrol schedule.

**Fitch recommends the assignment of two additional FTEs to the Patrol function.**

**Patrol Supervision is Insufficient**

With regard to Patrol staffing, we note that only 2 sergeants are assigned to Patrol – thereby limiting the hours where a supervisor is immediately available to manage critical incidents, maintain effective deployment of limited resource and ensure timely notification of key police department/city staff in exceptional events. Similar to the discussion above, this raises the question of the level of service desired by the City. If higher levels of law enforcement supervision are required, then at least basic staffing levels should reflect that need over a 24-hour period. If it is determined to be unnecessary, then other alternatives can be utilized over a 24-hour period.

**Fitch recommends a minimum of four Sergeants be assigned to Patrol to enhance the level of direct supervision available for this basic law enforcement role.**

**Proactive Patrol Requires More Resources – More Hours Must Be Liberated**

The discussion above reflects an average of greater than 1 call for service between the hours of 1200 noon and through midnight. With an average time on task of approximately 21 minutes there remains limited time for unrestricted proactive patrol – in large part because other demands on time exist beyond the 21 minutes which reflects only time from assignment of an incident until the officer advises they are available for another incident. Common practices reflect this “available” status occur before officers have completed the requisite paperwork and any required follow-up actions.

Accordingly, while the average time-on-task reflects 21 minutes, other supplemental tasks consume the available resources even further, thereby reducing time available for proactive patrol. Accordingly, the desire for an effective proactive patrol capability is impacted at certain hours because of higher demands for service. As reflected in figure 8, the number of calls for service decreases overnight – and while this allows for greater proactive patrol of properties, most businesses and residents will not have an opportunity to engage patrol officers directly. As with other recommendations, the value of an aggressive proactive patrol program must be evaluated from a policy perspective – and the desire to be effective in this endeavor requires greater resources

available during daytime and business hours to allow greater interaction between residents or business owners and their local police officers.

**To ensure the capability of an effective proactive patrol function, supervisors must adjust field patrol activities to free-up more time for community engagement. The addition of 2 FTEs to patrol, as well as ensuring a supervisor is available – both of which are recommended above – provide the resources and supervisory oversight to meet this recommendation.**

### **Administrative Staffing is Greater Than Required**

The police department has a total of 13 FTEs allocated to Patrol, though only 11 are currently staffed as reflected in the 2018 Patrol Schedule. The schedule also reflects an Administrative staffing of 5 positions. On balance, the number of personnel assigned to administration is disproportional in light of those assigned to patrol duties. Above, the recommendation is made to increase patrol staffing levels to 15 FTEs. At that level, an administrative (40-hour) staff of the police chief, captain, an investigator and school resources officer are sufficient to provide oversight. Accordingly, in order to minimize the fiscal burden associated with the recommendation to add to two FTEs to road patrol, it is recommended that one of these positions are provided by reassigning the existing administrative sergeant from administrative duties to road patrol. The current workload handled by this sergeant administratively should be reassigned to remaining administrative officers. This action will result in the net impact of staffing changes recommended herein to be the funding of one new patrol sergeant position for the police department.

**It is recommended that the existing administrative sergeant be reassigned from administrative duties to road patrol in order to minimize the fiscal impact of overall staffing changes recommended here.**

## Fire Performance & Management Audit

Evaluation of the fire department focused largely on its current staffing configuration, demands for service, and its overall performance. The following sections provide context on these issues before reporting on the analysis of the department's performance and management and recommendations.

### Fire Staffing

The Fire Department has a roster, as of May 2018, of 32 personnel, including an authorized full-time strength of the fire chief, deputy chief, and code compliance/fire inspector. There are also 2 part-time positions which the City's 2017 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) reports in aggregate as four full-time equivalent (FTE) positions<sup>6</sup>. This effectively reflects 27 paid-on-call (POC) positions out of an authorized 40.

In addition to fire services, the department also provides medical first responder services working in conjunction with Lakeview Ambulance the City's EMS provider. The company states their average response time is between four and five minutes, and approximately 7 minutes at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. Their units are staffed with two paramedics, who also will do interfacility/nonemergency transports.

As a combination department, most fire protection services are provided by personnel who were paid depending on their level of qualifications, experience, and specific duties being performed. Paid-on-call compensation is structured around several types of service. This includes being on-call from home, as is generally used for medical first responder services, at approximately \$3.81 per hour. POCs are also compensated when they are called in, for example a reported structure fire, at a rate starting at \$11.82 per hour. These rates of compensation vary depending on the specific role POC personnel assume. In total, approximately \$171,000 out of the department's approximate \$1 million budget is spent on 'part-time' compensation, though the fire chief reports that true POC wages are approximately \$130,000 to \$135,000 per year.

