



Allenstown Fire Department
1 Ferry Street
Allenstown, N.H. 03275
Tel 603-485-9202

Fire Chief Shawn Murray

Deputy Fire Chief Paul St. Germain

June 13, 2018

To: Allenstown Board of Selectmen
Re: Fire Chief Position Options
From: Shawn Murray, Interim Fire Chief

I have been asked by Selectwoman McKenney to detail various options for staffing of the Fire Chief's position. My recommendation is based on elements contained in the Fire Department Risk Assessment completed by MRI in September of 2016 that discusses the challenges of having staffing available to meet the increasing calls now and in the future. I have attached a highlighted copy of the areas that were reviewed during the risk assessment and recommendations of the report.

My recommendation is to continue with a Part Time, 26 hours per week Fire Chief or a Stipend Fire Chief position and to allocate the cost savings from the previous fulltime Fire Chief position to staff a second Firefighter position 45 hours per week utilizing Per Diem Firefighter/EMTs.

- The use of a Per Diem Firefighter/EMT 45 hours per week provides a significant savings and efficiency in that benefits and other personnel costs are not allocated due to the low number of hours worked. The 45 hours per week is allocated between a group of four to five call or per diem personnel therefore eliminating the need for payment of benefits.
- There is a clear decline in the number of available call firefighters to respond to emergencies during the day. As referenced in the report approximately 51 calls out of 631 are missed or not responded to. By adding the per diem Firefighter/EMT during the day we are able to have a crew of three (when part time fire chief is on duty) immediately available for emergency calls and to help address the lack of available personnel during the day.
- The highest call volumes occur on weekdays between 6 am and 9 pm.
- Out of 22 members of the Allenstown Fire Department there is only about 10 members that respond to 10 % or more of the calls.
- There is a time frame between 6-8 am and 5-9 pm that shows an increase of missed calls due to the "commuting" to or from work of call firefighters that needs to be addressed.
- The two fulltime firefighters would be able to conduct required school fire inspections, business inspections, and other life safety inspections which are currently behind.
- While the majority of calls in Allenstown are EMS related (68 % or 429 calls), there remains the need to respond to fire type emergencies (32% or 202 calls). Currently even with a Firefighter and the Fire Chief during the day there is a safety concern that two people are insufficient to perform firefighting and rescue operations. Given the current



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challenges with response of call firefighters during the day and projected increases of calls in the future, the addition of a per diem firefighter is critical.

- It may help to clarify to the Board of Selectmen that while we have mutual aid agreements with surrounding communities, however the mutual aid that is received is not supposed to be a supplement to the Allenstown Fire Departments staffing issues. An example is just this week there was a call for an illegal fire. Only two Allenstown personnel responded and a mutual aid call to Pembroke was made for assistance. This took away Pembroke's coverage for their town when the AFD should have had people respond. The call was in the hours mentioned earlier.
- There is a two in/two out OSHA standard (recognizing that NH is not a OSHA State) however similar fire standards advocate having two people outside of a building to be able to rescue inside firefighters if needed while a minimum of two personnel are inside. Should an injury ever occur while firefighting and without this accepted standard the Town is open to a large liability.
- My early impression of the organization is there is a need for a stronger delegation of authority and duty assignments because a number of tasks go unfinished or not done at all, no formal chain of command which details responsibilities, and the true number of responders is masked by having a roster of over 20 people when in reality half of the people are responding which creates a fallacy that adequate response to emergencies is occurring.
- Calls for service will continue to increase, a need to continually recruit and retain qualified first responders will need to be ongoing, and providing an acceptable level of safety to first responders is critical.

Shawn Murray, Fire Chief
Allenstown Fire Department

Allenstown Fire Department Fire Chief Options - June 2018

Full Time Fire Chief - 45 Hrs/Week		
Full Time Fire Chief	Calculations	Annualized Cost to Town
Hourly pay rate	\$33.94	
45 hrs per week - annualized	2,340.00	
Subtotal		\$79,419.60
NHRS employer contribution - Pension	27.79%	\$22,070.71
NHRS employer contribution - Medical	4.10%	\$3,256.20
Medical - Employer Contribution - family		\$14,588.16
Dental - Employer Contribution - family		\$1,396.13
Medical - Employee withholding - family	\$3,647.04	
Dental - Employee withholding- family	\$349.03	
Medicare Town Portion		\$1,093.64
Life, LTD, STD		\$635.36
Estimated Annual Cost to the Town		122,459.80

Cost Difference between work classifications

FT Chief	\$122,459.80
PT Chief	\$49,397.23
Savings	\$73,062.57

PT Chief	\$49,397.23
Stipend	\$25,183.64

Part Time Fire Chief - HRLY 26 Hours/ week		
Part Time Fire Chief - HRLY 26 Hours/ week	Calculations	Annualized Cost to Town
Hourly pay rate	\$33.94	
26 hrs per week - annualized	1,352.00	
Subtotal		\$45,886.88
Part time employees are not eligible for NHRS		
Part time employees scheduled for less than 30 hours of work per week are not eligible to participate in Medical Insurance Plan.		
Social Security Town Portion		\$2,844.99
Medicare Town Portion		\$665.36
Estimated Annual Cost to the Town		49,397.23

Stipend Fire Chief		
Part Time Fire Chief - STIPEND	Calculations	Annualized Cost to Town
Hourly pay rate	\$33.94	
100 hours per year (estimated)	100.00	
Stipend	\$20,000.00	
Subtotal		\$23,394.00
Part time employees are not eligible for NHRS		
Part time employees scheduled for less than 30 hours of work per week are not eligible to participate in Medical Insurance Plan.		
Social Security Town Portion		\$1,450.43
Medicare Town Portion		\$339.21
Estimated Annual Cost to the Town		25,183.64

Allenstown Fire Department Firefighter Options - June 2018

<u>New FT Firefighter</u>	<u>Calculations</u>	<u>Annualized</u>
Hourly pay rate	18.37	
45 hrs per week - annualized	2,340.00	
Subtotal		42,985.80
NHRS employer contribution - Pension	27.79%	11,945.75
NHRS employer contribution - Medical	4.10%	1,762.42
Medical - Employer Contribution - family		14,588.16
Dental - Employer Contribution - family		1,396.13
Medical - Employee withholding - family	3,647.04	
Dental - Employee withholding- family	349.03	
Medicare Town Portion		565.35
Life, LTD, STD		343.89
Estimated Annual Cost to the Town		73,587.50

<u>Use Per Diem Firefighters</u>	<u>Calculations</u>	<u>Annualized</u>
Hourly pay rate	18.37	
45 hrs per week - annualized	2,340.00	
Subtotal		42,985.80
Estimated Annual Cost to the Town		42,985.80