

Public Safety Staffing Study Police, Fire, and EMS

For the City of



Conducted by



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Executive Summary

The intent of the executive summary is to give an overview of the most important issues and opportunities identified by the consulting team during the course of the study. The reader is highly encouraged to read the document in its entirety in order to gain an understanding of the recommendations presented within the report. Reading only the executive summary does not provide ample information on which to base decisions or to judge the recommendations made within this report.

The City of Columbia Heights requested an analysis of police and fire/EMS operations to provide a recommendation for existing and future staffing services for the City. Overall, the departments are recommended to remain two (2) separate departments. Reorganizing the City's code enforcement services under a civilian Code Enforcement Unit within the Police Department staffing the Code Enforcement Unit will provide more effective inspection and enforcement services. In addition, the City is recommended to provide additional sworn and civilian personnel to assist with overall minimum staffing and better sustain existing community policing programs currently provided by the Police Department. Aside from these major recommendations, the remaining recommendations will benefit the operations of the department and can be considered for future consideration.

Fire/EMS services are provided to the City of Columbia Heights through a combination fire/EMS department consisting of eight (8) career and twenty-two (22) paid-on-call employees. This staffing method allows for a minimum of two (2) fire/EMS personnel on-duty 24-7. The issues, discovered by the consultants, were framed around the rental property inspections and enforcement of the City's Property Maintenance Code duties assigned to the Fire Department.

However, the department has opportunities to become a more efficient, trained, and progressive organization; all of which are directly related to leadership. At the time of the study the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief were not a well-functioning team (at the end of the study the Assistant Fire Chief retired); therefore, the duty personnel had considerable autonomy on what activities occurred on each shift, described to the consultants as three (3) different Fire

Departments depending on which Captain was on-duty. Emergency incidents have increased by an average of 2.4% over the past ten-years with EMS representing 71.56% of all emergency incidents during the three-year study period.

Two Fire Department future organization charts are included:

- *If rental property and property maintenance inspection/code enforcement remain in the Fire Department.*
- *If rental property and property maintenance inspection/code enforcement were to be reassigned to the police department. (recommended)*

The culture of the Fire Department needs to be realigned with the responsibilities of an all hazards response department with significant emphasis placed on training. It is not known if the current Fire Chief wishes to or is capable of making the changes needed within the organization; that will be a decision for City Administration to determine. The consultants listed options for future Fire Department leadership.

The consultants highly recommend that consolidation discussions with Fridley, St. Anthony, and Columbia Heights be reassessed from the 2013 consolidation efforts; regardless of future consolidation efforts the Fire Department should add one (1) full-time firefighter/EMS personnel assigned to a 40-hour 5-day a week (Monday – Friday) to augment the current on-duty staffing including aggressive recruitment of additional paid-on-call members.

There are also other immediate compliance concerns related to the Fire Department, including the recommendation to equip the Fire Station with an OSHA approved Emission Exhaust System, amending Paid-On-Call compensation to ensure compliance with Minnesota Minimum Wage, and define work periods in accordance for Fair Labor Standards Act to ensure proper overtime calculations. In summary, leadership, training, safety, and compensation components will need to be addressed in order for the Fire Department to provide more effective and efficient methods of protection and service.

Introduction

McGrath Consulting Group, Inc. was contracted by the City of Columbia Heights, Minnesota to conduct a Management Study of the City's Public Safety Departments.

Any report of this nature is only as good as the data and information provided to the consulting team. For a study of this nature, a significant amount of documentation was requested. Every effort was made to obtain accurate data and examine the issues from a non-prejudicial perspective. Therefore, the recommendations made within this report are based on quantitative and qualitative facts such as: data provided by the Police and Fire Administration, City Officials, City employees, interviews, observations, standards, research, and sources that are associated with the topic, and the experience of the consultants – who have spent years in either Fire/EMS, Police, emergency services, or an aspect related to that endeavor.

Dr. Tim McGrath, CEO of McGrath Consulting Group served as the overall Project Manager and Lead Fire consultant, with Chief Ron Moser as the Lead Police consultant. Nine additional consultants provided review and input on specific aspects of the Study, based on their areas of expertise, of which, seven (7) participated in the site visit(s). During these site visits, the consultants gathered and analyzed both qualitative and quantitative data to gain a better understanding of the existing state of the organizations as they currently exist, thereby, identifying future opportunities for greater cooperative efforts.

Study Methodology

Quantitative

Quantitative methods emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected. Quantitative data is any data that is in numerical form such as statistics, percentages, etc.; allowing the consulting team to analyze the data to yield an unbiased result that will validate the information gathered by the consulting team.

Quantitative research using statistical methods starts with the collection of data, based on the objectives of the study. Usually a big sample of data is collected – this would require verification, validation and recording before the analysis can take place. It is this validation of the data submitted that yields the best portrayal of how services are actually provided. A copious

amount of data was requested from the City, and Police and Fire Departments listed in Appendices A and B.

Qualitative

Qualitative methodology is a method of observation to gather non-numerical data e.g. thoughts, opinions, and key issues. Qualitative methods used included observations by the consulting team and in-depth interviews with stakeholders, both external and internal. All organizations have a culture which is comprised of beliefs and behaviors that determine how members behave in the department.

Qualitative research allows the consulting team to understand the opinions, attitudes, behavior, feelings, beliefs, values, perceptions, and underlying assumptions that comprise a department's culture.

Stakeholders Interviews

Using a prepared list of questions, during the course of the study, the consulting team conducted interviews with key stakeholders including Elected Officials, City Administration, community leaders, Fire Department leadership, Police Department leadership, and as many individual and/or group interviews with Police Department and Fire Department personnel as possible, including sworn, civilian, full-time, and part-time personnel.

The consultants wish to express appreciation to the City Manager, the former City Manager who retired during the course of the Study, the elected officials, the Police Chief and his staff, the Fire Chief and his staff, Assistant Finance Director, and the many other personnel who participated in interviews and other interactions and provided data and other information for the development of this Report.

Recommendations

Overall, the consultants give numerous recommendations for the City's consideration. At the close of each section throughout the Report, a list of recommendations will be provided for that section. Each recommendation has been ranked a priority level by the consultants. A summary

of all recommendations is found in in “Summary of Recommendations” at the end of the Report. The Table below identifies how each level of priority has been defined.

Table 1: Recommendation Priority Definition

Priority	Definition	Example
1	Urgent/Immediate	Potential threat to life, legal and regulatory compliance violations; physiological needs; essential preventative action needed
2	Pressing < Priority 1	Significant impact on organization; action needed as soon as possible
3	Important < Priority 2	Organization will benefit by addressing soon; items that should be accomplished
4	Future Consideration	Items needs to be addressed; develop future plan of action; low consequences of delay-action
5	Information Only	Organization should be aware; take under consideration

This report is broken into several sections: an independent audit of the fire department; an independent audit of the Police Department; sections concerning Human Resources are separate sections, but pertain to both the Fire Department, Police Department, and/or the City as a whole.

Community Overview/Governance

Community

The City of Columbia Heights is located in Anoka County, Minnesota and is 3.4 sq. mi. and has a growing population of approximately 20,153. The current population is comprised of the races as illustrated in the Table below:

Table 2: Demographics by Race

RACE	% OF POPULATION
White	59.5%
Black or African American	18.1%
Hispanic	10.3%
Asian	5.6%
Other	3.0%
Two or more	3.5%
Total	100.0%

Emergency incident volume is often related to social economics of a community.

Socioeconomic factors are among the best-known predictors of fire rates at the neighborhood level. Virtually every study of socioeconomic characteristics has shown that lower levels of income are either directly or indirectly tied to an increased risk of fire.

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency – United States Fire Administration – National Fire Data Center

In the case of Columbia Heights, the median household income is \$48,791, the median property value is \$155,300. The City is predominately a residential community bordering the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Governance

The City is governed by a 5-member council: Mayor and four (4) Council Members elected at large. The City of Columbia Heights is a charter city and as such has a City Charter that determines the procedures of city government in accordance with State Statutes and the Minnesota State Constitution. Under this Charter, the City has adopted the council-manager form of government. The City Council appoints the City Manager, who is the chief administrative officer for the City. Department Heads report to the City Manager with the exception of the Police Chief who reports directly to the Mayor.

Police Department

Staffing and Organizational Effectiveness

The authorized strength of the Police Department is a total of 33 full-time employees and five (5) part-time employees. Of the authorized total, 27 are sworn full-time personnel, comprised of the Police Chief, two (2) Captains, four (4) Sergeants, and twenty (20) Police Officers. This results in 1.34 sworn officers per thousand population serving the City of Columbia Heights. This is less than the average per thousand rate of 2.2 Officers for Cities recorded for 2017, the most recent national statistic (Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reports, 2017).

Ten years prior, the Department was staffed with 28 sworn officers. This was the highest level of sworn staffing the Department has seen. That additional Officer was from the Community

Oriented Policing Program (COPS) grant received from the Department of Justice. The Department used the position to implement the Community Oriented Policing Coordinator position. When the grant expired, the added position was not funded in the Department operating budget. The Department maintained the COP Coordinator position, which as a result, reduced patrol staffing by one (1) FTE.

The civilian staff includes the full-time positions of Office Supervisor, Information Systems Specialist (IS), Community Service Officer (CSO), and three (3) Records Technicians. There are five (5) part-time CSO's. Additionally, four (4) Volunteers (unpaid Reserve Officers) serve the Department.

In 2018 the Department reorganized its' structure. At that time, the Department had one (1) Captain, and five (5) Sergeants. The 2018 structure revision added an additional Captain, and the rank of Sergeant was reduced by one (1). Therefore, the total sworn number of personnel did not change. Both the 2017 and current (2018) organizational charts are shown below.

Figure 1: 2017 Police Organizational Chart

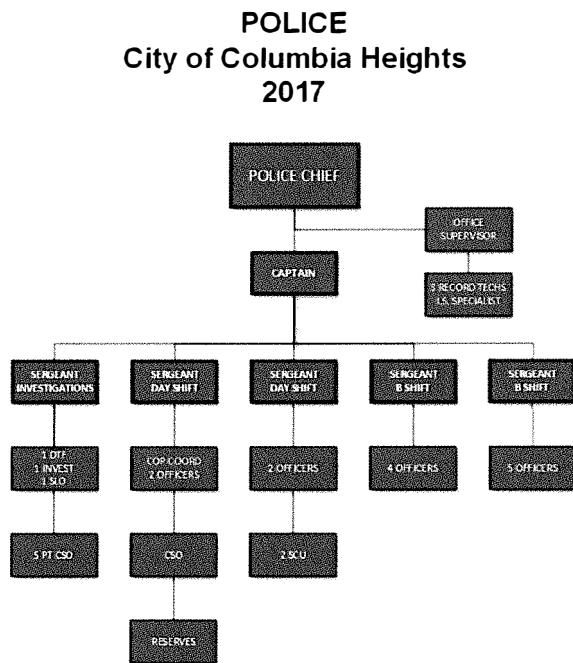
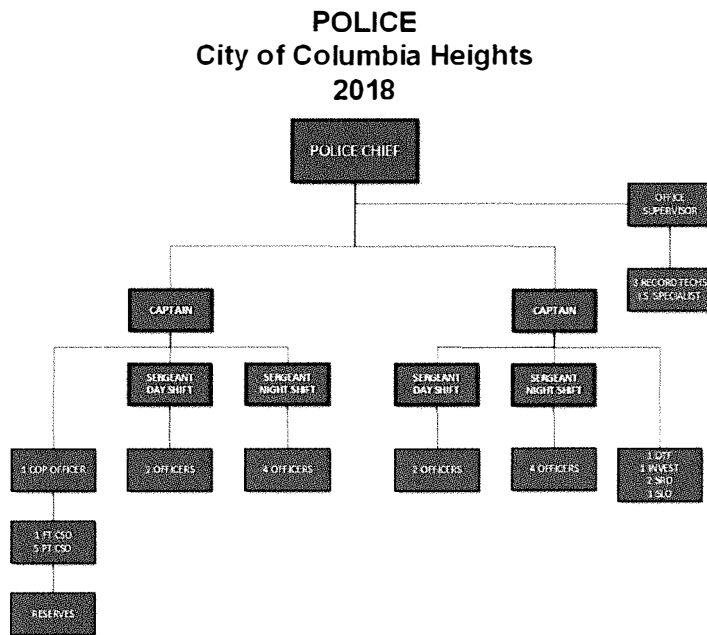


Figure 2: 2018 Police Organizational Chart



The current (2018) structure split the patrol function into two (2) shifts, one day and one night, and reports up to a Captain. By adding the second Captain position, the span of control was reduced and made more manageable.

Police Department Positions

The Department developed a Table depicting the collateral duties for all sworn positions as well as the civilian Office Supervisor. The Table is shown below.

Table 3: Duties of Police Department Positions

CHIEF	CAPTAIN 1	CAPTAIN 2	DAY SHIFT SGT.	DAY SHIFT SGT.	NIGHT SHIFT SGT.	NIGHT SHIFT SGT.	OFFICE SUPERVISOR	OFFICERS
Traffic Comm.	Training			FTO	MAC	Interns	Police Records Management	Radio Users Comm.
Permits to Purchase	Evaluations			Jail Admin	All Hands Day	Alcohol Server Training	False Alarm Program	Business Watch: Liaisons
Licensing	Internal Affairs			DART	Wellness Coordinator	Recruitment	Training Records	Neighborhood Watch: Liaisons
Employee Backgrounds	Department Policies			NW/BW	TZD		Payroll	

CHIEF	CAPTAIN 1	CAPTAIN 2	DAY SHIFT SGT.	DAY SHIFT SGT.	NIGHT SHIFT SGT.	NIGHT SHIFT SGT.	OFFICE SUPERVISOR	OFFICERS
Budget	Personnel			Portable Radio Inventory	Grant Writing		Property Room	
	CLP and CFS	SRO			Fleet/Squads		Licenses: Permits	
	Grants Admin	DTF					Computer Network: Supplies	
	Green Sheet	INV.					Budget: Accts. Payable	
	COP/SCU	Holiday Train (w/ rotating Sgt.)						
	CSO's	Youth Outreach						
COP Coordinator	Parade, Jamboree (w/ rotating Sgt.)	Forfeiture					I.S.S.	CSO's
NNO	PIO	Compliance Checks					Crime Analysis	Parking Permits
Crime Prevention	Reserves	Tasers					Technology Coordinator & Maintenance	Code Enforcement
Landlord/Tenant Training	Scheduling	Room scheduling/ laser shot/range						Speed trailer
Community/Multi-Cultural Outreach	FTO	Hilltop Liaison (w/ sergeants)						Annex maintenance
MAC								Paper Service: Subpoenas

Sworn Positions

The sworn command staff includes the Chief of Police and two (2) police Captains. These three (3) positions account for 11.1% of the sworn force.

Police Chief

The Police Chief leads and is responsible for all functions of the Department. Two Captains and the Office Supervisor report directly to the Chief. The Chief is under the general supervision of the Mayor. The Chief works closely with the City Manager. Major duties include but are not

limited to, coordination of activities, implementing policy, preparing reports, coordinating projects with other departments and budgeting.