One area of concern that was identified was the number of shifts, arguably to be filled by POC personnel, that remain 'open', or unfilled. Several sources reflect the acuity of this problem.

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<sup>6</sup> City of North St. Paul (2017). Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). P. 126.

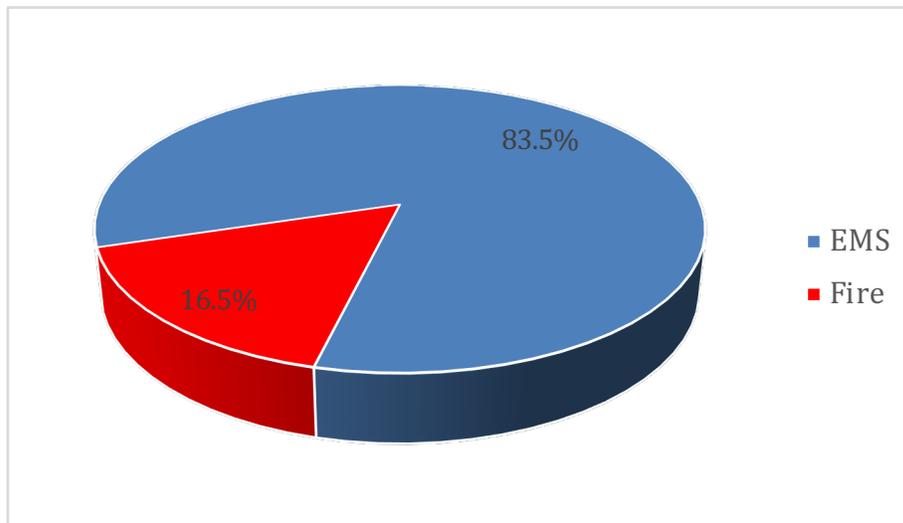
The department provided a report from their online scheduling system that reflected in 2017 there were 940 occurrences of first responder slots going unfilled. Admittedly, some of the slots may have only been for a one-hour time. (For example, 2 PM to 3 PM), while others encompass 6 or more hours. Nonetheless, this number of unfilled slots is concerning.

Reflective of the above was found in a report titled “Total Scheduled Hours” for 2017. It was noted that of all hours worked in 2017, which totaled 11,122, approximately 10.7% were worked by three of the fulltime staff. The fire chief himself was reported to have worked an additional 552 hours in 2017 beyond his regular duties – much of this was to cover unfilled slots described above.

### Current Demands for Service

In 2017 the fire department had a total of 1,319 incidents. Of these 1,102 were emergency medical service (EMS) related, and the remaining 217 were fire related incidents. This data is reflected in the figure below.

**Figure 12: Fire Department Incidents by Type**



These incidents types are described in more detail below. Of interest is that the top 6 incident types, mostly EMS related, represent over 50% of all responses. Structural fire incidents are relatively limited, numbering only 33 in 2017. These include dwelling fire (11), smoke in a dwelling (6), smoke in an apartment (5), commercial structure fire (5), apartment fire (3), smoke in a commercial building (2), garage fire (1), and smoke in a school (1).

**Figure 13: 2017 CAD Incidents - Fire**

Incident Description	Count
Sick	211
Breathing Problem	135
Falls	121
Behavioral	77
LIFT - Lift Assist	69
ALM - Alarm Sounding	66
Chest Pain	62
Unconscious	51
Injury	42
Unknown Problem	40
ACC - Accident	30
Abdominal Pain	29
Heart	27
CO - CO Detector No Symptoms	24
MED - Medical Alarm	21
Seizure	21
Back Pain	19
Bleeding	19
NAT - Natural Gas Odor	19
SER - Public Service	16
Overdose	15
Allergic Reaction	13
Stroke	12
Assault	11
Cardiac Arrest	11
DWLF - Dwelling Fire	11
IBURN - Illegal Burn	11
Diabetic	8
VEH - Vehicle Fire	8
DOW - Person Down	7
DWLS - Smoke in a Dwelling	6
ECHO - Cardiac/Respiratory	6
APTS - Smoke in an Apartment	5
COMF - Commercial Fire	5
EMS - Medical Assist	5
MUT - Mutual Aid	5
OB	5
PLS - Person Location Search	5
WIR - Wire Down	5
Accident Delta	4
Cardiac Arrest DOA	4
APTF - Apartment Fire	3
Burn	3
ODR - Odor	3
SMK - Smoke in the Area	3

