


Public Safety & Court Committee

DEPARTMENT: Burleson Fire/EMS
FROM: Casey Davis, Fire Chief
MEETING: April 8, 2026

SUBJECT:

Receive a report, hold a discussion, and provide recommendations to the city council on Fire/EMS staffing needs, capital improvement plan implementation and timing. *(Staff Contact: Casey Davis, Fire Chief)*

STRATEGIC PRIORITY AND GOAL(S):

Strategic Priority	Strategic Goal
 <p>Beautiful, Safe, & Vibrant Community</p>	<p>3.3 Enhance emergency response services 3.4 Ensure public safety equipment and personnel needs are being met</p>

SUMMARY:

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of the current operational capacity of the Burleson Fire/EMS system and to seek Council direction on the timing and implementation of additional resources required to maintain service delivery and response performance. As the community continues to grow, the Fire/EMS system must evolve to ensure it can meet both current demand and future needs.

Over the past five years, the Burleson Fire/EMS system has experienced significant growth in service demand with total call volume increasing by 68 percent. This level of growth has far exceeded typical industry projections and has created sustained pressure on staffing, apparatus availability, and overall system performance.

As a result, the system is currently operating near capacity. Unit Hour Utilization (UHU) for EMS units is approaching or exceeding targeted performance thresholds, and fire suppression staffing is challenged to consistently meet NFPA 1710 effective response force (ERF) assembly standards. Under current conditions, the department is challenged to assemble 15 personnel within eight minutes for a

structure fire, which falls short of the 17 personnel benchmark for residential incidents. For commercial or multi-family fires, where staffing requirements increase substantially, our system is unable to assemble the necessary personnel within NFPA 1710 timeframes. This gap requires reliance on mutual aid, which cannot consistently meet required response time standards. Additionally, sustained workload levels are creating increasing strain on personnel, impacting morale, retention, and long-term workforce stability.

Operationally, both fire and EMS responses require multiple critical tasks to occur simultaneously in order to achieve successful outcomes. National research supports this approach. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has demonstrated that properly staffed crews complete fireground tasks faster and more effectively, while the American Heart Association (AHA) emphasizes team-based, simultaneous interventions in cardiac arrest care. These findings reinforce that system performance depends not only on the arrival of the first unit, but on assembling sufficient personnel quickly to perform multiple tasks at the same time.

The department has taken several steps to manage costs and improve operational efficiency. These efforts include implementing EMS and fire cost recovery programs, strengthening commercial inspection and fee collection processes, adding a Battalion Chief to improve fireground command and safety, and expanding ambulance resources staffed with cross-trained firefighter/EMS personnel. While these actions have improved system performance and fiscal responsibility, they have not offset the impacts of sustained demand growth and fire assembly.

Based on current system performance and projected growth, two primary operational needs have been identified. First, an additional frontline fire company is required to support response reliability and improve fireground assembly. This need exists regardless of the timing of Station 4 construction and carries a staffing impact of 14 additional personnel. Second, the department should transition the current peak ambulance to a 24-hour unit in order to manage EMS demand, maintain UHU within target ranges, and reduce system strain and overtime. This requires an additional 4 personnel. In total, these needs represent an increase of 18 personnel.

Staff recommends maintaining the current timeline for Station 4 construction, as it provides permanent coverage to the west side of the city, aligns with long-term growth projections, and serves as the intended location for deployment of the additional fire company. However, it is important to note that the need for the additional fire company is independent of Station 4. If necessary, the department can deploy the company sooner using existing infrastructure, such as double company staffing at Station 1, to address current operational needs.

At this time, staff is seeking Committee feedback and direction on several key items, including the timing of the additional fire company deployment, the transition of the peak ambulance to 24-hour staffing, the Station 4 construction timeline and prioritization, the phased hiring approach for 18 additional personnel, and the timing of capital improvement plan items such as the Ladder Tower and Brush Truck.

In conclusion, the Burlison Fire/EMS system is experiencing demand that is beginning to outpace current capacity. To maintain service reliability and response performance, additional resources will need to be considered. Staff is seeking Council direction on the timing and approach for implementing these needs in a manner that aligns with the City's priorities.

Staff recommends adding an additional fire company and transitioning the peak ambulance to 24-hour service, while maintaining the current Station 4 CIP timeline.

PRIOR ACTION/INPUT (Council, Boards, Citizens):

List date and description of any prior action related to the subject

REFERENCE:

Insert CSO# if applicable
Insert resolution or ordinance change

FISCAL IMPACT:

Proposed Expenditure/Revenue:
Account Number(s):
Fund:
Account Description:
Procurement Method:

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