Police Captains

The Captains have supervisory and administrative responsibilities. They assist the Chief in all aspects of leading the Department. They directly supervise line personnel including Sergeants, Officers, and Community Service Officers.

Patrol Sergeants and Officers

The patrol function is the area that has the most police personnel assigned. Of the 27 sworn members of the Department, 16 (59.25%) are assigned to this function. This number includes the Sergeants and Officers, but not the Captains.

Sergeant & Patrol Schedule

Those assigned to patrol work a 12-hour shift, comprised of four (4) shifts of 12-hours. There are two (2) patrol shifts designated as Day Shift (A), Night Shift (C) and an overlap, or power shift (B). Day shifts are scheduled from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and evening shifts are scheduled from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. When one of the day or night shifts is working, the other day or night shift is off. The B Shift, or power shift, works from 2:00 p.m. until 2:00 a.m. and is assigned under the night shift. Each shift is commanded by a Sergeant. Day shifts are staffed with one (1) Sergeant and two (2) Officers. Night shifts are staffed with one (1) Sergeant and four (4) Officers, which includes an officer assigned to the power shift on each of the night shifts. Each of the Captain's supervise one (1) day and one (1) night shift.

The Department has established minimum required staffing levels per time of day. Two patrol personnel (Sergeants are included) are required as a minimum from the hours of 6:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m., and again from 2:00 a.m. - 6:00 a.m. Night shift minimum staffing is four (4) personnel from 10:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m. and three (3) personnel from 3:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. A scheduling difficulty noted is that since the B Shift has only one (1) officer assigned per days off group, when an officer is off on any leave, the shift suffers a shortage. This results in repeated adjustment of officer and supervisor hours to ensure minimum staffing.

As of the writing of this Report, the current actual staffing of the Department is 25 Officers with two (2) vacancies. One of the two vacancies is expected to be filled in March 2019 by someone currently attending Pathways (basic police training).

Sergeant

All four (4) Sergeants are assigned to patrol. Each is responsible for supervising a shift of patrol officers. Each Sergeant reports to a Captain. Supervisory duties include but are not limited to, carrying out department policies and programs, providing general supervision of officers at scenes and on patrol, and reporting to upper command staff. Sergeants also perform patrol duties.

Patrol Officers

Patrol officers carry out the basic functions of uniformed patrol in marked squad cars. They enforce criminal law, ordinances, and traffic statutes. They are a visible presence and engaged proactively in community policing activities. The officers carry defibrillators (AEDs). Officers also respond to medical calls that involve criminal activity, major wounds, respiratory or cardiac issues, drug overdoses, and unusual calls where there could be a threat.

The duties of patrol have become more and more complicated and require more time to perform basic functions. The commitment to community policing is labor intensive. Officers are required to spend sufficient time with residents to adequately perform the community policing function.

It is recommended that two (2) additional Patrol Officers be added to the force. These Officers could be added to each day shift. It is further recommended the B Shift be eliminated and schedule these Officers to each of the night shifts. To provide for overlap at roll call, each shift should schedule one Officer to begin one (1) hour early. This also allows for that Officer to take calls the final hour of the previous shift, which serves to reduce overtime from Officers being required to stay past the end of shift (e.g. 5:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.; and 5:00 p.m. - 5:00 a.m.).

Patrol is the “backbone” of any municipal police force, so this is where the majority of staff is assigned. The Department appropriately staffs patrol when there are vacancies, by transferring

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Officers from specialty positions. This however then reduces the vital functions performed by those other specialty positions. Specialty positions also contribute to officer job satisfaction and retention. As aforementioned, the patrol function should increase by two (2) Officers. This will help prevent specialty functions from needing to be transferred in times of temporary vacancies in patrol.

Finally, during interviews with staff, several Officers felt a K-9 unit would be of value to the Department. Although these units are valuable, they also come with considerable cost. It was found that Fridley Police Department staffs a unit and can be called for service by Columbia Heights. The consultants do not recommend a K-9 as there is availability through an adjacent agency.

Special Assignments

The Officers assigned to special investigative and school assignments comprise the second largest component of the sworn personnel, with eight (8) authorized (29.6%) of the sworn officers. These positions include one (1) officer assigned to the Regional Drug Task Force, two (2) Investigators, two (2) School Resource Officers (SRO), the Community Oriented Policing Coordinator (COP), and two (2) Street Crimes Unit (SCU) Officers.

Investigators

Due to current staffing shortages, one (1) officer is assigned to the investigative function. When patrol is short personnel, it is typical to fill vacancies by pulling from specialty positions. When this occurs, there can be an imbalance of work in other areas. This is the current status of the investigative function. The current Investigator is carrying approximately 80 open cases. This is an excessive amount.

The Investigator is doing all the preparatory work for in custody arrests from patrol. This involves a great deal of administrative work, which is time consuming. This task should be delegated to clerical and patrol staff instead of the Investigators.

School Resource Officers

The Department staffs two (2) School Resource Officers. One is assigned to the high school and the other at the middle school. They also provide services at the elementary school. During the summer months when school is not in session, the Officers take leave time and fill patrol slots.

Street Crimes Unit Officers

Street Crime Unit Officers focus on drug enforcement and crimes of violence utilizing proactive intervention methods. They are a “*force multiplier*” for the patrol units. They are particularly effective in reducing crime along the Central Avenue corridor. This is important to further create a safe environment on this major thoroughfare. Additionally, this assignment, like other special assignments, is an important aspect of job enrichment for Officers which aids in officer retention.

Community Oriented Policing Coordinator

This position coordinates all community policing projects. It is a vital position given the agency’s strong commitment to excellence in community policing.

Additional and Expanded Duties and Responsibilities in Operations

The duties and responsibilities for operational personnel have vastly increased in the past decade. These added duties and responsibilities have led to better, more effective, and impartial and fair policing; but demand much more time to accomplish. Staffing has not increased to keep up, but in fact has seen reductions. In 2008, staffing of sworn positions was reduced by one (1) Police Officer. This was the result of not only the nation’s financial crisis at the time, but also due to the loss of the COPS grant funding previously discussed. In the past 11 years, there have been many additional time-consuming tasks and responsibilities added to the sworn positions. The following is a listing of those additional duties and tasks:

- *Misdemeanor and Gross Misdemeanor investigations follow up is assigned to patrol due to a reduced number of Investigators who previously conducted the follow-up.*
- *Registration and management of sex offenders is a more thorough process than historically. In 2018, the Columbia Heights Police Department managed over 50 registered Predatory Offenders during the year. Managing each offender requires an average of 1- 2 hours of Officer time per year due to increased State requirements.*

- *Field Based Reporting (FBR) has increased the time to complete reports and citations for officers.*
- *Supervisor workload has increased in reviewing all reports in FBR, totaling approximately 2-hours per shift.*
- *Intelligence based policing efforts have led to increased duties for Police Officers to respond to problem areas or persons (problem oriented policing models, inter-agency follow-up, partnerships, increased enforcement).*
- *High volume of cases per Investigator which include additional felony cases.*
- *Additional cases worked in-house to improve responsiveness and results. Additional time spent partnering with Anoka County Sheriff's Office on larger cases.*
- *Additional requirements from prosecuting attorneys relating to statements, evidentiary requirements, and body camera review.*
- *Additional clerical duties were transferred to the Investigators.*
- *Level of difficulty per case has increased as technology has become more prevalent. Prosecutors and defense attorneys requiring video, audio, jail records, etc.*
- *Crime activity is often regional requiring collaboration and meeting with neighboring agencies.*
- *Clerical activities for case assembly was transferred from a clerical staff to Investigators with changes in records staff. Case assembly and summaries can involve 1-2 hours per case.*
- *De-escalation requirements have increased the time spent on calls. Crisis Intervention techniques take more time and can result in delay of non-priority calls.*
- *Investigations reduced from three (3) investigators to two (2) investigators to staff COP and SCU positions.*
- *There is required community policing involvement of a minimum of 20-activity hours per year required for all staff.*
- *Responsibilities of School Resource Officers increased to include mentoring, DARE instruction, youth programs and outreach.*
- *Additional required training related to Crisis Intervention Techniques and mental health, implicit bias, and de-escalation is required by the Minnesota Peace Officer Standards &*

Training (POST). Additional employee training has also been added to create a professional and responsive workforce.

- *Street Crimes Unit was established to address problem areas and properties. Requires regular oversight and supervision due to the high-risk nature of the work.*
- *COP Coordinator position was added to facilitate community outreach and police property maintenance enforcement.*
- *Data is required by command staff to appropriately lead the Department with community and problem-oriented policing. This means front line supervisors complete more forms and paperwork to inform command staff to aid in decision making.*

Civilian Positions

Office Supervisor

The Office Supervisor has responsibility over one IS Specialist and three (3) Records Technicians. The duties for this exempt position includes supervision of subordinate personnel, department payroll oversight, recruitment support, budget management, data reporting, department communications, and confidential support to the Chief and Captains. Whereas the duties of the position are appropriate, the position has very little backup/depth support, so if the incumbent is absent, very little work can be redistributed. This is even more problematic because the incumbent has been with the City for over 30 years. The organization should always be mindful of succession planning for management level positions, because every employee will eventually leave their job. Whereas the Department has a mechanism with Sergeant and Captain promotional opportunities to develop sworn management, no such option exists for this critical civilian position.

The Department should develop and staff a non-confidential senior level support position that can be a lead worker over the Records Technicians, assist with non-confidential communications, budget review, and data reporting, in addition to their day to day records responsibilities. This will give the Office Supervisor a backup in these areas and allows the organization to develop internal civilian staff. This senior level support position would be above the Records Technicians in terms of salary and responsibilities, so it also introduces a promotional opportunity for civilian staff to grow and develop professionally with the Department.

Records Technicians

This is a clerical position under the supervision of the Office Manager. The position performs clerical tasks related to records and reporting systems of the agency. Technicians also receive incoming telephone calls and assists customers at the front desk.

Information Systems Specialist

The Information Systems Specialist is the Department's information technology position. This position prepares weekly statistics, assists with technical issues, and installs the squad technology. The position has responsibility for maintenance of information systems and other technologies for the Department.

Community Service Officer (CSO)

The Department employs both one (1) full-time CSO and five (5) part-time. The position reports to a Sergeant in patrol. The position is uniformed, in a marked vehicle, and performs non-emergency functions that do not require a sworn police officer.

The full-time CSO duties include but is not limited to, directing traffic at schools, courier runs, transport of evidence to the crime lab, animal control and prisoner transports to jail. Ordinances and parking violations can be issued by the Officer.

In 2008, funding from the state Local Government Assistance program was cut. This resulted in the City eliminating one (1) full-time CSO position and modifying staffing to one (1) full-time and additional part-time CSO's. The Police Chief commented that when the full-time CSO is not on duty, they have difficulties having other staff complete the vital functions of that position.

The full-time CSO is scheduled Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Hours assigned to part-time officers are in the evenings and primarily respond to calls for service. There is a void noted between the hours of 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. when the full-time CSO is not on duty and prior to part-time officers beginning the shift.

The CSO position is an effective support position to both operations and administration. The Department would benefit from adding a second full-time CSO. The consultants recommend this addition. Furthermore, the Department will benefit by scheduling each to 10-hour shifts. One CSO would serve Sunday - Wednesday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the second officer Wednesday - Saturday the same hours. This scheduling will provide for coverage every day, as well as an overlap day on Wednesday. The overlap allows for regular scheduling of duties such as evidence runs, vehicle maintenance, assistance with administrative functions, etc. These hours also allow for staffing from 3:00 p.m.- 5:00 p.m. time, that is now without staffing.

Additional and Expanded Duties and Responsibilities in Support and Administration

Similar to sworn position duties, many additional time-consuming tasks and responsibilities have been added in the last decade to those in civilian positions. As in operations, these added tasks have improved the police function, but come with a cost of required time. The following is a listing of those additional duties and tasks.

- *Report approvals require a 2-party approval which increases time.*
- *Record Technicians assumed primary property room responsibility with changes in CSO staffing. (averages 8-hours a week in staff time)*
- *Data requests involving technology have increased and are more time consuming to process.*
- *State law that allows for redacted body worn camera video to be released exposes the Department to significant time involved with redacting video, which must be done manually frame by frame.*
- *Crime statistics are being run and reviewed weekly.*
- *High amount of technology in squad cars and with investigations prompted the addition of IS staff.*
- *Numerous duties that were previously spread out are now consolidated with the Officer Supervisor when Records staffing was reduced.*
- *IS has increased responsibilities that include crime analysis, statistics, Department technology, squad car and other Department equipment.*

- *Support Services Supervisor duties were incorporated into the Officer Supervisor position.*
- *One full-time CSO position was eliminated and modified to two (2) part-time CSO's.*

Recommendations

- *Increase the number of Police Officers by two (2) additional Officers. Assign them to day shift. **Priority 2***
- *Adjust patrol shift scheduling by eliminating the B Shift. Assign current B Shift Officers to regular night shift hours. **Priority 3***
- *Assign each shift with an early car beginning and ending one (1) hour earlier than the regular shift to provide for roll call overlap coverage and to reduce officer shift holdover. **Priority 3***
- *Insure staffing of specialized units by adequately staffing the patrol function; thereby reducing the need to transfer officers to patrol during times of temporary vacancies. **Priority 3***
- *Assign the preparatory paperwork and documentation for in custody arrests to the arresting patrol officer. **Priority 3***
- *Increase CSO full-time staffing by one (1). **Priority 3***
- *Modify CSO schedules to one (1) officer Sunday - Wednesday, and the other (assuming two full-time officers) Wednesday - Saturday. Hours of work should be assigned from 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Priority 4***
- *Staff a non-confidential senior level civilian support position that can be a lead worker over the Records Technicians, assist with non-confidential communications, budget review, and data reporting. This position will report directly to the Office Supervisor. **Priority 2***

Code Enforcement

Three City Departments have different responsibilities related to building inspections and code enforcement issues. The agencies involved include Community Development, Police Department, and the Fire Department. Ordinance violations are issued through the City but are prosecuted by Anoka County. Columbia Heights is responsible for these functions in the City of Hilltop also. The City of Hilltop does not have a rental licensing ordinance or property

maintenance code but has some individual codes. They do have a nuisance call for service ordinance, but it is rarely used.

Community Development conducts building inspections, preliminary rental inspection, general zoning issues, sign code enforcement, and issues business licenses for select types of businesses. The Community Development Director advised the consultants that the Police Department is an excellent partner with Community Development. They have a great cooperative working relationship. For example, the Police will accompany Community Development to a complaint as needed.

The Police Department enforces all vehicle related codes such as abandoned vehicles or parking in the yard; animal complaints and dog licensing enforcement (CSO's); the crime free/drug-free enforcement section of the property maintenance code; nuisance calls for service; and a garbage can ordinance. The ordinance regarding nuisance calls is underused as the Department typically seeks to attain compliance by working in collaboration with landlords through community policing efforts.

The Fire Department has primary responsibility for the property maintenance code (except for crime free/drug-free housing). The Fire Department is responsible to re-inspect the interior of rental properties every other year and conduct external inspections every year, although the Department is behind on external inspections. There are approximately 950 rental licenses. Most are seven (7) units or less, or duplexes. Commercial and business inspections are also the responsibility of the Fire Department. They also have seasonal responsibility for long grass violations.