<b>Incident Description</b>	<b>Count</b>
COMS - Smoke in a Commercial	2
DWL - Dwelling Incident	2
Falls Delta	2
HAZ - Hazmat	2
RUB - Rubbish Fire	2
Sick Bravo	2
Stabbing	2
WIRF - Wire Fire	2
Accident Bravo	1
APT - Apartment Incident	1
Assault Alpha	1
BAL - Balance Alarm	1
Behavioral Bravo	1
Bomb	1
Breathing Problems Charlie	1
BRU - Brush Fire	1
Cardiac Arrest Bravo	1
Choking	1
Cold Exposure	1
Cold Exposure Bravo	1
COM - Commercial Bldg Incident	1
ELV - Elevator Rescue	1
Falls Alpha	1
Falls Bravo	1
GARF - Garage Fire	1
Headache Alpha	1
Heart Delta	1
Heat Exposure	1
SBY - Event Standby	1
SCHS - Smoke in a School	1
Seizure Bravo	1
Shooting	1
Shooting Delta	1
Sick Alpha	1
Traumatic Injury Bravo	1
Unconscious Delta	1
Unknown Problem Bravo	1
Unknown Problem Delta	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1319</b>

Based on the response plans as defined within CAD, there were 1,272 (96.4%) incidents directly related to the City of North St. Paul, while the remaining 47 incidents were various forms of automatic aid or mutual aid to adjoining communities. Interestingly, when considering unit responses – that is the number of times a fire department vehicle

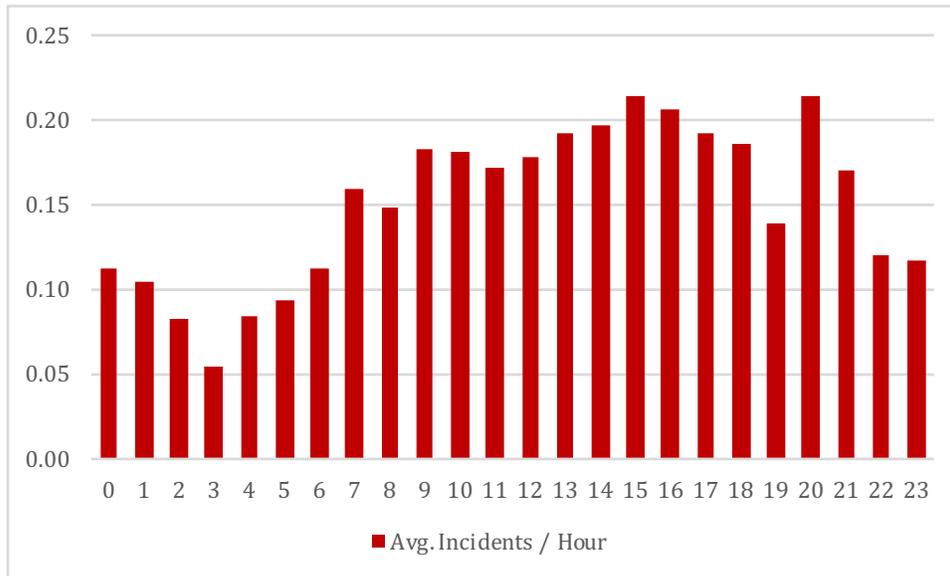
moved for a North St. Paul incident – there was a total of 3,798 unit responses, or approximately 2.9 vehicles assigned to each North St. Paul incident. Of those, 3,433 were North St. Paul apparatus or 90.4%. The remainder of unit responses came from outside resources.

Fire and EMS services have a distinctive temporal distribution, similar to that of law enforcement. The two figures below provide tabular and graphic representation of the total and average incidence per hour based on the 24-hour time of day.

**Figure 14: Incidents by Hour of Day - Fire**

Hour of Day	Incidents	Avg. Incidents / Hour
0	41	0.11
1	38	0.10
2	30	0.08
3	20	0.05
4	31	0.08
5	34	0.09
6	41	0.11
7	58	0.16
8	54	0.15
9	67	0.18
10	66	0.18
11	63	0.17
12	65	0.18
13	70	0.19
14	72	0.20
15	78	0.21
16	75	0.21
17	70	0.19
18	68	0.19
19	51	0.14
20	78	0.21
21	62	0.17
22	44	0.12
23	43	0.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>1319</b>	<b>3.61</b>

Figure 15: Average Incidents Per Hour - Fire



## Current Performance

Department performance was assessed from several different perspectives. The figure below reflects various components of response time, including call processing time in the 911 center, time for personnel to assemble and begin response to the emergency incident location, time from when they begin responding until arrival at the location, and then summarized as the total response time reflected from the time the 911 call was received until emergency crews arrive at the incident location.

