

Grafton Fire Study Committee

Findings & Recommendations

MRI Report:

- All committee members received a copy of the MRI report and the synopsis of the MRI report put together by the Town Administrators office.
- These documents were reviewed by the committee so that a list of priorities could be established.

Interviews:

- The committee interviewed three Fire Chiefs during our process. We interviewed the Millbury, Sutton and Holliston Fire Chiefs. All three are on-call departments. Sutton and Holliston have full time professional Chiefs. Millbury's Chief is an on-call position, but the existing Chief is retired from his career and operates and is paid as a full-time Chief.

Public Hearings:

- The committee held two Public Hearings and received comments from the public.

Priorities:

The committee's list of priorities are as follows:

1. Organizational Structure, Management & Administration
2. Staffing Recruitment & Retention
3. Training
4. Emergency Operations
5. Fire Prevention
6. Mission, Vision & Values Statement
7. GFD Table of Organization
8. Community Risk Assessment
9. Fiscal Forecasting & Capital Planning
10. Benchmarking & Comparative Analysis
11. Facilities & Apparatus

Organizational Structure, Management & Administration

- Currently on paper, department positions are Chief, Administrative Assistant, Deputy Chief, two Assistant Chiefs, three Captains, six Lieutenants, 60 regular Firefighters and fifteen Auxiliary members.
- Current department positions: Chief, Administrative Assistant, Deputy Chief, part time Inspector, three Captains, six Lieutenants, 42 Firefighters, 4 Auxiliary members.
- Fire Study Committee Recommendation: Full Time Chief, Administrative Assistant, Deputy Chief (call), Full Time Inspector (captain), Full Time Fire Prevention/Training, & Safety (captain), Captains in cars (call), 60 Firefighters and 15 Recruits with a minimum of 10 new recruits per year
 - Fire Chief (full time):

- Strong Chief. Requires By-law and Charter change
- Overall management of the Fire Department and Emergency Operations
- Creating Standard Operating Procedures
- Create Emergency Operations Procedures
- Create an emergency operations coverage procedure
- Create a Fire alarm protocol
- Creating a Training Program
- Creating Community Risk Pre-plan assessment
- Create an internal coverage program utilizing all Officers including a stipend process
- Create a Health and Safety program
- Interagency Work
- All Annual Procedures & Testing
- Create Facilities Maintenance Program
- Create a Vehicle Maintenance Program
- Budget creation, fiscal forecasting, management & capital planning
- Writing and procuring all grants
- Creating a Recruitment & Retention Program
- Creating an on-boarding system for new recruits
- Create hiring & interviewing HR system for new employees and recruits
- Integrate the officers in budgeting and procurement that aligns with the Town Purchasing System
- Procure a Fire Management software system and connect all fire facilities to the Town's server
- Create a Mentor program for all fire department members to allow for future advancement to all ranks for all firefighters
- Create a Mission, Vision & Values statement
- Deputy Chief (call)
 - Second in Command for the overall management of the Fire Department and Emergency Operations and stands in when the Chief is not available
 - Provide coverage for the Chief when he/she is not available and is responsible to create an officer backup coverage program
 - Assist the Chief in his duties, responsibilities and requirements
 - Required to attend and receive a certificate in Chief Fire Officer Training program
- Fire Inspector (full time)
 - Overall Management of all Fire Inspections and programs
 - Create a Fire Inspection program including annual inspections
 - Procure Fire Inspection management software program to conform to State and Town standards and be integral with the Fire Reporting and Fire Prevention programs.
 - Responsible for all fire inspections for residential, commercial, industrial, municipal and health care facilities.
 - Responsible for all plan reviews

