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# Fire & EMS Staffing Needs Assessment

March 2008

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*Prepared For:*

Towns of Dayton and Lyman  
Board of Selectmen and  
Budget Committees

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*Prepared by:*

Fire Chief H. Rodney Carpenter on  
behalf of the active members of the  
Goodwins Mills Fire-Rescue

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Goodwins Mills Fire-Rescue  
481 Goodwins Mills Road  
Lyman, Maine 04002

*H. Rodney Carpenter  
Fire Chief*

*Karen M. Gagnon, Deputy Chief  
Michael D. Lord, Deputy Chief*

**History:** The Goodwins Mills Fire Department, Inc was officially formed in 1949 as a Volunteer Fireman's Association. It was, and still is, primarily run by volunteers who in 1949 went on 20-30 incidents a year and participated in 1-2 trainings throughout the year. As time went on the Department progressed to what today is known as Goodwins Mills Fire-Rescue, which supplies Fire, Rescue and EMS services to the towns of Dayton and Lyman, Maine and responds to an average of 1-2 emergencies each day. The department also commits itself to numerous hours each week performing training and other administrative hours totaling 125 hours per week. This Department has been entirely run by volunteer staffing with the exception of the following:

- In 1977, two Government CETA employees manned the station Monday thru Friday during daytime hours.
- In 1978, a Fire Chief's annual stipend was initiated for \$600 per year, and is currently at \$4000.
- In 1981, the CETA program expired and 1 Full Time FF-EMT was hired to staff the station 50 hours a week.
- In 1990, the 50 hour employee was reduced to 45 Hours in effort to cut costs
- In 1995, funding was allocated for payment to members participating in the "on call system" Each member would receive approx. \$5-\$7 for each call they responded to while "On Call". This was for EMS responders only.
- In 1999, the On Call System was revised and began compensating members for each hour on call rather than when responding to a call. Rates which are still in effect today that are approx. \$1-\$2 per hour for being "On Call"
- In 2001, a second 40 hour employee was added by use of per diem employees to bring staffing levels to 2 employees for 40-hours each week.
- In 2003, Stipends were created for all members with the rank of Lieutenant or higher, these stipends now range from \$600 for a Lieutenant to \$2200 for a Deputy Chief. (approx. 12 out of 50 members qualify)
- In 2004, Per Diem hours increased from 40 hours to 45 hours a week
- In 2005, the per diem employee position was transitioned into a full time position, due to labor laws requiring us to pay all per diem employees as part employees, therefore making it more cost effective to pay a full time employee.
- In 2005, Training Stipends were initiated for all members of the Department, each member receives approx. \$100-\$700 per year for attending and keeping up training levels.
- In 2007, the On Call program was expanded and made mandatory for Department wide members.

Our community is at significant cross roads with the Fire-Rescue-EMS service that it provides to our two towns. As a community, we have exceeded the expectations with regards to acquiring training, education and equipment to meet today's standards and community needs. However, we have significantly dropped the ball on preparing our department with its largest resource needed on any emergency and that is "people". Though we have made some modest adjustments in staffing, we have failed to meet current needs and have continued to fall behind over the past 20 years. This is by and large due to the pride that our members displayed over the years and didn't want to admit that the members deserved or needed some sort of compensation. We are in need of a substantial change in the way we do business to avoid a potential crisis.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this document is to set forth a plan of action to deal with the ever growing need for staffing of both emergency incidents as well as performance of administrative functions. The Goodwins Mills Fire-Rescue has grown far beyond what was originally anticipated in 1949. This document should support and show a detailed plan to bring this Department staffing to where it needs to be today. This plan does not project the need for 10 – 20 years from now, but rather a 3 to 5 year plan. You will note that in this plan there are no dates of implementation. These dates should be sought out by the selectmen so as to be able to meet the goals but at the same time be fiscally responsible. Keeping in mind that an extreme maximum of 5 years with 3 years being a reasonable goal for implementation.

The ultimate goal of staffing needs is to ensure that when the Goodwins Mills Fire-Rescue is called upon, someone is there in a timely fashion. The ability for this Department to be able to solely handle every emergency with on duty staff is far fetched and rather we will attempt to handle the everyday normal incident, including medical emergencies, minor motor vehicle crashes, small outside fires, etc. We will still rely heavily on the volunteer members to assist nearly every call as well as handle back to back calls, which occur more and more each year.