Average performance times and performance times at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile are reported in this section. The 90<sup>th</sup> percentile is presented as a more conservative and reliable measure of performance, as this measure is more robust, or less influenced by outliers, than measures of central tendency such as the average. Best practice is to measure at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. In other words, 90% of all performance is captured, expecting that 10% of the time the department may experience abnormal conditions that would typically be considered outliers. For example, if the department were to report an *average* response time of six minutes, then in a normally distributed set of data, half of the responses would be longer than six minutes and half of the responses would be shorter than six minutes. Utilizing six minutes as an example again, a *90<sup>th</sup> percentile value* of six minutes communicates that 9 out of 10 times, the department performance is six minutes or better (faster) and is therefore more predictable and more clearly articulated to policy makers and the community. Note, however, that the sum of the 90th percentile values for dispatch, turnout, and travel times is not equivalent to the 90th percentile response time.

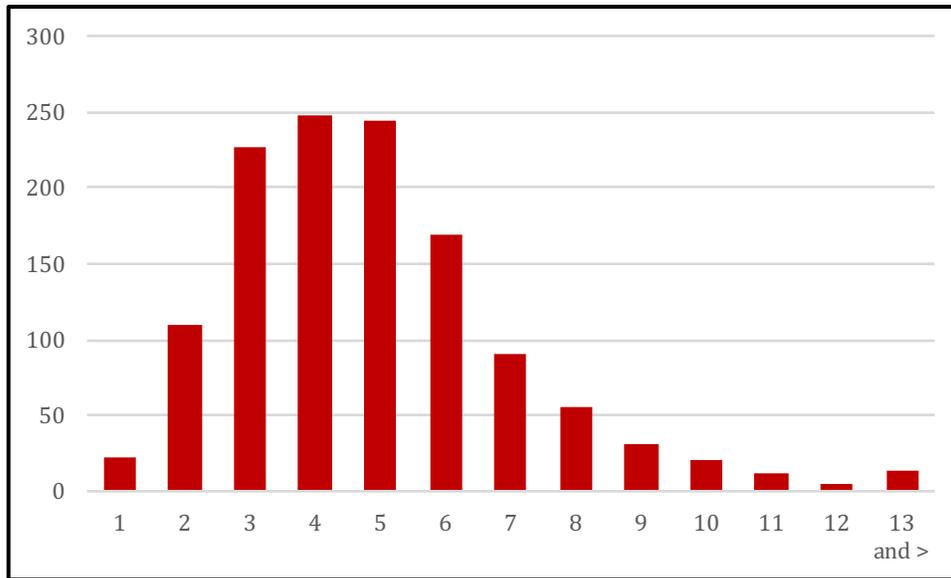
**Figure 16: Call Processing, Turnout, Travel and Total Response Times - Fire**

	Call Processing	Turnout	Travel	Total Response	Time-on-Task
Average	00:00:50	00:02:07	00:02:29	00:05:27	00:08:40
Standard Deviation	00:00:44	00:01:21	00:02:37	00:02:58	00:09:42
Count	1,319	1,281	1,289	1,260	1,286
90th%	00:01:45	00:03:26	00:04:25	00:08:15	00:20:14

As reflected in the CAD data obtained directly from the 911 center, the average total response time is 5:27 and at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile is 8:15. Generally, for a combination fire department that utilizes paid on-call personnel must respond to the station before responding, these times are quite surprising - they reflect a very high level of surface. Typically, the consultant would've spent more time questioning these results. However, while we were on-site two different fire related calls were received and responded to by fire personnel. The consultants interrupted their interviews and directly observed the turnout and response while closely observing the elapsed time. The department was able to quickly assemble and respond with four or more personnel on the fire engine for both of these incidents.

The average and 90<sup>th</sup> percentile times reflected above, except for turnout time, would be extremely strong performance by any fire agency, including departments that are staffed with fully paid career personnel. Surprisingly, even the turnout times are strong considering the use of paid on-call personnel. Most important, from the citizen's perspective, response time performance would be considered very positive.