- Attendance at Select Board, Planning Board and other town agencies that relate to plan review and inspections
 - Required to respond to all fire calls while on duty, in a non-command position.
 - Work with the Fire Chief and Fire Prevention officer to create and present fire prevention programs for the public, school district and private school facilities.
 - Assist the Chief in his/her duties, responsibilities and requirements
 - Assist the Fire Prevention/Training & Safety officer in his/her duties, responsibilities and requirements
- Fire Prevention/Training & Safety Officer (full time)
 - Overall management of all Fire Prevention, Firefighter Training and Safety Officer programs
 - Create a Fire Prevention Program that encompasses all residential, commercial, industrial, municipal, healthcare, public and private educational systems
 - Procure Fire Prevention management software to conform to State and Town standards and be integral to the Fire Reporting, and Fire Inspection program
 - Create a firefighter training program for existing firefighters and officers. Training program will cover all levels of basic training through advanced training procedures including CPR and First Responder
 - Create an in-town training program for new recruits to provide them with the required training to obtain Firefighter 1&2 Certification.
 - Record keeping of all firefighter training including all submissions to the State Fire Marshalls office
 - Create a firefighter and fire ground safety officer program including training of firefighters and officers to perform as Safety Officers on all fire scenes
 - Respond to all fire calls while on duty in a non-command position
 - Assist the Chief and Fire Inspector in his/her duties responsibilities and requirements
- Captains (call):
 - The (call) Captains would serve as backup to the Chief and Deputy Chief in their absence and have mobile radios and repeaters installed in their personal vehicles. The individual Captains can also decide to go right to the scene of a fire and not to the station. Response will follow the Emergency Operations coverage procedure put together by the Deputy Chief.
 - Attend all required training sessions and provide in-company training
 - Completion of Fire Officer 1&2. Current officers will have five years to complete this course pending course availability.
- Lieutenants (call):

- Lieutenants will assist the Captains in the Company & Emergency operations and cover for the Captains in their absence
 - Attend all required training sessions
 - Completion of Fire Officer 1. Current officers will have five years to complete this course pending availability.
- Firefighters (call):
 - Perform firefighter duties and emergency operations under the direction of the command staff.
 - Attend all required training sessions
 - All firefighters are required to Firefighter 1&2 Certified prior to appointment to regular status.
 - Current firefighters who are not certified as Firefighter 1 & 2 will have five years to complete the course and get certified.
- Recruits (call):
 - Perform firefighter duties and emergency operations on a limited basis under the direction of the command staff
 - Attend Firefighter 1 & 2 training and in-company training to achieve certification for promotion to regular status

Staffing, Recruitment & Retention

- Recruitment
 - Recruitment of new firefighters will be handled by a committee of nine consisting of the Chief, Deputy Chief, and fire officers.
 - This committee will be tasked with creating a program to seek new firefighters through advertising, social media, word of mouth, open houses and possibly the creation of an Explorer Post.
 - This committee would be required to create a program to be able to on-board and train a minimum of ten new firefighters per year.
- Retention of Firefighters
 - It is imperative to retain the current and new firefighters in the GFD and create a program to encourage firefighters to stay on the job.
 - Creation of a stipend program based on the Officer coverage program that will be put together by the Deputy Chief. Officers will be required to provide coverage in the absence of the Chief and Deputy Chief. Officers covering will receive a stipend/hourly rate during this time.
 - Retirement: Currently the Town pays \$100 for each year that a firefighter has served after 10 years on the job. \$2500 for 25 years. The Fire Study Committee is proposing that if a firefighter retires after a minimum of 10 years. The Town would then calculate the highest three years salary and award a percentage to the retiring firefighter as follows:
 - 10+ years 40%
 - 15+ years 60%
 - 20+ years 80%
 - 25+ years 100%

Example: A firefighter retires after 16 years. The top three years of pay equals \$15,000.00. The retirement payout would be \$9,000.00. After 25 years the payout would be \$15,000.00

- Life Insurance: Provide Life Insurance at the same level that Town Employee's receive
- Health Insurance: Offer Health Insurance at the Town's rate and percentage to all firefighters that want it. The Firefighter would need to attend all required trainings and respond to a minimum of 25% of all fire calls.
- Station Amenities: Provide WIFI, Computers connected to the Town system and fire management programs, cable TV service, IPADS for the trucks with the GIS system, fire gear cleaning equipment in each station, facilities information and fire management programs, general station renovations
- On-Boarding program: Create an on-boarding program for new recruits and firefighters to receive SOP's, Benefits, Turnout Gear, introductions of Command Staff and company members
- Install washers and dryers so firefighter gear can be cleaned on a regular basis.
- Provide a second set of firefighter gear to all firefighters so that when the gear is in a cleaning phase the firefighters will be able to respond to calls

Training

- Training needs to be conducted on a weekly and monthly basis from basic to advanced. Firefighter 1 & 2 certification needs to be done so that recruits can advance to regular status and existing firefighters can receive certification. The goal is to have all Grafton Firefighters certified in FF 1&2 as a minimum. The Fire Study Committee has set a mandatory 48 hours per year for training including FF 1&2, CPR and First Responder training.
- Program: The Fire Prevention/Training & Safety Officer along with the Chief will create a training program and schedule one year in advance including basic to advanced, FF 1&2, CPR & First Responder. Training will take place at night, on weekends and during the day to accommodate FF's work schedules.