Based upon the size of the community and services requested by the citizens, we will attempt to have proper coverage of at least one engine and one ambulance 24/7. This would include the need for 5 people to respond to any and all incidents. With our given situation of volunteerism, we can feasibly draw 3 volunteer members on nights and weekends as well as 1 member during normal business hours in conjunction with our current full-time employees. This leaves a gap and the need to hire paid employees to equal 2 additional employees during normal business hours and 2 paid employee during nights and weekends.

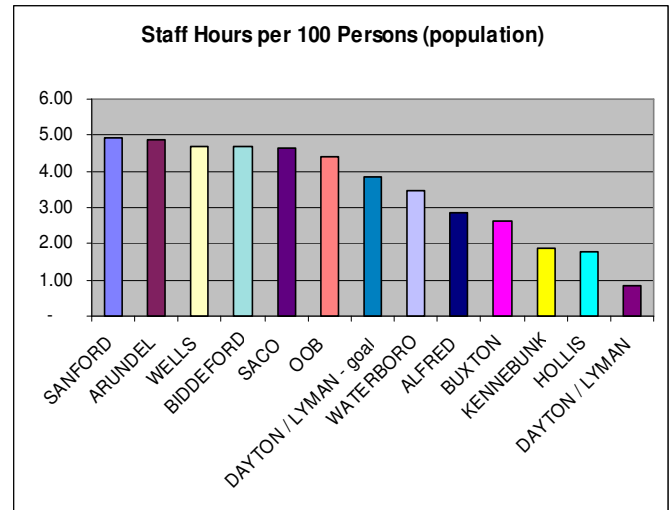
Along with the need to respond to emergencies, the management of a Fire-Rescue Department has become that of a normal business and requires not only excessive amount of time, but also this person needs to be well rounded in the business world. The need for a full time Fire Chief is long over due. From 1983-2002 we were afforded the luxury of having a full time Chief by coincidence. With the loss of Chief Mullen in 2002, we have struggled to keep up with the ever changing times and see it as a necessity to have this position in place. This individual would be charged with not only the Chief Executive Officer title, but also would have to assist in major emergency incidents as well as minor incidents during normal business hours. This position could be counted towards the goal of 5 responders.

This proposal would by no means try to remove or drive out the Volunteers that are, and have been, carrying this Department for the past 50 years, but would make volunteering in our communities more obtainable, by requiring a little less of demand on their valued family time. The average person is usually willing to give up important home time when there is a natural or man made disaster. That will remain unchanged. However, it is very difficult for the average person to daily subject their families to them leaving for hours at times for what we would call “routine calls”.

## Department Comparisons

### Alfred:

They currently have a total of **137** staffed hours each week. This includes daytime hours, a part time administrative assistant, and some evening coverage. They are subsidized by the use of live in students as well as paying their call company members \$10.00 per call. That number increases if they transport a patient to the hospital which is capped at \$25.00 for an ALS call. The Officers also receive annual stipends, capping off with the Rescue Chief receiving \$7,500 and the Fire Chief receiving \$10,000 per year.



### Arundel:

They currently have **336** staffed hours a week; this includes 2 people on duty 24/7 as well as paying their call company members \$10.00 per hour for each call, trainings and meetings.

### Biddeford:

They currently have a total of **1880** staffed hours each week, this includes a 10 person shift 24/7 as well as 3 Chief Officers and 2 Administrative Assistants Monday thru Friday. Their Call Company members respond on Desk Boxes and are paid \$50 for each Box, as well as an annual stipend of a minimum of \$1000 and caps off at approx. \$2200, depending upon rank and qualifications. They also offer a retirement benefit for anyone who dedicates 25 years of service; they will continue to receive their annual benefit for the rest of their lives.

### Buxton:

They currently have **376** hours of staffed hours each week. This includes 2 people on duty 24/7 and a Full Time Fire Chief on duty during normal business hours. The Call Company members receive hourly wages for responding to calls and trainings ranging from \$8 - \$15 per hour.

### Goodwins Mills:

We currently have **90** hours of staffed hours each week. This includes 2 people Monday thru Friday normal business hours. The Call Company members receive an annual Training Stipend ranging from \$100-\$700. The officers receive annual stipends ranging from \$600 to \$4000 for the Chief. We also pay members for being on call from \$1.00 to 2.00 per hour.