**Figure 17: Response Time Distribution**



Drawing from a national database of reported fire incidents to the US Fire Administration, the following figure reflects the ability of the fire department to assemble an effective response force to reported building fires. Overall, the department is able to average 12.4 personnel to reported structure fires which occurs approximately 15 times per year. While this is a bit below the recommended minimum of 15 fire personnel<sup>7</sup>, it is noted that additional resources can be quickly dispatched through the existing mutual aid system.

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<sup>7</sup> National Fire Protection Association. (2016). NFPA 1710: Standard for the Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments. In. Quincy, MA: National Fire Protection Association.

**Figure 18: Effective Response Forces to Reported Building Fires 2012 thru 2016**

Number Assembled	Number of Incidents
1	3
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	1
7	4
8	4
9	10
10	9
11	4
12	6
13	4
14	7
15	8
16	4
17	2
18	3
19	2
20	2
21	1
22	2
23	0
24	0
25	1
Total Incidents	77
Average Per Incident	12.4

## Analysis

Fire services in the City of North St. Paul are provided effectively and efficiently. On a comparative basis, the ability to respond to incidents with an average total response time of 05:27 is quite strong. The department’s administration is engaged and services to the community meet expectations.

As noted above, one area of concern remains – the continuing ability to rely on paid on call members to provide coverage for the community. With 80% of activity being EMS, the department has struggled to staff shifts that are specifically designed to handle medical first responder services. This pattern is quite common throughout the United States – though currently less severe in North St. Paul. Should the City not adjust their paid on-call program to address these concerns, the likelihood of greater atrophy in the

future becomes increasingly more likely. Attachment A provides an overview of volunteer/paid on call fire services from a national perspective. While the City presently provides a number of incentives and benefits to fire personnel, it is apparent that adjustments to paid on call pay are required to address this shortcoming. Other program enhancements, as outlined in the Attachment A may also be appropriate.

The three fulltime members of the department currently provide 10.7% of the total hours worked by the department – this is in addition to their regular work hours. The issue of sustainability must be considered. If existing participation by paid on call personnel is not addressed, the City will ultimately be forced to fund additional fulltime personnel in order to ensure the ability to respond to the majority of existing incidents.

## **Recommendations**

**Increasing call demand and lower participation rates among paid on-call personnel impede the department's capability to provide current levels of service on medical first responder incidents.**

As noted above, the major issue identified has been the ability of the fire department to staff their medical first responder program. The major objective should be to incentivize personnel to fill shifts that today are largely unfilled.

**The City should increase current pay rates to increase participation rates by paid on call personnel. A pay rate adjustment, for on-call and station-based shifts, should be at least 20% or greater to address the initial problem.**

## **Conclusion**

North Saint Paul public safety departments provide appropriate levels of existing service to the community. The existing demand for service and capabilities to provide services today benefit from the geographic and demographic characteristics of the City. However, both departments currently have challenges which should be addressed moving forward.

The recommendations herein are intentionally focused to address the issues identified – encompassing an effort to balance organizational effectiveness with concerns for fiscal efficacy. Ultimately, policy determinations remain within the purview of the City Council.

**ATTACHMENT A: Volunteer Recruitment &  
Retention**

Although the recruitment and retention challenges continue to grow, some volunteer organizations maintain good membership while others continue to function with reduced numbers. Those organizations that seek solutions and adapt to the changing personnel environment are successful. Individuals are still willing to give their time to volunteer emergency services organizations provided the following:

- The experience is rewarding and worth their time.
- The training requirements are not excessive.
- The time demands are adaptable and manageable.
- They are rewarded with a personal sense of value.
- There is good leadership minimizing conflict.
- There is ample support for the organization.

The emergency services are some of the most demanding of volunteer activities today. The physical and time demands associated with training; responding to incidents; maintaining facilities, apparatus, and equipment; fundraising; and administering a nonprofit corporation are grueling if not managed properly. In today's hectic world, strong leadership is required to make the emergency services the organizations that will attract and retain volunteers.

As indicated by earlier research, there is no single reason for the decline in volunteers in most departments. However, there is a universal consensus that skilled department leadership is a key to resolving the problems. Retention and recruitment problems usually can be traced to several underlying factors: more demands on people's time in a hectic modern society; more stringent training requirements; population shifts from smaller towns to urban centers; changes in the nature of small town industry and farming; internal leadership problems; and a decline in the sense of civic responsibility, among other factors. Although some regions are more affected than others, and the problems and solutions vary across regions, even within States and counties, volunteer retention and recruitment is a problem nationwide. **Specifically, it is a local issue and must be dealt with locally.**

Can the trend in declining volunteerism be reversed? Information collected reveals that departments that have taken steps to deal with the problems have seen a resurgence in volunteerism. This indicates that many of the problems can be mitigated or eliminated if proper attention and resources are given to them. This Section will attempt to identify and share the ideas and practices that are successful in recruitment and retention. Departments that have failed to address the problems and challenges of

volunteering in today’s world have been forced to hire career firefighters, consolidate, or even close their doors.