Emergency Operations

- Emergency Operations spans from alarm calls, structure fires, brush fires, natural disasters, terrorist/active shooter, mass casualties, plane crashes and regular EMS calls, plus many more.
- The Chief will be responsible along with the with the command staff and the department officers to create an emergency operations program along with the appropriate Standard Operating Procedures and Standard Operating Guidelines to be able to respond to all calls for service.

Fire Prevention

- The Chief and the Fire Prevention Officer will be responsible to create a Fire Prevention program that encompasses all residential, commercial, municipal, industrial, healthcare public & private educational facilities.

Mission, Vision & Values Statement

- The Chief will be responsible to create a Mission, Vision & Values Statement with the input from the entire department

GFD Table of Organization

- The Chief will create a Table of Organization based on the report of the Fire Study Committee. The goal of the committee is to maintain a call department
- The Chief will also be responsible to create SOP's, SOG's, requirements and qualifications for advancement through the ranks within the department

Community Risk Assessment

- The initial Community Risk Assessment process will be created by and prioritized the Chief. The final Assessment and pre-plans will include all officers and firefighters. Including all members of the department will educate everyone as to the current risks in the community and allow input from all on the pre-plans

Fiscal Forecasting & Capital Planning

- Fiscal forecasting and capital planning is the responsibility of the Chief with input from the officers
- The Chief will put together a five year capital plan and a vehicle replacement program

Benchmarking & Comparative Analysis

- This is the responsibility of the Chief to determine and create a report that compares the size, ability and training of the Grafton Fire Department as it relates to departments of similar size

Facilities & Apparatus

- The Chief along with the officers of the department will be responsible to create a program that addresses the facility needs and an ongoing evaluation of the existing apparatus. Station Two and Station Three will require renovations to provide adequate facilities to house firefighters and upgrade the buildings to current codes.

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1. Organizational Structure, Management & Administration

- Organizational structure, management & administration
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- Fire Prevention
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- Mission, Vision & Values Statement
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- Facilities & Apparatus
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Holliston Fire

- Chief Michael Cassidy has been Chief since 1999. The department operates the ambulance separate from the fire department. The department operates out of 5 stations. Current apparatus, Four Engines, one ladder truck 3 brush trucks and 3 off road tankers.
- The department provides 24-hour dispatch with a combination of civilian and FD personnel dispatchers.
- **Organizational Structure:** Chief, FD Deputy Chief, 1 EMS Deputy Chief, 5 Captains and 4 Lieutenants.
- **Staffing & Recruitment:** Currently the department is maxed out at 49 firefighters, 12 recruits on a waiting list, 39 EMT's/paramedics, 4 full time dispatchers and 2 part time dispatchers. Recruitment is done through an intern program in the high school and colleges. Word of mouth, face book, open houses and a very active Explorer Post
- **Retention:** Firefighters receive all of the same benefits that town employees receive. Health insurance with a 60/40 split, life insurance and Middlesex County retirement. Firefighters can retire after 20 years with full benefits. Firefighters receive a stipend each month plus a per hour rate for calls. Officers receive an additional stipend to cover for Chiefs on the weekends. A mentor program is in place to allow officers and firefighters to gain experience and training for future promotions.
- **Training:** In house firefighter 1&2 training is provided by 6 academy certified trainers. Training is held every week. All firefighters must attend a minimum of 24 training sessions. Firefighters receive \$75.00 per training session.
- **Emergency Operations:** The department has full SOP's and SOG's. Safety Officer is assigned to every call, individual companies visit all businesses and municipal building to familiarize themselves with the building, alarms etc. All firefighters are pre-assigned to trucks. They operate an on scene de-con unit. The department has in place a command backup system.
- **Fire Prevention:** The chief is the fire inspector for the town. Pre-plans have been completed for all high-risk buildings and are updated on a regular basis. The Chief, officers and firefighters perform the fire prevention for the schools.
- **Apparatus Replacement:** The department has a replacement program in place and replaces engines every 20 years, ambulances and command vehicles every 5 years. At the time of the interview, they had just put a new \$440,000 engine in service. They received a grant for washers and dryers for turnout gear recently.