### Hollis:

They currently have **140** hours of staffed hours each week. This includes 3 people on duty Monday thru Friday normal business hours, one of which is the Fire Chief. The Call Company members receive an hourly wage from approx. \$8.00 to \$14.00 per hour for all Calls, Trainings and meetings. The Hollis Fire-Rescue does not provide EMS transport.

### Kennebunk:

They currently have **376** hours of staffed personnel each week. This includes a full time Chief, Deputy Chief and administrative assistant. Two personnel are on duty 24/7 as well as an additional person on duty during normal business hours. The Call Company members receive an hourly wage for responding to calls starting at \$8.00 per hour and capping at \$16.00 per hour. They receive hourly pay for all mandated training and ½ pay for all non mandated training.

**Old Orchard Beach:**

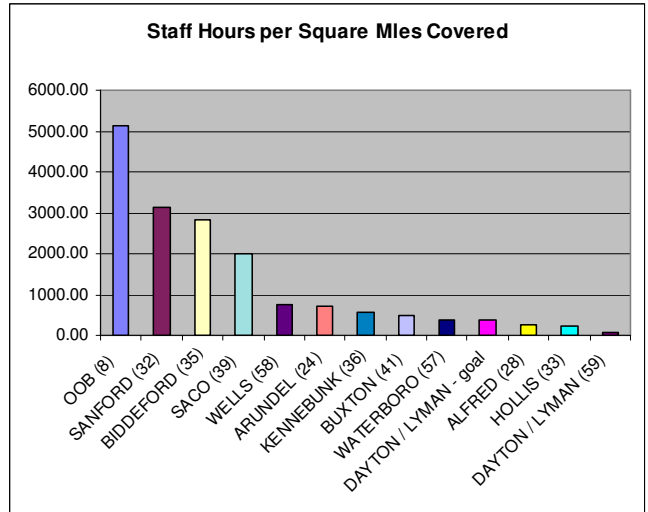
They currently have **752** staffed hours a week. This includes 4 personnel on duty 24/7, a Full time Fire Chief and secretary working normal business hours. The Call Company Members receive an annual stipend for responding on Boxes and attending meetings and trainings starting @ \$1,000 per year and capping at \$1,500 per year.

**Saco:**

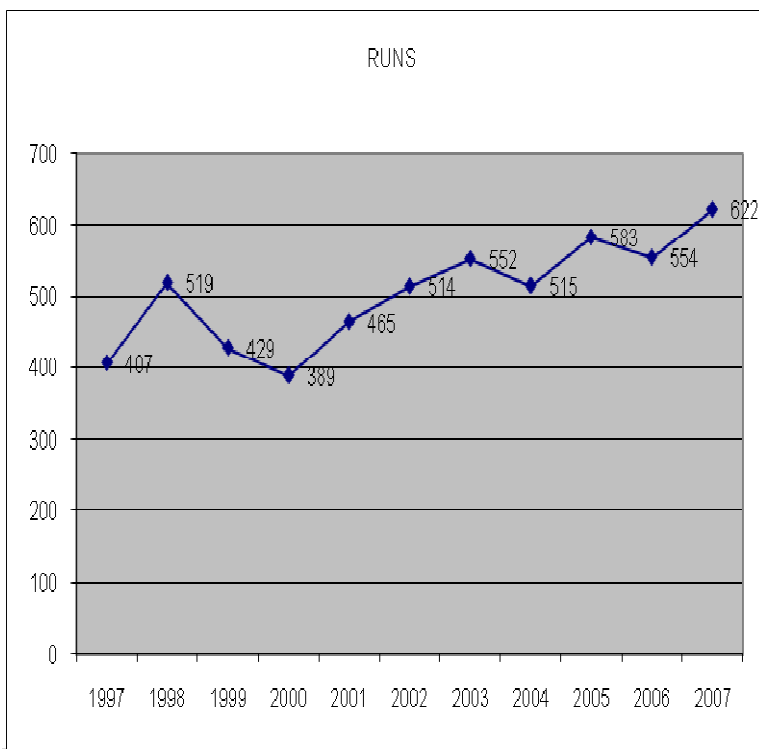
They currently have **1504** staffed hours a week. This includes 8 personnel on duty 24/7, 3 Full time Chiefs and a secretary working normal business hours. The Call Company Members receive an annual stipend for holding the position, starting @ \$700 per year and capping at \$1,700 per year. They also receive \$50 for each Box responded to, \$25 for each meeting or training and will receive an hourly wage of \$11.00 per hour for long duration calls or weekend schools. They are also subsidized with use of live-in students in their outlying Fire Stations.