Several factors underlie today’s retention and recruitment problem in the volunteer fire service. It is a complex and multifaceted problem. Although stringent training standards, leadership problems, and time constraints caused by increased family responsibilities--particularly in two-career families and single-parent households--seem to be the most common causes, there are many other factors contributing to the turnover that volunteer departments are currently facing. The Bureau of Labor Statistics surveyed those that had volunteered at some point in the past and reported the most common reasons for no longer participating.<sup>8</sup> The results are reflected in the figure below.

**Figure 19: Common Reasons for Participation Loss**

Reason	%
Lack of time	44.7%
Health/Medical problems	14.7%
Family responsibilities	9.5%
Other	8.2%
No longer required/relevant	5.8%
Wasn’t interested	4.3%
Moved, transportation, expenses	4.2%
No one asked	3.2%
Burnout	2.4%
No longer member of organization	1.7%

The following data are from the St. Joseph’s University Study in 2004:

What makes Your members leave Your organization? *	
No time to volunteer	93.3%
Conflicts in organization	47.8%
Organizational leadership created adverse atmosphere	46.7%
Too much training	45.6%
Attitude of existing personnel to newcomers	39.1%
Criticism received from officers/older members	38.0%

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Fire Administration. (2007). *Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services: Challenges and Solutions*. (FA-310). Emmitsburg, MD: U.S. Fire Administration.

Lack of camaraderie

9.5%

\* Many respondents indicated more than one reason for leaving the organization

The causes of the problems are similar in all 50 States. No single region of the country is dealing with problems that are significantly different than those found in other regions. There are some differences, however, in problems faced by urban versus rural communities. These differences stem from the sociological differences in the urban versus rural communities.

Increased training requirements have had a major effect on retention and recruitment. On-the-job training is no longer permitted as a substitute for formal training and certification. The time when a volunteer can start to go on calls and do other “exciting” duties is delayed, and their initial enthusiasm may be lost. Also, some volunteers are not good at taking written tests and may quit rather than face one, fail, and have to leave. Formal training, however, has made both the volunteer and career fire service more professional and effective. Increased training requirements have been particularly traumatic for older members who have no certifications and are no longer allowed to run certain calls. Some who once volunteered to simply join in and pull hose or drive the apparatus are no longer allowed to do so.

**D**uring the same time in which the number of volunteers has declined, the volunteer fire service has had to contend with an increase in the volume of emergency calls due to the lack of education on when to call 9-1-1. The NFPA reports that fire department call volumes increase at varying rates depending on the community. This means that volunteer fire departments have to do more with fewer people, and that the overall demands on individual volunteers have increased.

**Increasing Emergency Medical Call Volume** --Emergency medical calls have created the greatest increase in call volumes for fire departments. Years ago, most fire departments did not respond to EMS calls. Currently, more departments are becoming involved with providing medical service. This may only be at a first responder level; but regardless of the level, increases the response load considerably.

**Increase in the Number of Automatic Alarms** --As previously noted, the volume of automatic alarms has grown steadily, particularly in areas with commercial buildings that often have alarm systems. Fire departments have also experienced a sharp

increase in call volume due to alarm system malfunctions. Many volunteers are growing tired of the time demands associated with responding to these malfunction false alarms. Some departments enact policies that, after a set number of malfunctions in a given time period, the occupants are charged the response costs and/or fined to reduce the unnecessary use of volunteer resources. In addition, medical alert alarms are adding to unnecessary emergency responses.

**Less Emphasis on Social Aspects of Volunteering**--The loss of the social aspects associated with volunteering has hurt recruitment and retention. Many volunteers join fire departments and stay involved not only to serve their community and help others in need, but also to develop social relationships. Some volunteers report that the time demands of volunteering coupled with the time constraints of everyday life have left no time to develop social ties or spend time outside of the station with other firefighters. Likewise, many fire departments have closed their firehouse clubs and pool rooms that historically have been social centers for many volunteers.

**M**any retention and recruitment problems can be traced back directly or indirectly to leadership problems. Effective leadership helps retain members as well as reduce dissatisfaction. Ineffective leadership is the most common reason for a decline in membership.