The consultants found the process of inspections and code enforcement is not cohesive and the Departments are not working together as closely as possible. Community Development commented that the citizens are at times confused about the process; such as, they make a complaint with Community Development, but follow-up was done by the Fire Department.

Additionally, violations related to the property maintenance code and the nuisance ordinance are not adequately or properly logged and tracked to ensure appropriate follow-up. Communication between Departments involved is not described as sufficient. In addition, the Fire Department and the Police Department do not merge information on property maintenance code violations. The property maintenance code provides for action against the lease on the property if three (3) violations occur within 12 months. The nuisance ordinance also provides for a fee to be assessed starting at \$250 against the property owner for three nuisance violations within 12 months. However, with the current system, it is possible that a residence could accumulate more than three (3) violations of either code within a 12-month period if they occurred both under the purview of the and Police Department.

The process for follow through on code violations within the Police Department flows through the Community Policing Officer (COP) position. That Officer serves as the primary rental property liaison. The Officer reported this takes approximately 30% - 40% of his time. When there is a violation found on a call for service, such as drugs, a conduct violation is documented, and a report goes to the Captain of that shift, who then sends the report to the COP. The COP then logs and sends to a Records Technician who creates a letter for the COP to sign. After signature, the letter then goes back to the same Records Technician to mail the letter. The COP flags the incident and checks it 10 days later. If the situation is not corrected, it eventually goes to the Council who can revoke the license. This is an unnecessarily time consuming and cumbersome process.

It was reported to the consultants there is a desire on the part of the city elected officials to improve the look and conditions of properties in the City. The current system should be improved. The consultants recommend the creation of a Code Enforcement Unit under the command of the Police Department. This civilian unit would be responsible for all current Police Department code enforcement responsibilities, and the responsibilities currently conducted by the Fire Department for the property maintenance code, re-inspections of the interior of rental properties and external inspections. They would also be responsible for long grass violations. The processing of all complaints and violations would be transferred from COP. This will

provide that position greater time to devote to the Department's comprehensive community policing programs and efforts.

The Code Enforcement Officers should be dressed in a uniform similar to that of the CSO's. This helps display their authority to the citizens. A marked vehicle, designating them as the code unit should be assigned. These Officer's should also be cross trained with some CSO duties; such as parking enforcement and traffic control. This provides flexibility and greater coverage for the Department.

Community development is recommended to maintain all of their current duties. The Fire Department would retain inspection responsibility for commercial and businesses.

By creating this new Code Enforcement Unit, the tracking of violations will be centralized and better managed. The Unit relieves the COP position from these time-consuming duties, therefore allowing more time for attention to community policing matters. It will also allow the Fire Department additional time for needed training. The Code Enforcement Unit is recommended to be comprised of one (1) full-time civilian supervisor, two (2) full-time civilian Code Enforcement Officers, and a part-time seasonal long grass Enforcement Officer.

Recommendations

- *Create a Code Enforcement Unit within the Police Department and transfer inspection and enforcement responsibilities from the Fire Department to that Unit. **Priority 4***
- *Staff the Code Enforcement Unit with one (1) full-time supervisor, two (2) full-time Code Enforcement Officers, and a part-time seasonal long grass Enforcement Officer. **Priority 4***

Community Policing

The Community of Columbia Heights

The City leadership and Police Department strives to further improve on the community policing and problem oriented policing strategies and programs they currently employ. They also wish to examine their efforts through the lens of the *Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st*

Century Policing (2015). In order to accomplish that, it is vital for the Department to understand the citizens they serve. Statistics provided by the Community Development Department, obtained from the American Community Survey and Metropolitan Council 2016, provides an overview of the City.

The current population of the City is 20,153. It is projected to increase to 21,800 by 2030, and to 23,100 by 2040. The Community Development Director provided further details about population, housing and business trends. There are 8,170 households in the City, of which almost half are rental properties.

There has been a shift to higher population, but less jobs. The manufacturing sector has been reduced. However, persons seeking housing have come to the City due to their proximity to Minneapolis, but there are not significant gains in population expected. In some residential neighborhoods, older housing is being torn down and replaced with new residential structures. From recent building trends it is expected the City will see more multi-family housing.

The City is very diverse with large immigrant populations from areas such as Tibet, Ecuador, and Somalia. This brings advantages to the City as they are trying to brand Central Avenue as a culturally diverse dining location. There is also a trend of a growing younger population. In fact, the high school has the highest enrollment numbers currently in the school's history. The City also has a significant number of senior citizens.

The ethnic and racial demographics of the City are reported as 59.5% White, 18.1% Black or African American, 10.3% Hispanic or Latino, 5.6% Asian, 3.5% two or more races, and 3% other race.

There is a commercial focus in the 3700 to 5300 block of the Central Avenue corridor. Community Development is working with the Police Department on façade improvements in that area. The façade improvement is being paid for by the County's financial contribution to the City. There is \$25,000 allocated for this project. At this time 12 businesses have applied for

funding. The Police are involved in positioning surveillance cameras on properties in that area as part of this program.

The City is also buying homes on Central Avenue to tear them down for business redevelopment. The City is putting in furniture, lights and other improvements on Central Avenue as well as barriers to prevent jaywalking.

There is a new Hy-Vee store being built at 4400 Central Avenue as well as a Hy-Vee gas station directly to the north. These are expected to open in the spring of 2019 and will significantly improve that area of Central Avenue. The Hy-Vee grocery store will also be a source of additional activity for the Police. The consultants have statistics on police activity at other Twin-City suburban Hy-Vee stores in the metropolitan area. Statistics from the Eagan Police Department showed 89 calls for service at the new store at 1500 Central Park from September 1st to December 28th, 2016. That approximates 267 per year. The Lakeville Hy-Vee, at 16150 Pilot Knob Road, generated 64 calls from June 21st to December 27th, 2016. That approximates 128 per year. Averaging the call load for both store examples approximates 198 calls per year.

The City has also amended the Code to allow microbreweries which could increase commercial activity. These establishments could also increase police call load.

Department Commitment to Community Policing

The Department is deeply committed to community policing. They have shown themselves to be leaders utilizing community policing programs and strategies. Their efforts and successes have been recognized repeatedly as described in this section.

- 1. The Columbia Heights Police Department was first nationally recognized in 2012 by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) for the Leadership in Community Policing Award. That year the Department won the IACP award for pioneering several community policing initiatives it still uses today.*
- 2. In 2015, Columbia Heights won the L. Anthony Sutin Civic Imagination Award sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. The award is presented each year to a team of law enforcement and community members whose innovative interactions transform public safety in their community. Columbia*

Heights was recognized for their variety of youth outreach programs which resulted in a demonstrable drop in juvenile arrests.

- 3. The National Civic League recognized the City for two (2) outstanding programs of excellence in 2016. The first project initiated the “City of Peace” that began the process to build a park in a low-income area of the City. The neighborhood is also home to many Somali immigrants. The project also helped to foster positive police relations with this immigrant community. The second project recognized the Department’s strategy to fully embrace community policing in the face of rising crime rates, increasing diversity, and economic decline. The program includes mandatory officer training, block organizations and business partnerships, weekly open gym events with the community, a Teen Police Academy, and other efforts.*
- 4. In 2016, Columbia Heights was named a winner of the All-America City Award. The award recognizes cities that employ ‘inclusive civic engagement’ to address issues and create a stronger connection between citizens, businesses, nonprofit, and government leadership.*
- 5. As the City has a very diverse population of immigrants, the Department held a Police-Community Dialogue in April of 2017, in which they discussed immigration practices with residents in a church setting. The Department also provides information to residents on their website regarding the Agency’s involvement and procedures related to immigration matters.*
- 6. The Columbia Heights Police Department was selected by the International Association of Chiefs of Police for the 2018 Leadership in Community Policing Award, marking the second time the Department has won the honor. The IACP award goes to one (1) agency each year, worldwide, in one of five (5) population categories. The January 2019 edition of Police Chief Magazine published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police featured Columbia Heights award on the cover page. The Department was recognized above and beyond all other award winners in all categories of achievement. This is a highly praiseworthy accomplishment. The Department won in the “under 20,000 population category” for its successful work in community policing strategies and crime reduction programs, particularly its involvement in the City of Peace Neighborhood Center. Chief Austin praised the community, elected officials, and other City Departments for winning the award.*

City of Peace Neighborhood Center

The City of Peace Neighborhood Center opened in June 2018 in the heart of the Columbia Heights’ Circle Terrace Neighborhood, an area that has seen high crime rates in the past but continues to make improvements through the combined efforts of residents, police, and community groups. The building was conceived of as a gathering place for under-served communities, where residents, city officials, and volunteer groups could meet and build

relationships. Planning for the Neighborhood Center began over three (3) years ago. Near the beginning of the process, Officers surveyed residents face-to-face to listen to the needs of Circle Terrace residents. The survey results showed that almost 90% of residents were looking for more interaction and a more engaging relationship with law enforcement. The Police and Community Development Departments then reached out to state, county, and city stakeholders, the school district, the faith community, public works, recreation, and political and community leaders to develop a plan that would provide the neighborhood with a better opportunity to grow and invest in itself. The City of Peace Neighborhood Center grew out of that collaborative effort. The Leadership in Community Policing Award was presented to the Columbia Heights Police Department on October 9th, 2019, at the IACP's Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida.

Social Media

Columbia Heights utilizes social media proactively. Their Facebook page has around 3,700 “likes”. They are responsive to residents on the page and post information regarding events, major arrests, safety messages, etc. They also have a considerable presence on Twitter with over 2,000 followers. Their website is modern and professional and links both their most recent annual report as well as their 2018 Strategic Plan on the front page.

The consultants have a concern for the ability to sustain the large and progressive community policing efforts with current staffing. To continue the level of community policing, the consultants recommend increases in Police Officers as well as the CSO position (as noted in a previous report section). Furthermore, if the Department assumes the code enforcement duties, the rental residential licensing tasks should be transferred from the COP position to the Code Enforcement Unit.

Recommendations

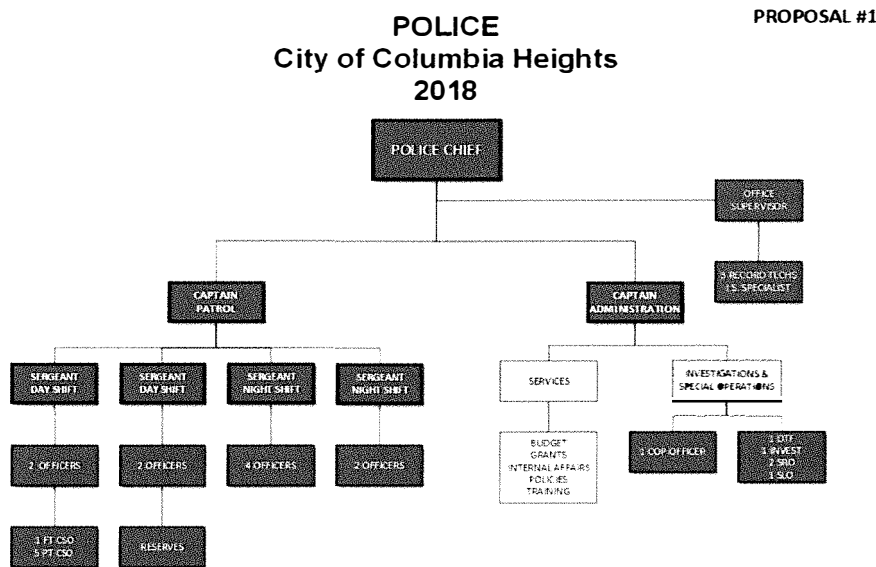
- *Move rental residential licensing and other work from the COP and assign to the Code Enforcement Unit. **Priority 4***
- *Increase patrol and CSO staffing, as noted previously, to sustain the community policing philosophy and programs of the department. **Priority 2***

Recommended Staffing and Restructuring

The City is not projected to see significant population increases in the near future, nor have other factors been found to occur in the future to require major increases in staffing. However, consultants have noted a need for increased staffing. Those recommended immediate increases are listed in a previous section of the Report.

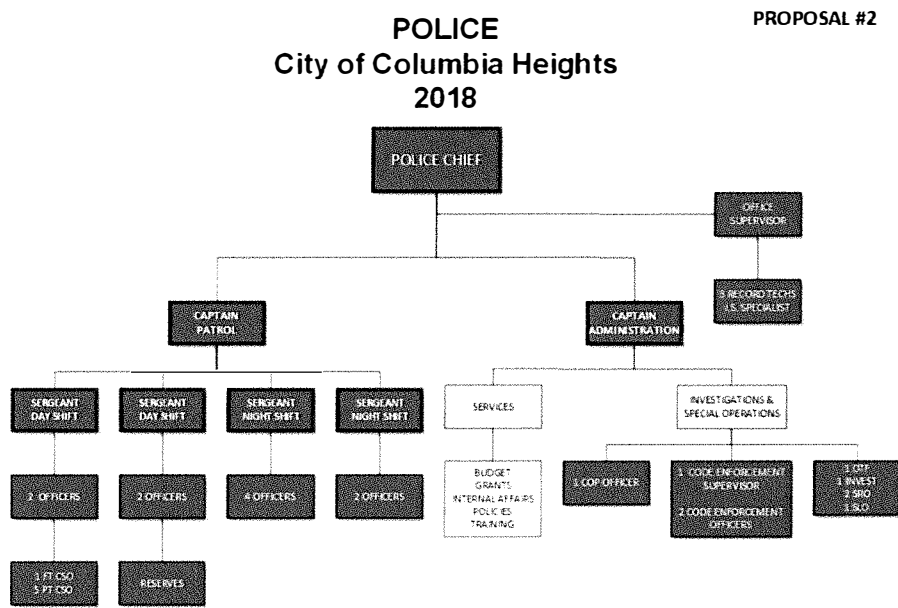
The consultants reviewed the organizational structure of the Department. Overall, the current structure works for the Agency. However, the patrol function is split between the two (2) Captains. To aid in consistent practices within all patrol shifts, and to provide for all patrol Sergeants reporting in the same chain-of-command line, the following organizational chart is recommended. This structure places all patrol shifts and functions under the command of one (1) Captain in the Patrol Division. The other Division is Administration, which involves the Services functions including budget, grants, internal affairs, policies, and training. This Captain would also supervise investigations and special operations officers. The organization provides for separation of managerial duties while balancing the work load.

Figure 3: Proposed Police Organizational Chart without Code Enforcement



The second organizational chart provides for the same structure as the first but includes the addition of the Code Enforcement Unit under the command of the Administration Division. This structure is recommended if the Department assumes the code enforcement responsibility.

Figure 4: Proposed Police Organizational Chart with Code Enforcement



Recommendations

- *Modify the Department organizational chart to assign a Captain to supervise the Patrol function including CSO’s and Reserves; and a Captain to supervise Administration which includes Services, Investigations and Special Operations. **Priority 3***
- *If the Department assumes responsibility for code enforcement, adopt the revised organizational chart and include a Code Enforcement Unit in the Administration Division. **Priority 4***

Police Response Time

Response time to citizen calls for service was analyzed for the patrol function. Response time is defined as the time from when the tele-communicator first dispatches the call until the first officer arrives on scene.