**Waterboro:**

They currently have **432** staffed hours a week. This includes 4 full time personnel on duty during normal business hours and 2 part time people on duty nights and weekends. Each officer does one 8 hour shift per month of weekend duty, which they are compensated at their hourly rate for. The Call Company Members receive a flat rate for responding to calls, trainings and meetings starting @ \$10.00 and capping at \$14.00. They are also subsidized by the use of live-in students in their Central Station. Starting in 2008, they have secured funding for an additional 40 hour week FF-Emt as well as a part time secretary. (these hours are not in the totals or graphs.)



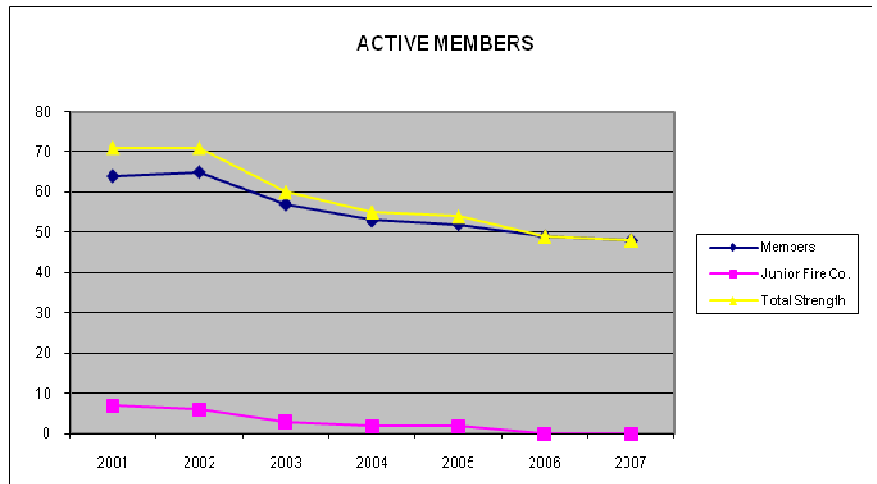
**Current Volunteerism in our Community:**



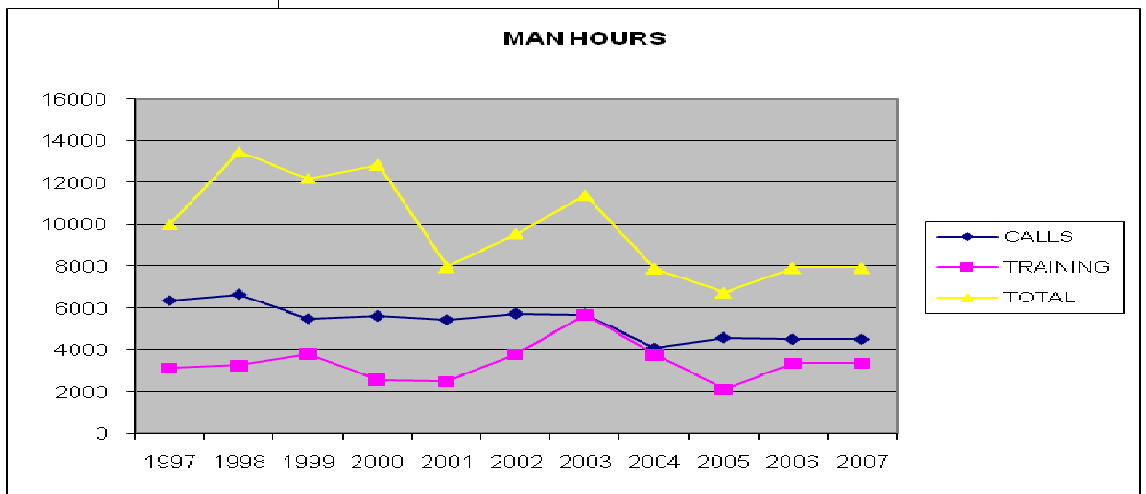
Volunteerism in our community is as strong as any other community in our area. However, it has shown a downward slope over the past 30 years. This can easily be attributed to the changes made in society both from the side of what it takes to make a family function these days, to the demands and expectations that society has laid upon public service. No longer is the Fire Department called out for only serious type emergencies, but we have become a routine service giver on a daily basis.