**I**nternal conflicts and other stresses drive members out of fire departments. The two greatest problems with internal conflict in the volunteer fire service originate among leaders or between volunteer and career members in combination departments.

**T**he erosion of the volunteer fire service in the United States has economic and social effects. The economic ramifications are obvious, as towns are forced to hire career firefighters in place of volunteers. The 75 percent of the country served by volunteer firefighters relies on them to be the first line of defense in almost any type of emergency from fires and medical emergencies to technical rescues and hazardous materials spills. Volunteers are the initial mitigators before the arrival of county, State, or Federal backup emergency response teams for all types of natural disasters. Of the

over 30,000 fire departments in the United States, 88 percent are volunteer, protecting 40 percent of the population.

Fire Chiefs Jack Snook, Jeff Johnson, and Dan Olsen are national experts on retention of volunteer firefighters. In their book, *Recruiting, Training, and Maintaining Volunteer Firefighters*<sup>9</sup>, they identify four characteristics of a volunteer department that are essential to retaining members:

- The program must meet individual needs.
- The program must provide its membership with reward and recognition.
- The program must provide adequate supervision and leadership.
- The program must challenge members.

The research by St. Joseph's University confirmed these as core elements to recruitment and retention coupled with the issue that all recruitment and retention is local. Additionally, the needs, leadership, and challenges are all local.

### **“Volunteer Viewpoint”**

If you want my loyalty, interests, and best efforts, remember that:

1. I need a sense of belonging, a feeling that I am honestly needed for my total self, not just for my hands, nor because I take orders well.
2. I need to have a sense of sharing in planning our objectives. My need will be satisfied only when I feel that my ideas have had a fair hearing.
3. I need to feel that the goals and objectives of the organization are within reach and that they make sense to me.
4. I need to feel that what I'm doing has a real purpose that contributes to human welfare--that its value extends beyond my personal gain, or hours.
5. I need to share in making the rules by which, together, we shall live and work toward our goals.
6. I need to know with some clear detail just what is expected of me--not only my detailed task but where I have opportunity to make personal and final decisions.

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<sup>9</sup> Snook, J; Johnson, J; Olson, D. (2011). *Recruiting, Training, and Maintaining Volunteer Firefighters, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.* Jones & Bartlett Publishers. ISBN 13: 978-0763742102

7. I need to have some responsibilities that challenge, that are within range of my abilities and interest, that contribute toward reaching my assigned goal, and that cover all goals.
8. I need to see that progress is being made toward the goals we have set.
9. I need to be kept informed. What I'm not up on, I may be down on. (Keeping me informed is one way to give me status as an individual.)
10. I need to have confidence in my superiors--confidence based upon assurance of consistent fair treatment, or recognition when it is due, and trust that loyalty will bring increased security.

The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs. J. Donald Philips, Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan.

As volunteers quit or are unable to respond in the daytime, more and more communities are forced to hire career firefighters. This may further diminish volunteers' interest and cause more to drop out, or it may lighten the volunteers' workload, thereby increasing their willingness to volunteer. Much depends on how the concept is sold to the department and how both the career and volunteers are managed. The greatest factor influencing the success of a combination department is good leadership that encourages the career and volunteer members to work together as a team recognizing the need for and importance of each other.

When career members are hired, fire departments must establish the roles and responsibilities of career and volunteer members in a clear, written format. These should include responsibilities with station duties and emergency calls. In the long run, written, defined roles will help to avoid conflict over who is supposed to do what.

Some departments that have hired career members have found that volunteers quit because they feel like they are being replaced and no longer have a purpose in the organization. To avoid this feeling, departments can give volunteers their own special role such as technical rescue response, staffing the second engine, staffing a ladder truck (if career personnel staff only an engine), or other fire ground support duties.

## **INCENTIVES**

**I**ncentive programs are used throughout the volunteer fire service as a retention tool.

They are necessary to help recruit and retain volunteers. Localities benefit financially

from having experienced volunteers who are willing to stay active for years. Due to the demanding and risky nature of firefighting, many departments find that members consider leaving the service after only 5 to 10 years. Long-term (10 to 20 years) retention of members is important to ensure that there is a solid base of experienced members.

There are many ways to set up an incentive system in a fire department. The most successful incentive programs today are diverse and appeal to volunteers of all ages, experience, and ranks. Any of the incentives listed previously could be offered, but fire departments should not limit themselves to one type of incentive program for all volunteers because one program may not appeal to all members. Instead, they should offer a menu of several different programs from which volunteers could select to receive. Certain incentives are more appealing to individual volunteers--such as older volunteers--than others. Since membership in the volunteer fire service has become more diverse, fire departments must strive to find the right types of recognition and incentives that appeal to all or a majority of the members. However, it must be remembered that these incentives can vary extensively for the different age groups within the department.