Calls are classified as either Low or High Priority. A low priority call is a report of an incident that may not be in progress, does not involve violence or injury to a person, or does not require immediate attention. A high priority call could involve a crime in progress, a violent offense, injury to a person, or other critical matters that need immediate attention.

The following two (2) Tables summarize average response time to both low and high priority calls for service:

*Table 4: Table of Low Priority Calls for Service Response Time 2016-2018
(2018 year to date through November 30, 2018)*

	2018	2017	2016	3-Year Average
Average Call	8 minutes	8 minutes	8 minutes	8 minutes
Response Time	12 seconds	6 seconds	25 seconds	14 seconds

The three-year comparison shows little fluctuation in response time to low priority calls for service. The lowest average response time was recorded in 2017 at 8 minutes 6 seconds. The highest average response time was recorded in 2016 at 8 minutes 25 seconds. This is a difference of only 19 seconds. The average response time is 8 minutes 14 seconds.

*Table 5: Comparison Table of High Priority Calls for Service Response Time 2016-2018
(2018 year to date through November 30, 2018)*

	2018	2017	2016	3-YEAR AVERAGE
Average Call	4 minutes	4 minutes	4 minutes	4 minutes
Response Time	39 seconds	13 seconds	24 seconds	25 seconds

The data on high priority calls for service is similar to the pattern for low priority calls for service. The 3-year comparison shows little fluctuation in response time to high priority calls for service. The lowest average response time was recorded in 2017 at 4 minutes 13 seconds. The

highest average response time is reported in 2018 at 4 minutes 39 seconds. This is a difference of only 26 seconds. The average response time is 4 minutes 25 seconds.

The Anoka County Sheriff's Department provides dispatch service to the Department. When the dispatch center receives a call for service in the Columbia Heights jurisdiction, it is dispatched immediately. Police Officers respond immediately to high priority calls. However, they have discretion and are able to delay response if it is a low priority call and they are involved in another police matter. Typically, the squad assigned to the area of the location of the call will respond. But since it is received by all officers, if another squad is closer, that unit can respond to the call. This option opens the door for quick response.

As the geographic area of the City is small, at 3.52 square miles, Columbia Heights patrols are never a great distance from any location in the City. Through interviews conducted with Police Officers and supervisors, the consultants found very few concerns or complaints on slow response time were reported by citizens. Officers advised they typically respond to calls quickly. They reported the only impediments to response is rush hour traffic on University Avenue and Central Avenue, and the uncontrolled intersections on the west side of the City.

There is not a nationwide standard for determining appropriate police response times. consultants have experience with studies of rural large land areas where average response times routinely exceed 20 minutes for any call. Other very small municipal agencies have very low response times. There are many factors that affect response time.

Response times do not necessarily affect the resolution of a criminal matter since most offenses are found well after commission. Response times do make citizens feel safe and may build rapport between them and the Department. Adequate response times can also lead to citizen satisfaction with the Department. For these reasons the Department should monitor response rates on a regular basis.

The response times recorded for both low and high priority calls for service are good and have stayed steady. The process for dispatch and response is also designed for rapid response. But it

still allows for discretion on the part of the Officer to *reasonably* delay response to a low priority call if involved in another important activity. Due to the nature of this Department's commitment to community policing it is important to allow the Officers this discretion. The consultants do not recommend changes in the response procedures of the Department, but only that it be tracked and reviewed to insure response remains reasonable.

Recommendations

- *Annually, review the Department response times to both low and high priority calls for service. **Priority 4***

Police Department Technology

The consultants examined the use of technology in both administration and operations of the Department. A comprehensive list of technologies utilized was developed. The technologies employed by the Department are as described in this section.

1. *Scheduling software through POSS (vendor). This program allows personnel to submit time off and overtime requests online or through an app. Supervisors can approve the requests through this system. Staff described this scheduling program as sufficient.*
2. *A Public Data Safety System (Tri Tech vendor) through Anoka County. This records management system includes Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), Mobile Field Based Reporting (FBR) and the records management. Officers' use cloud based FBR to complete incident reports. Sergeants review and approve the written reports through this same system.*
3. *Patrol Officers utilize Department telephones (iPhone) for communication, photographs, video, and recording statements from victims, witnesses, and offenders through the Axon app. Seven iPhones are assigned to patrol. Officers check them out when they go on duty. Sometimes however, not enough telephones are available to assign all officers on duty. In that case, Officers often use their own personal telephones. The files are uploaded to evidence.com at the end of the shift. Officers should not use personal phones for work related duties such as communicating, photos and video, and recorded statements. Personal phones if used in this manner could be subject to subpoena and discovery.*
4. *There is a recording system in the detention center interview room. The consultants received conflicting information as to the System functioning properly. The police administration believes there is no problem with the System; therefore, the consultants encourage the department to have the System checked to ensure it is working properly.*

5. *Body cameras (Axon vendor) are worn by all patrol personnel. The videos from the cameras have cloud-based storage and are managed through evidence.com. Officers are required to categorize the video at the end of their shift.*
6. *The Department has access to drone technology and usage through the Anoka County Sheriff's Department. This drone also has forward-looking infrared (FLIR) capability. There was discussion between the fire and police department of applying for a grant to purchase a drone for public safety usage. The consultants recommend the two departments determine the frequency of use and determine if Columbia Heights cost benefit analysis would be better to utilize the Sheriff's Department or buy their own.*
7. *By having access to this drone, the Department saves the cost involved for a device that is of extreme value, yet rarely needed.*

The Department utilizes numerous software tools in the functions of operations. Those software tools and programs include the following:

- Crime mapping through Accurint.
- Ability to search records on persons through Minnesota Department of Vehicle Services (DVS) as well as through Lexis/Nexus.
- Scene management through Rhodium (vendor) software. This system provides incident management for daily events as well as all hazards large scale disasters.
- MRAP for photo lineups.
- APS for pawn records searches.
- Minnesota Department of Vehicle Services traffic crash reports through the state online reporting tool.
- Criminal complaints managed through online electronic criminal charging (e-charging).
- Driving while intoxicated offenses are completed online through the state e-charging system.
- Search warrants can be electronically written and approved online through e-charging.

There are also technology uses employed in administrative functions of the Department.

Credit Card Payments

An issue of concern to clerical personnel is that of credit card payments. The front desk accepts cash and checks for payment for records and reports but does not always accept credit cards.

Credit cards are accepted for overnight parking violations (snow related) from November 1 through March 31, but the steps are cumbersome. Technicians must first accept the credit card, then call the Finance Department to notify, type in the credit card information, scan the receipt, then email receipt to Finance. The customer paying the ticket is then provided a receipt. The

following morning, prior to 9:00 a.m., the actual paper receipt must be delivered to the Finance Department by a CSO.

Through December 28, 2018, the Department reported 513 overnight tickets issued. Of those, 234 have been paid. Of the number already paid, 27 were paid with credit card. This process should be streamlined, and credit cards should be accepted year-round.

Evidence Tracking

There is also an issue related to technology in the evidence and property function of the Department. They do not have a barcoding evidence tracking system. This is antiquated and inefficient. The Department should utilize a barcoding system that is compatible with their records management system. Also, there are no cameras in the evidence processing and doorway leading into the area. Cameras should be in place here to insure the integrity of property and evidence.

Although some concerns are noted related to technology which can be improved, personnel provided comments to the consultants that the technology of the Department has greatly improved within the last 10 years.

In today's world of policing use of technology is vital to perform the functions of the profession. Technology helps provide timely information to decision makers. It serves to augment and improve basic policing skills. Technologies can serve as "force multipliers". Proper use of technology does not mean it subtracts from the Department's community policing focus, rather it is used to serve the public more efficiently.

Technology, however, is costly and requires time to use. Therefore, it must be deployed as efficiently as possible. The Department must choose wisely what technologies to employ, and what not to use.

The Department has chosen effective and efficient technologies. It was found that they have in fact, chosen not to employ popular, yet ineffective technologies. For example, in the past they

tested an Automated License Plate Reader but found it difficult and not effective. It was not brought on then as a tool to use.

Overall, the Department has excellent technology and uses it appropriately. Areas that could be improved include the iPhones in patrol, evidence bar-coding, acceptance of credit cards for payment, and the payroll system.

Recommendations

- *Purchase additional iPhones for use in patrol. By Department policy, prohibit officers from utilizing personal phones for work related matters. **Priority 2***
- *The recording system in the area adjacent to booking (detention center interview room) should be fixed or replaced. **Priority 3***
- *A bar-coding system for evidence, that is compatible with the records management system, should be implemented. **Priority 4***
- *Develop a streamlined system for credit card payments and accept them year-round. **Priority 4***
- *Install surveillance cameras in the evidence processing and doorway leading into the area. **Priority 3***

Fire Department

Overview of Operations

The fire department was organized on May 28, 1907 and provides protection to an area of 3.4 square miles, with a population of 20,153 (2018). The department provides 24/7 fire suppression, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), auto extrication, operations-level hazardous materials response, public education, and fire code enforcement to the City of Columbia Heights. In addition, the department licenses all rental property in the City and enforces the City's Property Maintenance Code. In addition to the City of Columbia Heights, the department also provides fire suppression, EMS, and fire code inspections to the City of Hilltop (0.12 sq. mi.) by contract.

Department Staffing

The department has eight (8) career employees and twenty-two (22) Paid-On-Call as illustrated in the table below:

Table 6: Fire Department Employees

FIRE DEPARTMENT STAFF	
Position	Work Hrs.
Fire Chief	Days M-F
Assistant Chief	Days M-F
3 Shift Captains (career)	24 Hours
3 Shift Firefighters (career)	24 Hours
22 Paid-On-Call Firefighters*	On Call
Administrative Assistant	Full-time
Administrative Assistant	Part-time

*Two Paid-On-Call personnel are rank of Lieutenant

On normal a shift day there would be a Captain and one (1) Firefighter assigned to a 24-hour shift, so the Chief and Assistant Chief may be required to respond to calls during work hours. Because of the nature of their work, firefighters can't safely operate without a minimum number of personnel; there is a variety of ways to assemble the necessary resources. However, the consultants believe that an engine response in Columbia Heights should have three individuals on the apparatus. This can be accomplished through a combination of staffing with existing career, additional daytime weekday personnel, part-time, volunteer duty shifts, etc. Staffing levels will be discussed in the National Standard section of this report.

Fire Department Future Staffing

Paid-On-Call Retention

Prior to discussing future adequate staffing, the department is encouraged to spend considerable time and effort on the retention of the current Paid-on-Call, who are already members. During staff interviews, the Paid-on-Call morale was low; the same findings were found with the career members. The US Fire Academy conducted a national survey as to why people want to volunteer. The top responses were as follows, along with the feelings expressed by current stakeholders:

- *Respond to emergencies: 83.6%*
(Columbia Heights findings) The stakeholders interviewed indicated they rarely get to respond to emergencies; rather, they come in to cover the station when the on-duty personnel are on calls.
- *Helping neighbors: 81.5%*
(Columbia Heights findings) The stakeholders interviewed wanted to serve the community.
- *Family traditions: 61.9%*
(Columbia Heights findings) Only one (1) individual referred to the history in their family of serving as a volunteer.
- *Be part of a team: 55.4%*
(Columbia Heights findings) By far this was the major dissatisfaction expressed by the Paid-On-Call. They felt they were not respected by the career members and felt the organization treated them as second-class citizens.
- *Social opportunities: 48.9%*
 - *(Columbia Heights findings) Not heard.*
- *Career development: 42.3%*
(Columbia Heights findings) Only one (1) individual indicated future career opportunities.
- *Need for affiliation: 29.3%*
(Columbia Heights findings) Was not directly articulated but it was apparent in some cases.

The consultants asked if the members knew of individuals that had left the department and were willing to share the reason heard; a variety of reasons were shared (The consultants acknowledge these were second hand comments and not heard from the individuals who left the department):

- *Organization created an adverse atmosphere;*
- *Conflicts in the organization;*
- *Attitudes of existing personnel to newcomers; and*
- *Didn't feel appreciated or needed.*

In most studies where, low morale is an issue it leads to leadership issues. One can argue that morale is intrinsic, and leadership cannot change a person's beliefs; however, leadership must recognize low morale and attempt to create an environment in which member's choose a better outlook.

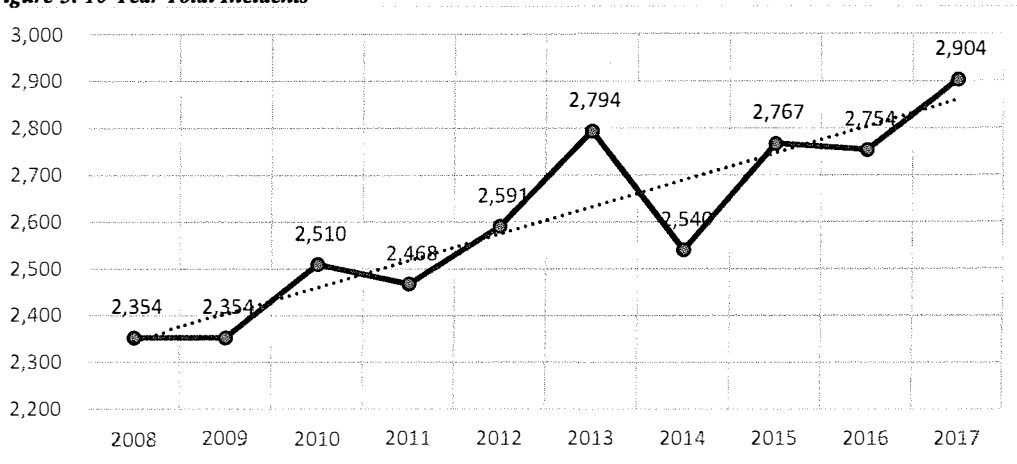
Recommendation – Retention

- *The department leadership has opportunities to develop a comprehensive retention program using existing resources such as the National Volunteer Fire Council. **Priority 3***

Increased Demands

Not only have the number of calls in the last ten (10) years increased, but the nature of those calls has changed resulting in more demands for EMS. The average change for the 10-year period between 2008-2017 was an increase in incidents of 2.40%. The figure below illustrates the 10-year changes in the number of emergency responses for the CHFD. It should be noted in the figure that a trendline (dotted blue line) illustrates the progression of call increase. What the figure does not show is that the nature of those calls has significantly changed; whereas, today EMS is the predominate service demand for the fire department.

Figure 5: 10-Year Total Incidents



The dotted line represents the trend line

Engine Staffing

In the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) -1710 Standards section of this report, the consultants covered the number of responders needed for a single family 2,000 square foot residential structure fire. The CHFD staffs two (2) firefighters to an engine which is below NFPA standard. The NFPA lists size of a community by population and the number of firefighters who staff an engine. The City of Columbia Heights population of 20,153 falls well within the highlighted (yellow) table below:

Table 7: Career Engine Staffing to Population

Population	Percentage Staffing Engine				
	1	2	3	4	5 or more
25,000 to 49,999	4.1%	21.1%	53.3%	14.9%	1.5%
10,000 to 24,999	10.1%	26.8%	37.5%	12.7%	2.5%

The majority of communities the size of Columbia Heights provides three (3) Firefighters on the initial engine to a fire. There are a number of studies addressing number of people on the initial engine job capabilities and safety to the responder.