In these next graphs you will see how the rate of calls for service has continued to climb from what were 68 calls in 1975 to what will be well over 600 in 2007. You must also note that the man hours though are on the decline. This is due to the fact that we have less people responding to help at these emergencies. This adds to the burden of those responding and makes it even more difficult to retain people.

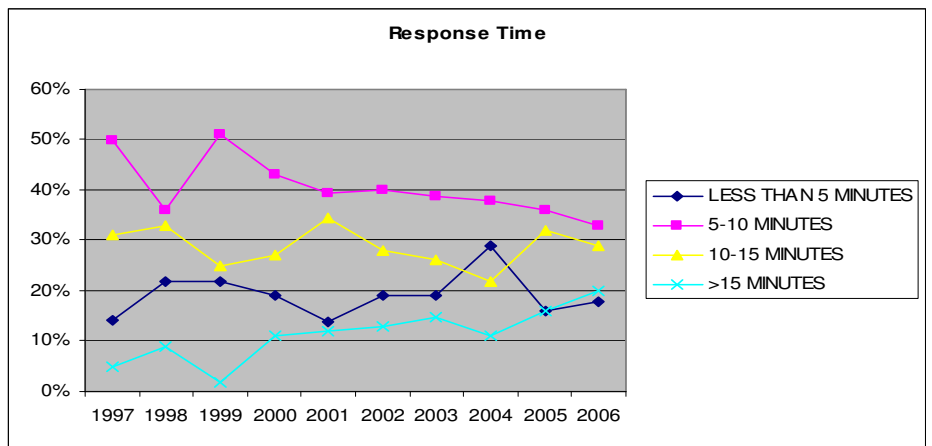
This next graph depicts the number of active members that we have been able to retain over the last ten years. Though the numbers only seem to decrease by one or two a year, it continues to prove the direction we are heading in, regardless of the tireless efforts we have made to attract and keep members in our community. We have taken on 93 new members in the last ten years and have been able to retain 26 of them. This further proves the point that the volunteer service requested upon on by our citizens is far beyond what one can reasonably expect.



Though we are extremely proud of our organization, this graph shows how long it takes from the time of the call until the time the 1<sup>st</sup> piece of equipment arrives on scene. NFPA and ISO request that you have a piece of apparatus on scene within 3 minutes from the time of the