The incentive system must be equitable. In other words, each item on the menu should provide similar benefits so that volunteers who choose different items receive similar benefits. Volunteers should be allowed to choose the incentive (or combination of incentives) they want to receive on an annual basis.

Civic leaders are sometimes hesitant to provide financial incentives to volunteers. However, the benefits of retaining members by providing small financial incentives far outweigh the costs of excessive turnover or hiring full-time firefighters.

While monetary benefits are becoming a higher priority in what attracts personnel to the volunteer fire department, this should not be the primary purpose for joining. The time demands are very high, making the hourly return very low. Those who join strictly for the material benefits will soon become disheartened and leave. They need to be mentored and learn the concept that the real goal of volunteering is the desire to help others who are in need. Financial awards, besides their obvious reward, have the psychological aspect of helping volunteers rationalize to themselves and their families that they are getting some tangible benefit from the extra hours.

### **Types of Direct Financial Incentives**

- retirement/pension or length-of-service award programs (LOSAP);
- individual retirement accounts;
- pay per call or per hour, or through “monthly pots”;
- annual reimbursements;
- tax exemptions and tax deductions;
- health insurance (for volunteers and their families) including dental and vision;
- tuition assistance;
- housing assistance;
- low-interest housing loans;
- in-season bonuses;
- scholarships;
- emergency funds (loans); and
- death benefits

### **Other Incentives**

There are many incentives that have little or no cost, but can be highly motivational nonetheless. These go a long way because they acknowledge dedication and hard work while allowing all members an equal opportunity to achieve them.

- Select a member of the year or month, for both operational and administrative positions.
- Ask local merchants for discounts or gift certificates for volunteers at local businesses.
- Recognize volunteers who complete training courses with certificates, plaques, or by featuring them in the local newspaper.
- Award outstanding volunteers with subscriptions to fire or EMS magazines.
- Cover the reasonable expenses associated with sending a volunteer to a special out-of-town training class.
- Award outstanding members with all-expense paid trips to State Firefighter Association meetings or training conferences.
- Award a top responder with a family get-away trip to a local hotel or resort.
- Occasionally excuse members who have given certain numbers of years of service from work details or mandatory duty nights.
- Excuse the “member of the month” from housework.
- Exempt volunteers from local utility bills (water, trash, etc.).
- Issue officers fire department vehicles that they can take home.
- Give the top responder of the department a reserved parking spot.
- Give flowers to spouses on special occasions.
- Permit members to use the station washer and dryer for personal use.

- Provide an area and tools for car maintenance at the station.
- Provide free videos, cable television, and movie channels at the station.
- Create departmental trading cards with pictures of the volunteers (good for the kids).
- Provide physical fitness facilities at the station.
- Provide free meals to members on duty or at training.
- Give volunteers passes to local sporting events. (Local sporting teams often will donate to the department to give away.)

### **Qualifying for benefits and incentives**

Fire departments must establish a base level of performance that a volunteer must meet to qualify for a particular level of awards. Many departments measure this by creating a point system for participating in activities. Volunteers accrue points by running calls, attending training, attending meetings, and providing administrative or support service. Members who attain a sufficient number of points in a year qualify for either a basic, mid-, or high-level award. They then are eligible to receive the incentive benefits they choose.

The awards should be given only to members who meet all of the departmental requirements, in addition to meeting point requirements. In other words, members should be required to maintain a certain level of training, attend a certain number of meetings, perform a certain amount of administrative work, or a certain amount of prevention duties to remain qualified for incentives. The incentive system can be structured so that all members are eligible to receive benefits (active firefighters and EMTs, administrative members, public educators), or that only certain members receive them (firefighters, or only those participating on duty crews).

The system allows members, both operational and administrative, to earn points through a wide range of activities. Certain categories have restrictions about the number of points that can be earned. Others have no maximums so that volunteers are encouraged to spend more time in these activities. It is recommended that the points for the Public Education and Administrative Duties categories be increased to encourage participation. Volunteers who earn points above the minimum requirements for a basic-level award can qualify for higher-level awards. A department may require volunteers to earn a certain minimum number of points in an area to qualify for any award (e.g., a volunteer must accrue at least 4 points in meetings, 8 points in training, 1 point in public education).





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