The traditional fire suppression model is a readiness model. It is based on always having resources ready for response. Since emergency services are unpredictable, there can be high

costs associated with such a high state of readiness or availability. The advantage for Columbia Heights is they still have a core group of Paid-on-Call who remain active and if integrated into the overall staffing methodology, would allow them to become part of the response team. These individuals, however, are typically limited to their ability to respond on work days Monday – Friday between the hours of 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Peak Demand Staffing

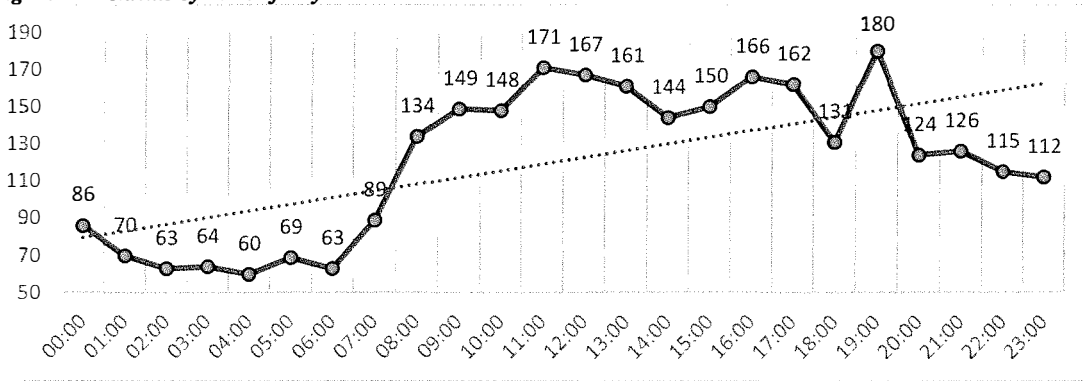
As communities like Columbia Heights look for alternatives to ensure long-term sustainability, there are times when replicating the current emergency services readiness model is challenging. What some communities are starting to do is establish the baseline readiness to handle the known community risks 24/7. To reach a more fiscally-efficient method for addressing growing call volume is to introduce peak demand units, which only function during the peak hours of the day while maintaining all baseline services.

This approach has proven effective for a number of reasons, most notably is the distribution of demand throughout the day and across the service area. If a department's call volume rises by 5% each year, and the majority of calls occur between 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., then a multitude of the 5% growth will be concentrated between those hours. Once baseline services have been met, targeting the times and areas of greatest need provide the largest return on investment.

Peak call units have been used in a variety of manners that are custom to the local setting. Some communities have staffed a full fire engine and others have deployed quick response vehicles. Most departments are providing peak demand units using overtime, but other agencies have developed a new schedule to achieve the improved staffing goal.

With regards to determining Columbia Height peak hour service delivery, the highest percent of calls typically occur between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm, so staffing could be aligned accordingly. The breakdown of incidents by time of day is illustrated in the figure below:

Figure 6: Incidents by Time of Day



Fire/Emergency Medical Services/Inspections

It appears that many years ago the City decided to staff a minimum crew (two on-duty personnel) per day working a 24-hour shift; this staffing methodology requires six career personnel. It appears (lacks quantifiable data) that it was determined that the two firefighters on duty would have ample time to perform other needed City functions; inasmuch, as fires were somewhat rare within the City. Therefore, it was decided that the on-duty firefighters would perform numerous types of inspections not traditionally performed by fire department e.g. property inspections.

Over the years there has been a greater demand on property inspections of which the fire department conducts these inspections with a two-person fire apparatus; thereby, allowing the personnel and apparatus available to respond immediately on an emergency incident. Although a career firefighter/EMT works a 24-hour shift the workday is usually divided into three categories: 8-hours of activities (training, inspections, minor apparatus repairs, etc.), 8-hours in-house activities (station maintenance, house cleaning, etc.), and 8-hours of sleep time. Of course, all activities are secondary to emergency response regardless of time of day. The firefighters interviewed estimated their work-hours of 50% to 70% of their daytime activities were conducting inspections.

Inspection Services – Past & Present

The fire department Inspection Program is supervised by the Assistant Fire Chief and involves the six (6) full time firefighters as inspectors. All firefighters are cross trained for both fire and

property maintenance inspections, allowing for flexibility in scheduling. The category of fire department inspections includes the following areas:

- Rental Inspections
- Long Grass
- Outside Storage
- Commercial/Industrial
- Single Family Inspections
- Snow and Ice
- Hilltop Fire Code
- Abatements
- Administrative, Citation, Misc.

10-Year Inspections

The overall percentage change in the number of inspections within the last 10-years conducted by the fire department increased by only 2.01% as illustrated in the Table below:

Table 8: Fire Department 10-Year Inspections

YEAR	INSPECTIONS	% CHANGED
2009	6,955	
2010	3,405	-51.04%
2011	5,720	67.99%
2012	6,073	6.17%
2013	5,413	-10.87%
2014	5,249	-3.03%
2015	5,077	-3.28%
2016	4,855	-4.37%
2017	5,205	7.21%
2018	4,719	9.34%
Average 10-Year Change		2.01%

10-Year Inspections & Abatements

The amount of rental properties continues to increase as many of the foreclosed properties have been purchased and are being used as investment rental properties. Interiors of rental properties are on a cycle to be inspected every two (2) years whereas exteriors and common areas are inspected on an annual basis. Complaint inspections are inspected in a timely manner.

The fire department also enforces the portions of City Code that does not allow for the accumulation of unacceptable exterior storage on any property and for the accumulation of ice and snow on all sidewalks, walkways, stairs, driveways, parking spaces, and similar areas of any property. Grass/weeds code enforcement are typically enforced by a seasonal staff person not by on-duty fire/EMS crews.

The table below illustrates the number on inspections and abatements for the following areas of fire department inspections:

Table 9: 10-Year Fire Department Inspections & Abatements

Year	RENTAL		GRASS		OUTSIDE STORAGE			
	Licenses	Revocations	Inspections	Abatements	Abatement Inspections	Abatements Performed	Council Approved Abatements	
2008	668	67	No Data					
2009	721	36	547	66	240	51	12	
2010	761	18	1,021	200	462	69	22	
2011	864	15	692	176	719	131	27	
2012	872	18	684	172	828	97	17	
2013	939	10	895	84	633	95	21	
2014	977	17	1,036	116	511	81	5	
2015	971	5	882	94	615	254	10	
2016	937	3	1,214	84	508	62	14	
2017	922	7	1,254	77	426	51	12	

(Source: Fire Department Annual Report – 2017)

Future Responsibility of Rental/Nuisance Inspections

Because the Fire Department is involved in inspections that are not related to fire safety or prevention, it consumes a large amount of time that could be utilized to increase firefighter training, improve fire prevention and public education efforts, or allow firefighters to participate in more activities related to delivery of emergency services, inspections other than commercial and business and should be removed from the department, and placed under the Police Department. There is a definite advantage of having an agency (Police) that is perceived to have enforcement capabilities conducting these inspections. Even if the individual(s) conducting the inspections are civilians, the tie to the Police Department should encourage greater compliance. Moving the rental/nuisance inspections to the Police Department Code Enforcement Unit is

supported by the Fire Consulting Team, further information on this recommendation can be found in the Police section of this Report.

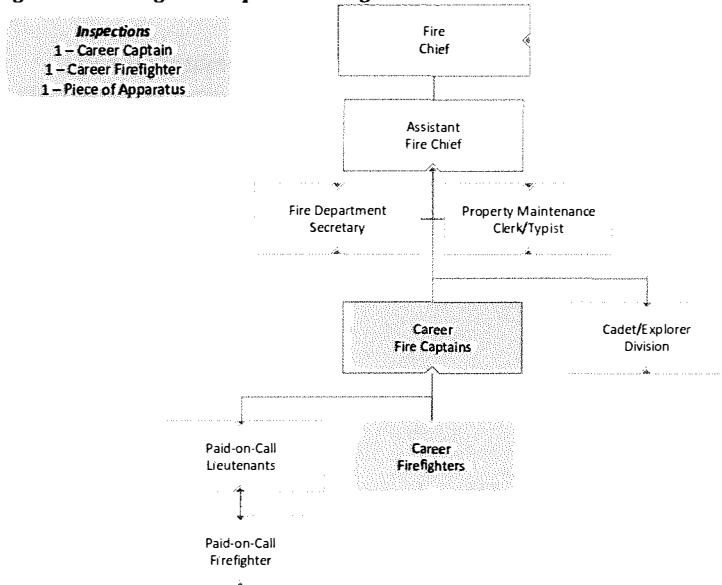
Recommendation – Rental/Nuisance Inspections

- *The rental and nuisance inspections should fall under the authority of the newly created Code Enforcement Unit in the Police Department (see law enforcement section). The fire department would remain responsible for residential and commercial inspections as it pertains to fire and life safety issues. **Priority 3***

Organizational Charts Fire/Inspection Department

The figure below illustrates the current organizational chart for the fire department including its inspection activities.

Figure 7: Existing Fire Department Org. Chart



Currently, two career firefighter staff a piece of apparatus and conduct property inspections as a team; the apparatus allows them to respond to a fire if needed.

It appears that each shift Captain has their own preference as to which piece of apparatus will be used.

Under the current program the station is left empty of suppression/EMS personnel, although the Chief and/or Assistant Chief might be available.

The current model has resulted in a culture where fire/EMS training and preparations have become secondary.

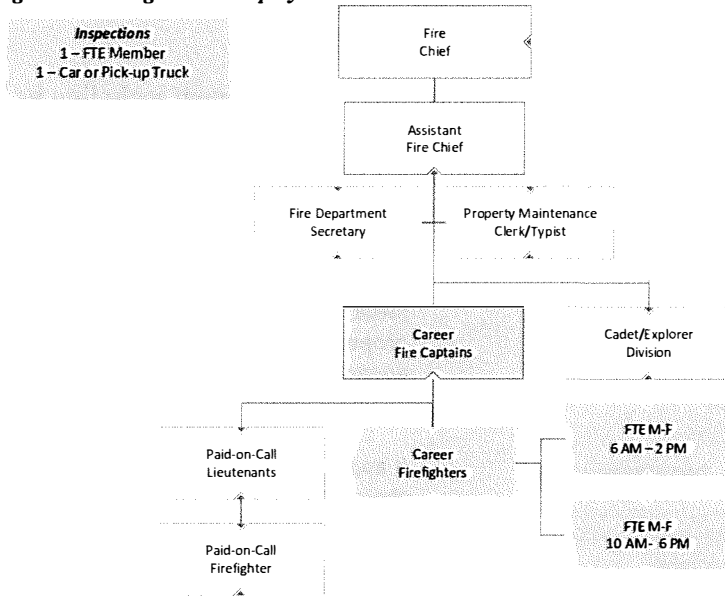
Retain Inspections Within the Fire Department

Although not the preferred recommendation of the consulting team the following options are provided for consideration. This model would require the hiring of two (2) Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees working different shift hours to provide the third firefighter on the first responding engine when in the station or meeting the engine if the FTE was conducting an

inspection. The work week would be from Monday – Friday an eight-hour day with different starting and ending times.

The FTE position could also be covered by Paid-on-Call when there is a vacancy with one of the two FTE employees. The figure below illustrates keeping the inspections within the fire department with two FTE employees.

Figure 8: Adding 2 FTE Employees



There are several advantages to this option. First there only needs to be one individual conducting inspections.

It allows for a third person on the engine company, either by being in the station or meeting the engine at the scene.

Existing career members can focus their attention on other essential tasks including training, maintaining equipment and apparatus, fire pre-plans, public safety education, etc.

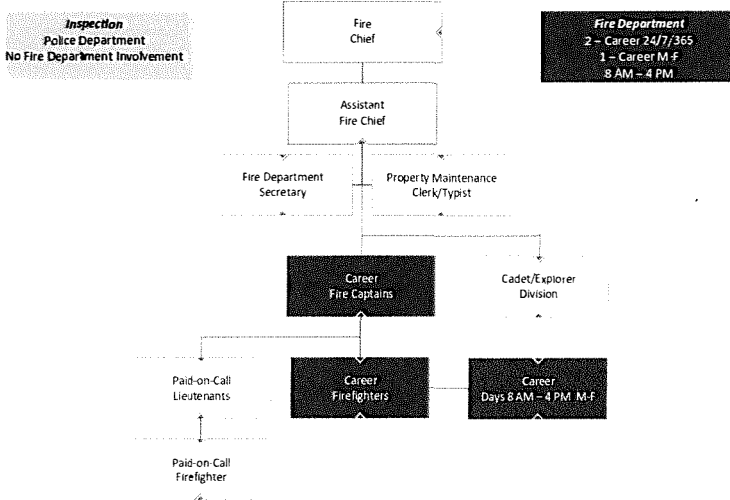
Considerably more productivity should result from this model.

Move Inspections to the Police Department

The property inspections would be moved to the Police Department and all property inspections would fall under their authority. To provide the third person for the Fire Department the City would hire a single day-time, 40-hour week, Monday – Friday firefighter/EMT. This individual will become part of the shift team and work cooperatively with the career full-time members. Inasmuch, as this firefighter/EMT is assigned to days and covers the time period when most volunteers are not available. Coverage before and after the day-time employee and weekends can be covered by volunteers assigned to a shift.

The figure below illustrates the organization chart for the fire department with a 40-hour, five days a week duty position.

Figure 9: Fire/EMS With No Inspection Responsibilities



Day-time, weekday 40-hour/week firefighter/EMT would work from 8 AM – 4 PM Monday – Friday when volunteers are least available.

All property inspections are conducted through the Police Department and the Fire Department would not be involved in property inspections unless a special request by the Police Department.

Other coverage hours for the third shift member could be covered with volunteers.

What do Firefighters/EMTs Do When Not On A Call?

The following are the most common activities that are involved in a firefighters/EMT working hours when not on an emergency call:

Preparation – When a firefighter arrives at the station for a shift, their first priority is to check the trucks and personal protective equipment and get ready for the next call. Although they do not fix major mechanical problems with the fire engines, the firefighters often do minor repairs.

Planning and Training – Firefighters are constantly training and learning and practicing. The department leadership makes sure that firefighters keep up with Medical, Fire, Special Operations, and other trainings. It doesn't appear (data and interviews) that the shift conduct company training from a standard curriculum; rather, more so on an individual basis.

Public Outreach – Firefighters often provide station tours for the public or speak at special events. Public safety education is a high priority in most departments; these talks cover many topics such as: babysitting safety, exit drills in the home, wildfire safety, fire prevention, and using a fire extinguisher.

Physical Training – Firefighters have the ability to exercise each shift. Firefighters undergo a battery of exams and self-fitness assessments, and

physicals to help ensure that they remain healthy. Heart and lung disease is the number one killer of firefighters.