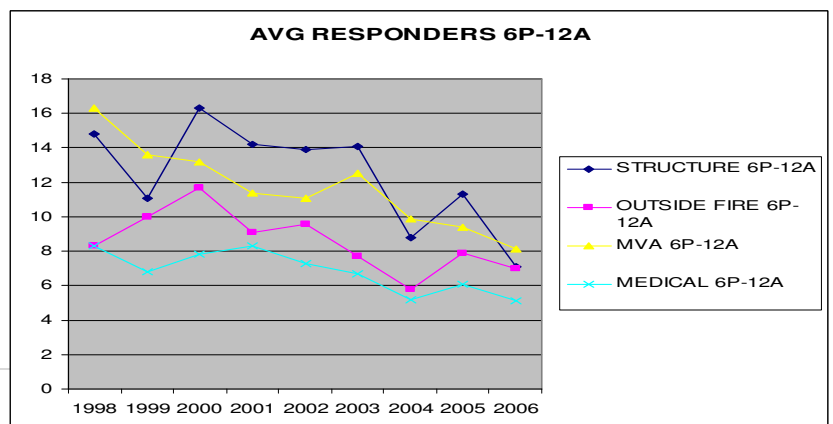


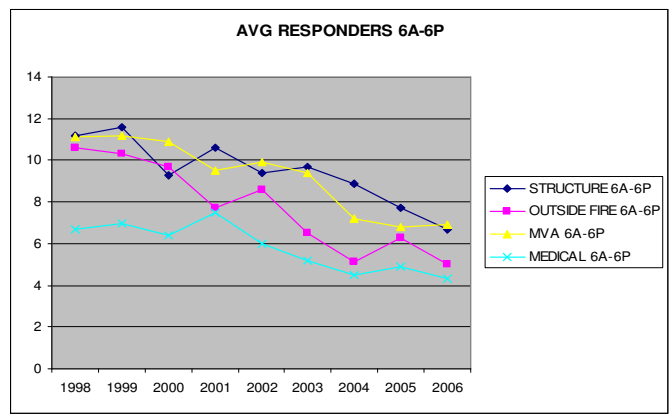
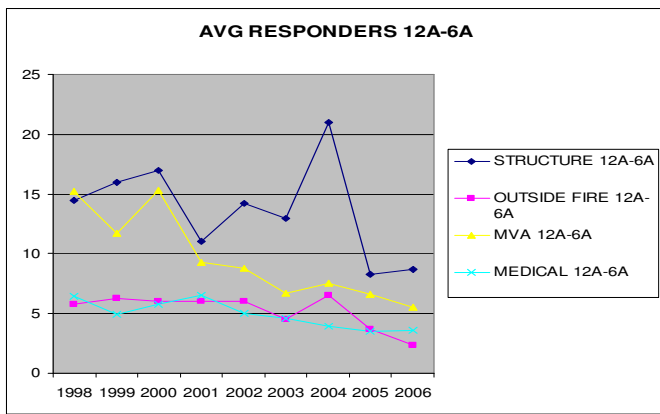
call. This goal would be very tough to meet, however it seems a little excessive to think that nearly 1 out of every 5 calls, it take us over 15 minutes to arrive.



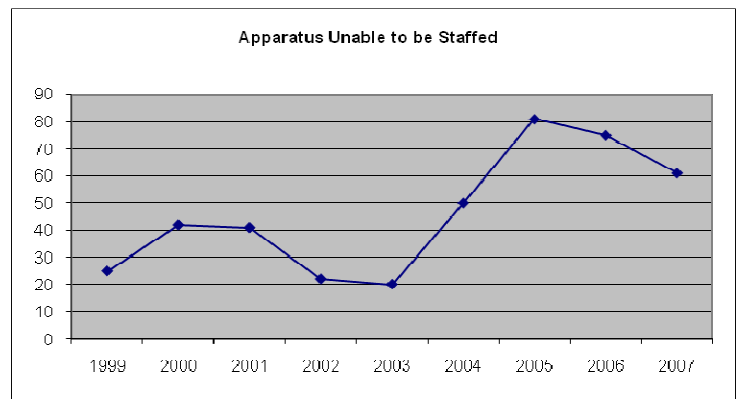
You can also denote from this graph that these response times have slowly gotten worse over the last ten years. This in itself supports the need to have on- duty staff in the Fire Station 24/7. Below, the next 3 graphs show the average number of responders that have responded to emergency calls.

Though like any service, there will always be peaks and valleys. The overall picture shows that no matter what time of day, the number of people responding continues to dwindle.





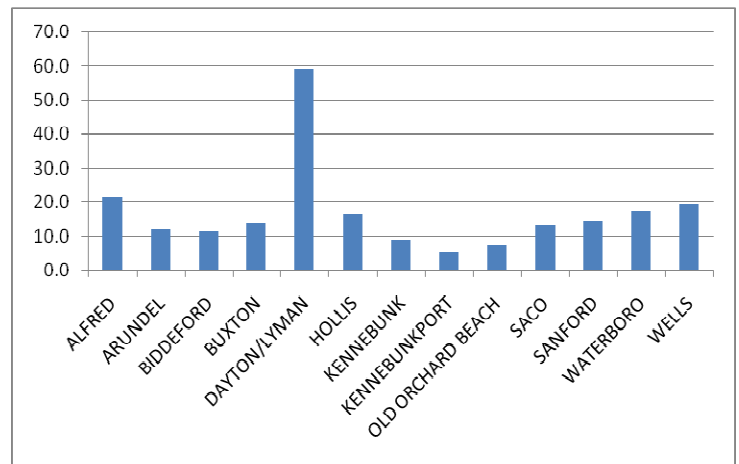
The last graph, which is probably the most disturbing, is the number of times in a year that apparatus is toned to respond and never get out of the station due to lack of manpower. As you can see in the graphs above it makes perfect sense to think that with the decline in manpower, these stats are inevitable and unacceptable. This lack of apparatus response is both dangerous for the citizens and dangerous for our responders. This can easily put our members in a bad situation where they are faced to make a decision to perform an unsafe act in order to provide the service that is expected.