Millbury Fire

- The Millbury Fire Department has a part-time/full-time Chief Rich Hamilton. The Chief is retired from his career and operates as a full-time fire chief. They operate out of 4 stations. They have 4 engines, 1 tower, 1 heavy rescue, 1 hose reel truck and a forestry unit. The department responds to EMS calls only as needed. Dispatch is provided by the Police Department
- **Organizational Structure:** The Department has the Chief, 1 Deputy Chief, 3 Assistant Chiefs, 4 Captains and 7 Lieutenants.
- **Staffing & Recruitment:** Currently the department has 45 members not including 6 recruits. Recruitment is done through a very active Explorer Post, face book, social media and work of mouth. The town provides a retirement program, \$10,000 life insurance policy, a department summer party and winter party, monthly officers and department meetings. At the meetings there is a portion of the meeting where all members have a voice. The department encourages open communication. The average response to daytime calls is 19 firefighters, after 5:00 pm the average increases to 45 firefighters. The department pays for all uniforms. The fire gear is less than 10 years old and is replaced on a regular basis. The department received a SAFE-GRANT to purchase fire gear cleaning equipment.
- **Training:** Training is conducted every Monday night using out-sourced trainers and the command staff. All are required to have a minimum of 8 hours of hazmat training per year. All members are required to attend 40% of the training sessions along with CPR and First Responder Training. The training schedule is posted for the entire year in January and is coordinated by the Chiefs. Currently new recruits are required to attend FF 1&2 academy classes to get promoted to regular status. They are working on providing in-house FF 1&2 training. All new recruits are required to have a physical which the town pays \$680 for. The department also requires that prior to attending training that recruits take the Mass Fit Test. Uxbridge Fire has a fit test machine.
- **Emergency Operations:** The department has full SOP's, SOG's and pre-plans that are updated on a regular basis. They utilize the Incident Command System at all fire calls.
- **Fire Prevention:** All inspections are done in-house. The department has an inspection coordinator and 7 firefighters that perform all inspections. The command staff and inspectors provide fire prevention programs for the public and the schools. 2 members head up the grant writing committee and have been successful in obtaining grants, most recently for gear cleaning equipment.

Sutton Fire

- Chief Matt Belsito is the second full time chief in Sutton. The department has 2 full time firefighters and operates out of 3 stations. The department does provide first responder with a private ambulance service. Current apparatus, 3 engines, 1 ladder truck, 1 tanker, 3 forestry trucks, 1 rescue, 1 special operations truck and a utility truck. Dispatch is provided by the Police Department.
- **Organizational Structure:** Chief, 3 District Chiefs, 3 Captains, 6 Lieutenants
- **Staffing & Recruitment:** Currently has 35 firefighters, to of which are full time and 2 recruits. Recruitment is done through an Explorer Post, face book, social media and word of mouth. The department offers a Length of Service Award after 10 years. They have regular officers and department meetings and all members have a voice. Communication is very open. A summer and winter party for the entire department. The Chief put together a detailed onboarding program for new recruits which introduces them to the department. The Town pays for all uniforms. The department received a Safe Grant to purchase firefighter gear cleaning equipment
- **Training:** They have budgeted for 480 hours of academy training per year for new recruits. Department training is held every week and they have weekly day time training for members who cannot make the night-time training. Firefighters are required to attend 50% of the trainings and officers are required to attend 75%. They are working towards providing in-house training for new recruits and by-pas the academy training. This will save money and time in onboarding new recruits. All members receive 8 hours of Hazmat training each year along with CPR and First Responder training.
- **Emergency Operations:** The department has full SOP's & SOG's that are updated on a regular basis. The members of the department have input on all SOP's & SOG's. They utilize the Incident Command System at each fire call. Fire Responder is provided to the private ambulance service during the day by the full-time firefighters.
- **Fire Prevention:** All fire inspections are performed by the Chief the two full time firefighters. Pre-plans have been developed for all critical buildings and facilities throughout town. The Chief and firefighters perform the fire prevention programs in the schools.