Equipment Testing – *Many fire departments inspect and test fire hydrants; also, the firefighters test fire hoses throughout the year to ensure that they are prepared to fight fires.*

Reporting / Documentation – *Firefighters must document each event they respond to, no matter how big or small. All emergency call activities must include an accurate and complete report. Also, each individual piece of equipment checks, or maintenance is documented and recorded. A firefighter can often times spend several hours a day on documentation.*

Fire Inspections – Pre-Incident Plans – *Firefighters would still conduct the following inspection responsibilities:*

- *Pre-incident planning*
- *Pre-construction site plan review*
- *Construction inspection*
- *Fire code enforcement*
- *Performing inspection for fire code compliance*
- *Conducting annual inspections*
- *Investigating citizen complaints regarding fire safety hazards.*

Housework – *Firefighters also address “house work.” Firefighters live at the stations 24 hours; it is their second home. The stations and trucks are viewed as the citizens property which the firefighters are responsible for maintaining and caring for. Firefighters sweep, mop, throw out the trash, dust, wash linens and windows, and clean the fire trucks. They also take care of small maintenance issues such as painting.*

Recommendation – Fire Department / Inspections

- *Move all property inspections under the authority of the Police Department. **Priority 2***
- *Strengthen the Paid-On-Call membership to the allotted 30 positions. This will allow the Chief to serve in an Administrative capacity in lieu of going on all calls while working and will provide for staffing relief for training requirements. **Priority 2***

Fire Department Opportunities

Under the current Fire Department model the following issues should be addressed:

Management Span of Control

Span of control simply refers to the number of employees that a manager can supervise effectively at any given time without compromising his or her own performance, or that of the employees he or she manages.

A hierarchical organization is an organizational structure where every entity in the organization, except one, is subordinate to a single other entity. In the case of Columbia Heights, this issue is amplified, inasmuch as of the eight (8) career, five (5) are Officers and there are an additional two (2) Paid-On-Call Officers, although there are no additional duties assigned these Officers. As previously stated, for a normal shift day there would be a Captain and one (1) Firefighter assigned to a 24-hour shift, so the Chief or Assistant Chief may be required to attend calls during work hours. The span of control (excluding the Chiefs) is one to one.

At the time of the study it appeared that the first 8-hours of the shift the firefighters/EMTs perform inspection 50% to 70% of the time. The consultants recommend that greater emphasis be placed on training which is closely related to provider and victim safety. The importance of training cannot be overstated, and a separate section of this report will be dedicated to that topic.

Simply stated the current organization chart for the Fire Department is too management heavy and with the retirement of the Assistant Chief the consultants believe that position should remain vacant and those fiscal resources moved to the hiring of a day-time 40-hour/week, Monday - Friday firefighter/EMT.

Recommendation – Span of Control

- *Utilize the salary savings from the vacant Assistant Chief to offset the creation of a firefighter/EMT position: 40-hours/week, Monday – Friday to create a three-person response team. **Priority 1***
- *Until additional data warrants the position of Assistant Fire Chief, the City should leave this position vacant. **Priority 2***

Why Does the Fire Department Respond to EMS Calls?

Additional information about this topic is included in the Public Safety Answering Point (Dispatch) section of this report.

Although the City has the license for patient transport, currently all patient transports are conducted through a private ambulance service; the Fire Department acts as a first responder.

First Responder – a person (such as a firefighter or an EMT) who is among those responsible for going immediately to the scene of an accident or emergency to provide basic medical assistance

Fire departments have numerous operational models based on the needs and wants of their communities. Many departments do respond to medical calls. Sometimes this is simply as a first response to get resources to the patient quickly with another agency transporting the patient to the hospital. Other departments combine the first response with Paramedic level ambulance transport. Fire departments respond because many are set up so that they can meet the four-minute standard. Four minutes is the accepted standard for getting to a fire and/or emergency medical call making a difference.

However, the simple answer is what level of emergency medical services (EMS) does the community wish to provide to its citizens and visitors? What is a medical emergency is very subjective: Some communities implement Emergency Medical Priority Dispatching (EMPD) – in which the dispatcher determines what resources should be dispatched to the emergency (e.g. ambulance or ambulance and fire department). This service should not be confused with Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD) where the dispatcher gives medical advice prior to the arrival of the medical team.

EMPD – determines what is sent to the emergency

EMD – is information to the caller to assist the victim

Anoka County Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) transfers the caller to Allina Health who will handle the EMD (giving medical instructions); in addition, the PSAP indicates they are capable of providing EMPD which is determined by what the Fire Chief of that municipality had indicated at what level (severity of event) of an EMS call the Fire Department should be notified.

This information is programmed into the PSAP CAD (computer aided dispatch) software program; therefore, each municipality can customize their own level of EMS response.

The question “does the fire department need to respond on all EMS calls” is simply determined by the authority having jurisdiction decision. It becomes a quality of life issue for the municipality to determine, if or if not, the fire department will respond to EMS incidents and if so at what nature of emergency.

Fire Department Leadership

The consultants are focusing on the future direction of the Columbia Heights Fire Department and the opportunities that can transform the current organization into a better organization. This report is not about good people, the department is full of them (sworn and civilian); rather, can the Fire Department team, City, FD leadership, and members see the vision of the future organization, and want to become part of that transitional team to get there?

Returning to the “good old days” is an excuse not to seize the opportunity of change and protect the status-quo; “Status-quo is Latin for – the mess we’re in” (*Ronald Reagan*). Status-quo is the desire to maintain things the way they are and worse yet, rejection or not recognizing opportunities to meet ever changing service/community challenges. Maintaining the status-quo is much like pushing water uphill – it is possible, taking extreme continuous effort, often not recognizing at best it is a temporary state of affairs; and not recognizing the reality an organization is moving backwards.

Without change, the fires will still get extinguished, patients will receive medical intervention, but the findings of the consulting team indicate the Columbia Heights Fire Department is moving in a direction that will get run over by progress, and department morale will continue to diminish.

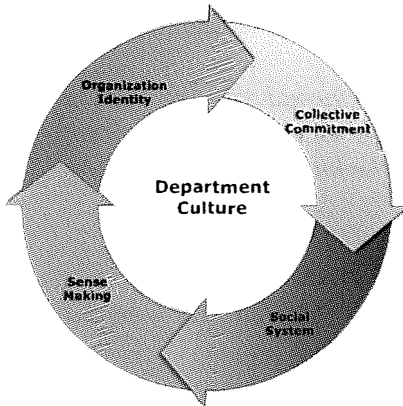
Fire Department Culture Change

It appeared the department was lacking a unified direction, and the leadership team did not meet the definition/intent of team leadership. The consultants were told the relationship between the Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief was strained at best for a very long time; it did not take long for the qualitative assessment to validate this environment. The two (2) individuals have served their community well for years, but it was apparent they philosophically have very different perspectives on the direction and day to day operations of the Fire Department. It was not likely this difference of opinions that caused the lack of unity and low morale that was observed; rather, it is the resulting culture that has developed within the department.

Near the end of the study the Assistant Chief retired. No one should assume that he was the cause of the department's lack of uniformity, for he was not, any more than the current Fire Chief. Rather, it is not uncommon for fire rank and fire members to recognize the lack of a unified leadership environment, and individuals will respond in a variety of ways. A department without a strong leadership direction is much like a ship without a rudder, the on-board experience overshadows the result of an inability to direct the ship (organization) and preventing an eventual crash.

The issue is the culture that has developed within the department that is preventing it from reaching its maximum potential. Organizational culture is the personality of the organization comprised of the assumptions, values, norms, and tangible signs (artifacts) of the organization's members and their behaviors. With that said, each department has its own culture; most often both an espoused culture (established by legal or authoritative act, to make into law, or to act out a role) and an enacted culture (what we want others to believe we abide by to create a positive public image), which might or might not align with the perceived culture of those who govern the City. Organizational culture is much stronger than any individual, and to change the culture requires new direction for leadership.

Figure 10: Department Culture Components



Organization Identify – organizations have an inherent identity which is reinforced.

Collective Commitment – shared perspectives – what are the underlying rules or norms that guide the organization’s members?

Social System – the organization develops a synergy from inter-personnel relationship, groups, and institutions forming

Future Leadership Options

Changing the culture of the Columbia Heights Fire Department to one that is a ‘team’ and functions in alignment with other City Departments and City Administration is the goal of the consultant’s study recommendations. The following options were explored:

Maintain the Status-Quo

There is consensus within the department that the current Fire Chief is an extremely nice person who cares about all the department members; having many strong attributes but confronting and enforcing discipline is not among them. When the consultants observed the personnel interactions, it became apparent the rank and file was very good at playing one Chief against the other – resulting in getting the answer they wanted. Now that there is only one Chief, will this issue resolve itself? Simply no; culture is much stronger than any individual, unless expectations are changed, and individuals are held accountable.

Challenges of the status-quo include but are not limited to:

- *Currently, the department is functioning as three (3) different departments depending on which shift Officer is in charge. This is problematic for many reasons but especially challenging for the Paid-On-Call employees who must learn three (3) different protocols depending on the shift leadership.*
- *There needs to be a clear chain of command and reporting structure, whereas the Captains are utilized as supervisory personnel – not just crew leaders. This must be*

achieved through officer training and clear expectations by leadership. The Human Resources section will also touch on how this may impact collective bargaining.

- *It is essential that Incident Command (IC) be taught through formal training and a single incident command protocol will be developed and utilized by all command personnel. This is a major safety factor for member's safety equal to the importance of a strong training program.*
- *Ensure the Fire Department recognizes they are part of a City team and not an independent service provider. Ensure the department's functions align with other City Departments and Administration.*
- *The department does little strategic planning to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results with elected officials, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment.*

Findings – Status-Quo

- *The question isn't whether the Chief needs to be replaced, as personnel decisions are for the City to make; rather, is the Chief willing and capable to change the status-quo culture? Fire departments create their own culture; culture is a difficult thing for existing leadership to change. The city must determine if a philosophical change in the current culture of the Fire Department is a goal and is so, is the existing leadership capable of creating the change desired.*

Create a Public Safety Department

There is a broad range of means for the term "Public Safety Department", the actual intent of the meaning was an organization's role looking after the public's safety. The consultants examined the issue of combining the Police, Fire, and EMS into a single department where the members are crossed trained and are trained to handle the function of all three (3) services.

In theory, the concept is appealing until you examine the actual amount of training and the vast differences in job responsibilities. Although being cross-trained could be advantageous, the individual can only perform one (1) service at a time. Consolidation of the three (3) disciplines into a single agency involves a new structure (benefits, strengths, weaknesses), start-up costs, and desire and capabilities of the existing personnel to make this transition, all require serious consideration by governing officials.

Findings – Public Safety Department

- *The Police consultants, Fire/EMS consultants, and Human Resources consultants had several meetings on this issue and the consensus was that a Public Safety Department was not in the best interest of the City.*

Public Safety Director

An option that generated considerable discussion was the consolidation of administration of the two (2) Departments under a single administrator. The two (2) departments would remain as separate divisions but the “Chief” (administrator) would oversee both departments. The Director oversees the Police, Fire, EMS, and emergency management; this will also involve the oversight of all individual budgets, (operational and capital), including personnel. There is a number of municipalities that have implemented this form of leadership with a very wide range of success.

Findings – Public Safety Director

- *After serious consideration the consulting team believes that having a separate Chief Officer in both divisions was more advantageous and if the culture change within the Fire Department were to occur it would tax a single individual to devote the time necessary without having negative impact on the other division.*

Recommendations – Leadership

Although the Fire Department could not provide quantifiable data as to the number of daily hours spent on city code inspections the perception is that these activities have become the excuse for deficiency in other aspects of fire/EMS preparedness. If the Fire Department wishes to stop conducting code enforcement inspections, they must clearly indicate to the city what activities will replace those hours and how these activities will benefit the city.

Today’s fire/EMS service has evolved into an all-hazard response team; whereas, in 1989 the call volume and training standard for delivery of fire and EMS service was much lower, and staffing levels were in question. What work-group is best prepared and continues to adapt to current hazards, and will continue to provide continual public education, code enforcement, fire suppression, emergency medical services, auto extrication, hazardous material mitigation, natural and technological disaster response? It needs to be the Fire Department and they must be trained as an “All Hazards Response Team”. It is not unreasonable for the Fire Chief to serve the

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community as the Emergency Manager fulfilling the requirements of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) compliances.

Therefore, the City must determine who is best suited to transform and lead the Fire Department and address the current and future unique community risks including that of emergency medical services which account for 76.1% of all CHFD emergency responses.

Reassess Fire Department Consolidation

In June 2013, three (3) communities: Columbia Heights, Fridley, and St. Anthony, invested in a feasibility study for combined emergency services that was completed by Emergency Services Consulting International. This Study found a substantial improvement in services at a more economic cost to all three (3) communities.

Consolidation Incentives

There are many incentives to consolidate, and the consultants have identified the top four (4) that would be most beneficial to Columbia Heights:

- **Method to Improve Service:** Responses to emergency events will have a much larger pool of resources, both apparatus and personnel. Pooling of resources, especially on-duty personnel, would increase the number of available Firefighter/EMT's to respond to emergencies and handle simultaneous events.
- **Unify Service Delivery:** Currently the departments work together on large emergency scenes but don't use the same training program and do not train together. Consolidation will allow the departments to operate under a single system and provide safety to the fire/EMS personnel by working and training together under a single set of standards, and a single command.
- **Future Cost Avoidance:** A common misperception is that consolidations will initially save significant money. Some initial savings might occur but the greatest cost savings in consolidations is future cost avoidance. The combined current resources such as apparatus and equipment could be reduced.
- **Eliminate Redundancy:** Consolidation means one (1) administration staff, and eliminates duplication of equipment, apparatus, services, programs, and personnel.

Other benefits to both communities include but are not limited to:

- Improves EMS capabilities
- Next logical step for the departments that already have functional consolidation in emergency responses
- Method to provide more cost-effective services
- Standardization of services, programs, and training, resulting in cost savings, greater functionality, improved services, and employee safety
- Helps to balance demands for increased services against the concurrent demand for reduced cost
- Forces program examination
- Enhances depth of service
- Strategic planning becomes a necessity
- Maximize effective use of scarce resources
- Better utilization of department resources
- Decrease apparatus expenditures
- Standardization of services
- Increases service levels
- Allows for response of the closest unit regardless of department district lines
- Allows opportunities to expand into specialized services
- Legitimate desire by the departments' leadership to become more efficient
- Improved ability to absorb financial crisis
- Less government is seen as advantageous by many individuals

Recommendation – Consolidation

- *The City of Columbia Heights should lead a taskforce to revisit the opportunities of consolidation with the Fridley and St. Anthony Fire Departments. **Priority 3***

Public Safety Answering Point (Dispatch)

The Anoka County Central Communication is located at 325 E. Main Street Anoka, Minnesota.

The PSAP handles 9-1-1 emergency calls for 11 law enforcement agencies and 16 fire departments in the County. The PSAP has been providing public safety communications services since 1974; serving 344,838 citizens of the County.