### Demographics and the Use of Mutual Aid

We currently have one fire station that covers both of our communities. With the size of both communities put together this by far gives us a territory nearly triple the size of any abutting community; as depicted in the graph to the right. This makes our ability to have manageable response times virtually impossible without on duty staff.

If this were thirty years ago, we would most likely be looking to add additional volunteer fire stations. However, given the trend of volunteerism in this nation, changes in society and the general population setting the bar for regionalization as a must in order to reduce costs, we feel that adding more fire stations with no paid staff would only prove inefficient and increase capital costs.



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ISO (Insurance Services Organization), a national agency that accredits Fire Departments for their abilities to respond to and handle structure fires. This agency accredits each fire department on a scale of 1 to 10. One being the best and ten considered to having no fire department at all. We are currently rated at what is called a 9/10. This means that residences that are within 5 miles of our fire station are rated as a 9 and areas further than 5 miles from the fire station are a 10. This rating comes into play when our residents purchase homeowners insurance. By using this staffing plan along with the use of some Automatic Mutual Aid in outlying areas, we are confident that we could drop our rating to at least an 8/8. This would allow each of our citizens to see an approx. savings of 8% per rating drop. For example someone living on the Danley Road in Dayton or the Howitt Road in Lyman could see a 16% savings annually and someone in the village area would see an 8% savings. Based upon the number of buildings and average costs of homeowners insurance in our area, we estimate that **collectively our residents could see an annual savings of upwards of \$100,000.**

## **Plan of Action:**

*Please note that all cost figures include all taxes, insurances, benefits, etc.*

### **Priority # 1:**

Hiring of a Full Time Fire Chief, to who would be directly responsible to the Selectman of Dayton and Lyman, salaried position with normal business hours and after hour emergencies and meetings.

Approx. Annual Cost: **\$65,000**

### **Priority # 2:**

Hiring of 1 additional Full Time FF-Intermediate (EMT-P desirable) to allow current 2 Full Time FF's to be put on a shift system, thus allowing us to have 2 full time FF-Intermediates on duty 11 hours a day 7 days a week.. This will increase work week for existing 2 full time employees from 45 hours to 53 hours.

Approx. Annual Cost: **\$65,000**

- New Employee: \$50,000
- Increase Existing Hours: \$15,000

### **Priority # 3:**

Increase current Treasurer's position from approx. 5 hours per week to 20 hours per week. This would allow for this position to under take all financial responsibilities, including payroll, billing, and secretarial duties.

Approx. Annual Cost: **\$14,000**

### **Priority # 4:**

Secure funding to change current Volunteer System to a part time employee status, which would further allow for the use of per diem employees as well as begin to retain responders. Estimating the hourly wages at \$10-\$15 for approximately 10,000 hours that are given each year, the budget number needed for this item would be approx. \$120,000. Also noting, we currently have training and officers stipends in the budget that could go towards this priority.

Approx. Annual Cost: **\$80,000**

### **Priority # 5:**

Hiring of 1 per diem employee 24/7 to work in conjunction with a single full time employee, at this point all 3 Full time employees would be changed from day shifts to 24 hours shifts and thus increased from 53 hours a week to 56 hours a week. Staffing would now be at 2 employees 24/7 plus the Chief working normal business hours.

Approx. Annual Cost: **\$130,000**

- Per Diem Employees: \$120,000
- Increase Existing FT Hours: \$12,000

### **Priority # 6:**

Hiring of 1 additional full time FF-Intermediate (EMTP desirable), to cover Monday thru Friday during daytime hours. This would bring staffing levels to a desired level of 4 FF/EMT's on duty during business hours and 2 FF/EMT's during nights and weekends.

Approx. Annual Cost: **\$50,000**

Total additional Annual Cost with Salaries and Benefits: \$406,000 (**\$203,000 per town**).

This document and plan was produced after many years of declining resources available and increasing demand for service. This Department, along with the support of the community, has dodged the need to add paid employees to this service for far more years than one could have ever projected. Though it may seem as though there are some sharp increases in the plan, it is due to the sole factor that we did not start to plan for this 30 years ago. We urge everyone to get involved in our community to help us through this culture change that we are experiencing and seek alternative methods that may exist.

Respectfully,

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H. Rodney Carpenter  
Fire Chief