The consultants contacted the PSAP Public Safety Data System Manager requesting the following information. The Data System Manager indicated he would respond through the Fire Chiefs; therefore, the following data was provided by the Fire Chief;

- Roster of telecommunications staff full or part-time

- Supervisors = 8
- Dispatchers = 36
- Call Takers – dispatchers and call takers are cross-trained
- Clerical = 1
- Management = 2
- Radio technicians = 4
- Shift Staffing
 - Maximum = 8
 - Minimum = 5

In addition to the above information request the consultants requested data from the PSAP on components of response times which they (PSAP) control.

- **PSAP Answering Time:** The time it takes the PSAP to answer the 9-1-1 phone call and establish communication with the caller. In accordance with NFPA 1221, 95% of alarms received on emergency lines shall be answered within **15 seconds**.
- Anoka PSAP calls this: Phone Pick-up time

- **Alarm Processing Time:** The time it takes after answering to entering the emergency into the PSAP CAD system. Per NFPA 1221 – 2016 edition: this shall **not exceed 64 seconds** for 95% of all calls/alarms from entry into the CAD system to the actual time the voice or electronic means is utilized to notify the fire department. (Controlled by the PSAP Dispatch Center).
- Anoka PSAP calls this: First Call Taking Keystroke and Call Entered Queue

- **Alarm Transfer Time:** Once the call is received and identified as a need for the fire department's services, this is how long it takes the primary dispatch to transmit that alarm to the secondary dispatch. Per NFPA 1221, where alarms are transferred from the primary public safety answering point (PSAP) to a secondary answering point, the transfer procedure shall not exceed **30 seconds** for 95% of all alarms processed.
- Anoka PSAP calls this: Call Taking Complete

The Data System Manager provided fire calls for Columbia Heights for a period from January 1, 2016 - October 23, 2018, with a total of 8,393 total entries on an Excel spreadsheet. The problem is that all four (4) PSAP response time components were the same time as illustrated in the Table below:

Table 10: Anoka County PSAP Fire Data

ID	Master_Incident_Number	Response_Date	Jurisdiction	Time_PhonePickUp	Time_FirstCallTakingKeystroke	Time_CallEnteredQueue	Time_CallTakingComplete
2372246	HF18026279	10/23/18 7:08 PM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/23/18 7:08 PM	10/23/18 7:08 PM	10/23/18 7:08 PM	10/23/18 7:08 PM
2371629	HF18026252	10/23/18 1:02 PM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/23/18 1:02 PM	10/23/18 1:02 PM	10/23/18 1:02 PM	10/23/18 1:02 PM
2371490	HF18026245	10/23/18 10:55 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/23/18 10:55 AM	10/23/18 10:55 AM	10/23/18 10:55 AM	10/23/18 10:55 AM
2371241	HF18026228	10/23/18 7:14 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/23/18 7:14 AM	10/23/18 7:14 AM	10/23/18 7:14 AM	10/23/18 7:14 AM
2371091	HF18026215	10/23/18 2:55 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/23/18 2:55 AM	10/23/18 2:55 AM	10/23/18 2:55 AM	10/23/18 2:55 AM
2370819	HF18026196	10/22/18 7:39 PM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 7:39 PM	10/22/18 7:39 PM	10/22/18 7:39 PM	10/22/18 7:39 PM
2370806	HF18026195	10/22/18 7:27 PM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 7:27 PM	10/22/18 7:27 PM	10/22/18 7:27 PM	10/22/18 7:27 PM
2370666	HF18026185	10/22/18 5:35 PM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 5:35 PM	10/22/18 5:35 PM	10/22/18 5:35 PM	10/22/18 5:35 PM
2370596	HF18026179	10/22/18 4:56 PM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 4:56 PM	10/22/18 4:56 PM	10/22/18 4:56 PM	10/22/18 4:56 PM
2370334	HF18026163	10/22/18 2:14 PM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 2:14 PM	10/22/18 2:14 PM	10/22/18 2:14 PM	10/22/18 2:14 PM
2370164	HF18026152	10/22/18 12:47 PM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 12:47 PM	10/22/18 12:47 PM	10/22/18 12:47 PM	10/22/18 12:47 PM
2370070	HF18026145	10/22/18 11:48 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 11:48 AM	10/22/18 11:48 AM	10/22/18 11:48 AM	10/22/18 11:48 AM
2369880	HF18026135	10/22/18 9:26 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 9:26 AM	10/22/18 9:26 AM	10/22/18 9:26 AM	10/22/18 9:26 AM
2369808	HF18026128	10/22/18 8:37 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 8:37 AM	10/22/18 8:37 AM	10/22/18 8:37 AM	10/22/18 8:37 AM
2369806	HF18026127	10/22/18 8:34 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 8:34 AM	10/22/18 8:34 AM	10/22/18 8:34 AM	10/22/18 8:34 AM
2369686	HF18 026118	10/22/18 6:18 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 6:18 AM	10/22/18 6:18 AM	10/22/18 6:18 AM	10/22/18 6:18 AM
2369535	HF18 026106	10/22/18 12:25 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/22/18 12:25 AM	10/22/18 12:25 AM	10/22/18 12:25 AM	10/22/18 12:25 AM
2368914	HF18026075	10/21/18 3:37 PM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/21/18 3:37 PM	10/21/18 3:37 PM	10/21/18 3:37 PM	10/21/18 3:37 PM
2368597	HF18026060	10/21/18 11:27 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/21/18 11:27 AM	10/21/18 11:27 AM	10/21/18 11:27 AM	10/21/18 11:27 AM
2368559	HF18026056	10/21/18 10:49 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/21/18 10:49 AM	10/21/18 10:49 AM	10/21/18 10:49 AM	10/21/18 10:49 AM
2368 309	HF18026032	10/21/18 4:21 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/21/18 4:21 AM	10/21/18 4:21 AM	10/21/18 4:21 AM	10/21/18 4:21 AM
2368059	HF18026017	10/20/18 10:59 PM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/20/18 10:59 PM	10/20/18 10:59 PM	10/20/18 10:59 PM	10/20/18 10:59 PM
2367678	HF18026004	10/20/18 6:51 PM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/20/18 6:51 PM	10/20/18 6:51 PM	10/20/18 6:51 PM	10/20/18 6:51 PM
2366935	HF18025960	10/20/18 9:22 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/20/18 9:22 AM	10/20/18 9:22 AM	10/20/18 9:22 AM	10/20/18 9:22 AM
2366779	HF18025944	10/20/18 4:55 AM	Columbia Heights Fire	10/20/18 4:55 AM	10/20/18 4:55 AM	10/20/18 4:55 AM	10/20/18 4:55 AM

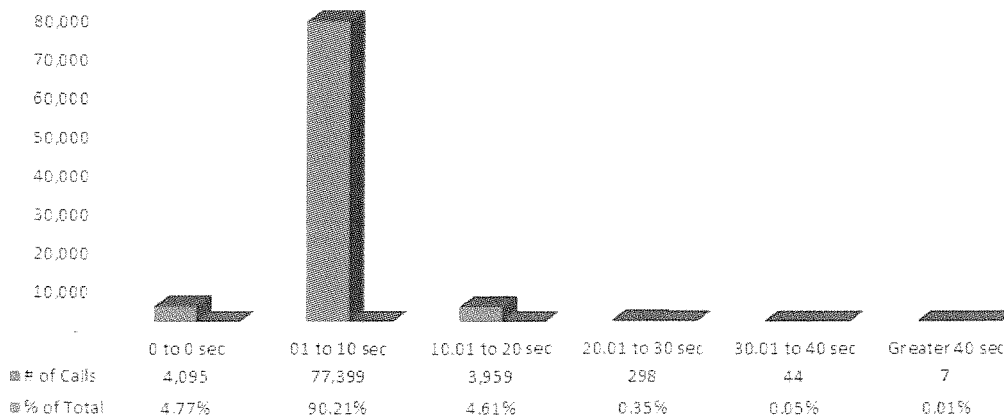
In order to view the above entries better, the consultants created a larger image illustrated in the following table from the table above:

Table 11: Enlarged PSAP listing

ID	Incident #	Date	Agency	Phone Pickup	First Keystroke	Call Entered	Total Call Taking Time
2372246	HF 18026279	10/23/2018 07:08	CH Fire	10/23/2018 07:08	10/23/2018 07:08	10/23/2018 07:08	10/23/2018 07:08

Although the consultants attempted to clarify the discrepancy and the importance of PSAP influence on both the fire and police response times to emergencies, no clarification was provided by the Anoka PSAP. Therefore, the consultants are unable to indicate how long it takes the PSAP from answering a 9-1-1 emergency phone call until it is dispatched (notified) to the Fire or Police Department. There is one exception. The consultants were provided, after a clarification request, a table addressing PSAP answering times as illustrated below:

Figure 11: County PSAP Answering Times



Emergency Medical Dispatching (EMD)

Anoka County PSAP upon receiving an emergency medical call will dispatch an ambulance; depending on the severity of the EMS call they will transfer the caller to Allina Health who will give life-saving instructions to the caller prior the arrival of medical intervention. The description of emergency medical dispatching (EMD) is:

An emergency medical dispatcher is a professional telecommunicator, tasked with the gathering of information related to medical emergencies, the provision of assistance and instructions by voice, prior to the arrival of emergency medical services (EMS), and the dispatching and support of EMS resources responding to an emergency call. The term "emergency medical dispatcher" is also a certification level and a professional designation, certified through the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials-International (APCO),^[1] the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch,^[2] and PowerPhone, Inc.^[3] Many dispatchers, whether certified or not, will dispatch using a standard Emergency Medical Dispatch protocol.

The transferring of EMD calls to a health facility is very prudent inasmuch as the health care facility can dedicate an individual to that task; whereas, the PSAP will attempt to dedicate an individual to giving EMD instructions; however, the volume of activities the dispatcher needs to accomplish simultaneously is becoming more common by EMS providers.

Emergency Medical Priority Dispatching (EMPD)

In addition, the Anoka PSAP allows service providers to classify what type and amount of resources (apparatus and personnel) should be dispatched related to the severity of the emergency. This type of matching of priorities to resources is described as:

Emergency Medical Priority Dispatching (EMPD) also known as Emergency Priority Dispatching (EPD)

The Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS), sometimes referred to as the Advanced Medical Priority Dispatch System (AMPDS) is a unified system used to dispatch appropriate aid to medical emergencies including systematized caller interrogation of multiple emergency responders. MPDS today still starts with the dispatcher asking the caller key questions. These questions allow the dispatchers to categorize the call by chief complaint and set a determinant level ranging from A (minor) to E (immediately life-threatening) relating to the severity of the patient's condition.

Table 12: Emergency Priority Dispatching Codes

EMS Code	Resource	Nature
A = alpha	BLS	Non-urgent BLS care
B = bravo	BLS	Non-life threatening injuries
C = charlie	ALS	Urgent conditions; in need of treatment
D= delta	ALS	Immediate life-threatening emergency
E = echo	ALS	Extreme life-threatening in need of multiple responders

BLS Basic Life Support

ALS Advance Life Support (paramedic)

Anoka County PSAP allows each responding agency to determine what apparatus to send on a medical call; the resulting input for the Chiefs is entered into the PSAP Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and the dispatcher simply follows the CAD entry.

Therefore, the question “does the fire department need to respond on all EMS calls” is simply the authority having jurisdiction decision. It becomes a quality of life issue for the municipality to determine, if or if not, the fire department will respond to EMS incidents and if so at what nature of emergency.

Insurance Service Offices, Inc. (ISO)

ISO was formed in 1971 as an advisory and rating organization for the property/casualty insurance industry to provide statistical and actuarial services, to develop insurance programs, McGrath Consulting Group, Inc.

and to assist insurance companies in meeting state regulatory requirements. It became a wholly owned subsidiary of Verisk Analytics in October 2009. ISO conducts a survey of the City every ten years (has been extended due to staffing) which provides the City with a Public Protection Classification (PPC) that could impact insurance rates for both residential and commercial properties.

Ten percent (10%) of the total ISO classification for the City of Columbia Heights relates to the PSAP. The PSAP procedures in handling 9-1-1 calls affects emergency response times both police and fire/EMS. The data for the Table below was taken from the ISO Public Protection Classification Summary Report published in April 2014.

Table 13: ISO Evaluation of Emergency Communication

FSRS ITEM	CREDIT EARNED	
	COLUMBIA HEIGHTS	CREDIT AVAILABLE
Emergency Reporting		
Credit for Emergency Reporting	1.95	3.00
Credit for Telecommunicators	2.00	4.00
Credit for Dispatch Circuits	1.79	3.00
Credit for Receiving & Handling Fire Alarms	5.74	10.00

All three (3) categories of affects the Public Protection Classification; however, the “Credit for Telecommunicators” addresses the same issues the consultants encountered in their request for quantifiable data, as illustrated in the table below:

Table 14: ISO Telecommunicators Credit

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS	CREDIT	
	Earned	Available
Telecommunicator	Earned	Available
Alarm Receipt	0.00	20.00
Alarm Processing	0.00	20.00
Emergency Dispatch Protocols	20.00	20.00
Training/Certifications	20.00	20.00
Continuing Education/Quality Assurance	10.00	20.00
Telecommunicator Total	50.00	100.00

The highlighted areas above should be of significant concern to the City and discussion with the PSAP would be beneficial.

Recommendation – Anoka PSAP

- *The City of Columbia Heights should request a monthly report form Anoka PSAP as to the components they control of the Fire and Police Departments. **Priority 2***

Emergency Activities

This section highlights the emergency response data for the Fire Department for the period of 2015 – 2017. The prime function of a Fire Department is to respond to and mitigate emergencies that arise within their jurisdiction. Although this activity only takes up a small percentage of the department’s overall time, its state of readiness must always be at maximum levels in order to optimally provide an efficient and safe level of service. Relevant, detailed, and concise data pertaining to the Fire Department is essential in providing archival documentation of the Fire Department’s preparedness for, and response to, emergency situations. As in any report of this nature, the recommendations are based on data provided by the client, interviews, and on-site observations; in the case of the department, their data could be improved from the implementation of a quality control program.

Why Retrieve Emergency Response Data

One of the main challenges fire/EMS leadership face is to identify the need for resources that will provide the highest level of service and safety for those who receive and provide such service, as well as to justify the fiscal resources needed. Good data can be very useful through study and analysis by fire chiefs and department supervisors to help implement, justify and support a variety of leadership/management endeavors including, but not limited to:

- Fiscal management
- Staffing
- Resource deployment
- Budgeting
- Purchasing
- Strategic planning
- Program development/implementation

- Program oversight/assessment
- Assuring competency
- Assuring cost-effective/efficient services
- Communication with governing board(s)

Leadership can quantify the above objectives through good data. The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) defines good data as data that meets three (3) components:

Good Data is Relevant – you are collecting information on the things that matter, like response times and number of calls for service.

Good Data is Accurate – your processes for data collection must be consistent and trustworthy.

Good Data is Reliable – a measurement from one company is equivalent to the same measurement from another company. You don't have to "adjust your data to accommodate known distortions".

(Source: International Association of Fire Chiefs: Weathering the Economic Storm, December 2008)

Unfortunately, CHFD data did not meet all the above standards, inasmuch as follow-up data conflicted with other data provided. This is not to suggest the Fire Department is manipulating data; rather, the department would benefit from implementing a data quality assurance program.

Governing boards traditionally ask for a summary of activities on a monthly basis; it is essential that the information be relevant, accurate, and reliable. When conflicting data is discovered, in many cases, it goes beyond a couple of numbers that don't match, which leads governing officials to begin to question all material/information and eventually those in leadership. In short, activity data builds trust and credibility.

The data source the consultants utilized was from the department's annual reports. In addition, the Fire Chief provided data printouts from the department's data management system.

Unfortunately, these sources conflicted and the data from the department's computer system normally provided only partial material e.g. day of the week was for fire calls only. The consultants believe the department has the data or they would not be able to generate an annual report which appears to be accurate.

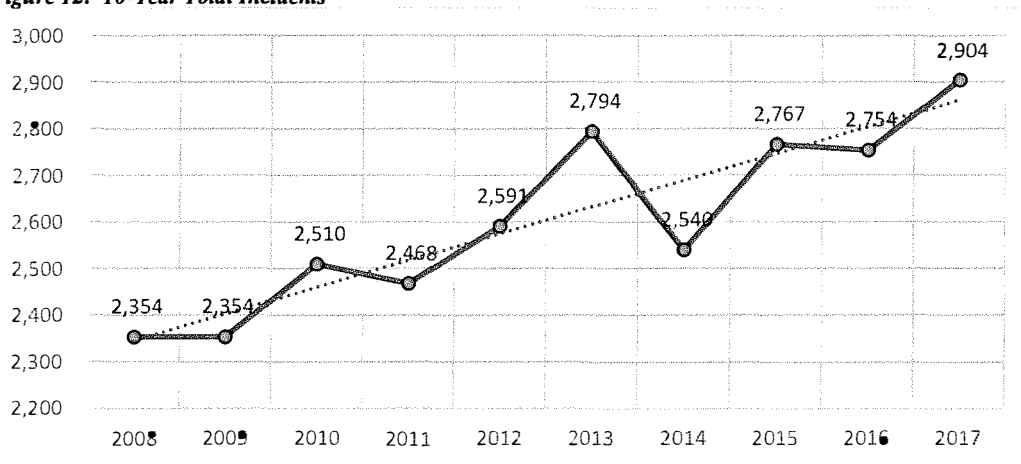
10-Year Emergency Activity Totals

The Department provided call totals for the last ten (10) years by sourcing data from their data management system. The figures below represent the 10-year record of total incidents and reflects the percentage of change each year from 2008 through 2017. The average change for the 10-year period was an increase in incidents of 2.40%.

Table 15: 10-Year Total Calls Change

Year	Calls	% Change
2008	2,354	
2009	2,354	0.00%
2010	2,510	6.63%
2011	2,468	-1.67%
2012	2,591	4.98%
2013	2,794	7.83%
2014	2,540	-9.09%
2015	2,767	8.94%
2016	2,754	-1.43%
2017	2,904	5.45%
10 Year Average Change		2.40%

Figure 12: 10-Year Total Incidents



The dotted line represents the trend line

Incident by Nature

The Department participates in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) fire/EMS program in reporting all incidents through the Minnesota State Fire Marshal (Division of Minnesota Department of Public Safety), under authority of the United States Fire Administration (USFA).

NFIRS categorizes incident types into nine (9) categories with each category having a series number with multiple sub-categories under each main series number. The USFA collects and analyzes NFIRS data from participating states to provide a legal record of fact, assist fire department administrations in evaluating their fire and EMS effectiveness, and to collect data for use at the state and national levels.

The following Table reflect the 2015 - 2017 emergency activities of the Department utilizing the NFIRS series categories:

Table 16: NFIRS 2015 - 2017

NFIRS Series		Columbia Heights				National
		2015	2016	2017	3 Yr. %	Percent
100	Fires	64	71	58	2.29%	4.7%
200	Overpressure/Explosion	2	1	1	0.05%	0.2%
300	Rescue/EMS	1,976	1,962	2,085	71.56%	64.1%
400	Hazardous Conditions	69	101	83	3.01%	3.7%
500	Service Calls	240	254	266	9.03%	7.1%
600	Good Intent Calls	283	253	298	9.91%	10.5%
700	False Alarm/False Calls	130	99	112	4.05%	8.7%
800	Severe Weather	-	4	1	0.06%	0.1%
900	Special Incidents	3	1	-	0.05%	0.7%
Total Calls		2,767	2,746	2,904	100%	100%

Simultaneous/Overlapping Incidents

The collection and review of data regarding simultaneous calls is advantageous to fire department leadership in determining resource deployment, staffing, budgeting, and planning. The term simultaneous incident is a term utilized by the consultants which refers to times when the fire department is handling an emergency situation and another unrelated emergency incident

occurs, requiring immediate department response. Depending on the record management system utilized by a department, these incidents might be called overlapping, or back-to-back calls. The significance of the amount and frequency of simultaneous incidents can result in increased response times or greater usage of mutual aid. There is no consensus in the industry as to an exact number when simultaneous incidents require additional resources. The consultants have found that in most studies, when simultaneous incidents reach between 15% to 20% of total incidents, greater emphasis must be placed on staffing.

Fire departments do not have the ability to “stack calls” as do police agencies who routinely prioritize calls and dispatch accordingly. With few exceptions, when 9-1-1 requests the fire department it is for an emergency – at least in the opinion of the caller.

If every piece of fire or EMS apparatus were available at its assigned location, every time a call for service was received, a fire department’s reliability would be 100%. If, however, a call is received for a particular station/unit, but that station/unit is already committed to another incident, the next closest unit must respond from a different station or source. In this case, the substitute company may exceed the maximum prescribed response time. As the number of emergency calls per day increase, the probability increases that the primary unit needed for response is already committed and a backup or mutual aid unit will need to be dispatched.

Columbia Heights Simultaneous/Overlapping Calls

The department did not provide data on this category of incident; however, they should be able to retrieve this data from their data management system. See Appendix A for data request of the fire department at the beginning of the study.

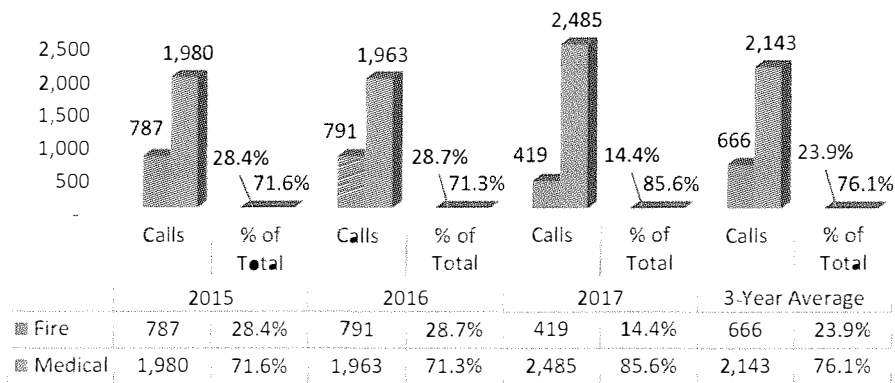
Incidents by Month

Fire department leadership should be particularly interested in data which indicates when the department is at its busiest for month, day of the week, and time of day. When a significant pattern is discovered, that indicates the probability that emergency incidents will occur at a certain time, it allows the department to anticipate staffing levels (peak staffing) and make

contingency plans when they know adequate personnel or other resources are needed for emergency response might occur.

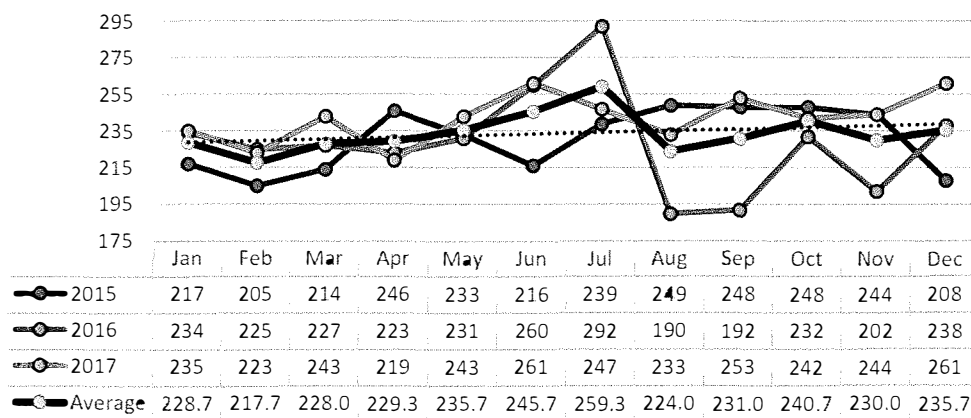
Most of Minnesota has a 4-season climate as does the majority of the states in the Midwest. Therefore, there are a vast variety of activities from spring- summer outdoor activities such as golfing, fishing, water recreation, hiking, etc. to fall-winter activities e.g. skiing, ice activities, hunting, skating, etc. Each of these seasons bring new challenges to the fire department. The figure below illustrates the 3-year distribution of calls by month for 2015 – 2017.

Figure 13: Incidents by Month 2015 - 2017



A more descriptive figure illustrates the actual number of calls per month for the three-year period as well as the average calls per month (heavy black line):

Figure 14: Calls Per Month 2015 - 2017 & Average

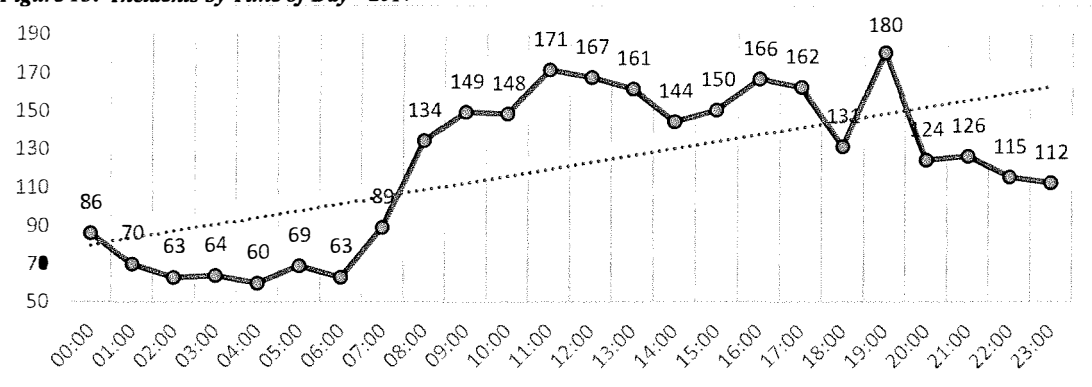


Incidents by Time of Day

Most departments find that time of day when plotted on a graph resembles somewhat of a bell curve. The least busy time are usually from midnight to 6:00 am when people are sleeping; however, this is the most dangerous time in structure fires especially for the very young and older residents. The busiest times usually occur in mid-day when the majority of people's activities are occurring.

Columbia Heights Fire Department data matches the usual pattern of calls by time of day in most studies. In the case of Department, half of all calls occur between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm as illustrated in the figure below for 2017.

Figure 15: Incidents by Time of Day - 2017



Incident by Day of the Week

The department did not provide data as to the breakdown of calls by day of the week for the study period. Inasmuch, as they were able to provide time of day and incidents by month it is unknown why day of the week was not retrievable. The actual amount of aid given and received are provided within this section of the report.

Recommendation – Emergency Incidents

- *The Fire Department should include incidents by Day of the Week in their annual report inasmuch as all three (3) metrics are needed to determine if a pattern of calls occurs in which staffing, or resources could be added at those times. **Priority 2***

Mutual/Automatic Aid

The amount and usage of automatic/mutual aid both given and received is not inappropriate for the City of Columbia Heights. The neighboring communities have been successful in sending resources to the neighbors' emergency as well as receiving automatic/mutual aid when needed.

Mutual Aid

The philosophical concept of *mutual aid* is to offer assistance to a fire department upon a request made by a host district. The sole purpose is to give or receive assistance when all available resources—equipment or personnel—are depleted; and then on a limited basis. Generally, mutual aid is drawn upon during an emergency incident where a particular or specialized need arises on a small to medium size incident that would not be expected as a lengthy or long-term incident.

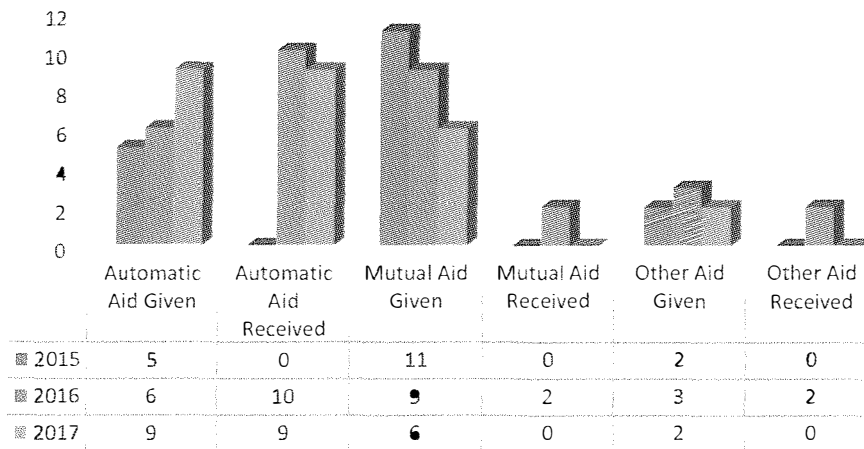
Automatic Aid

Automatic aid differs from mutual aid in that it is a pre-determined agreement with another department to respond automatically when the host department receives a reported emergency or an alarm at a given location or area. This type of aid is utilized on a regular basis to supplement the host agency's initial response to the emergency with pre-determined apparatus, manpower, and chief officers, and is done so automatically.

Mutual/Auto Aid Data

The Department provided the following data for mutual and automatic aid given and received.

Figure 16: Automatic/Mutual Aid Given/Received 2015 - 2017



It appears as if mutual /automatic aid has been successful historically and the consultants believe with the addition of the 40-hour weekday firefighter/EMT, the department will be able to continue its success with mutual/automatic aid.

Department Emergency Response

During site visits, the consultants observed no consistency in the response model, particularly on the EMS response. In some cases, members would respond with an ambulance, in some cases an SUV, in others an engine response was used. Consistency can become difficult in fire service. This profession is not usually viewed as a consistent system, and rightfully so. But when it comes to fire personnel, consistency is needed to ensure effective management and operations. It also would allocate the proper resources needed to mitigate calls, this will aid in justifying future apparatus purchases.

National Standards

Most standards in the fire/EMS service identify the minimum job performance requirements in an attempt to ensure that those performing fire services are qualified. Standards are an attempt by the industry or profession to self-regulate by establishing minimal operating, performance, or safety standards, and they establish a recognized standard of care. The Columbia Heights Fire

Department has standards (some mandatory and some advisory) which impacts how they provide fire and EMS. This section will address the federal and state codes and standards which apply to CHFD.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

Non-mandatory

Although NFPA has 300 codes and standards, two (2) of the most significant are **NFPA 1710** (Organization and Development of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by **Career** Fire Departments), and a sister standard **NFPA 1720** (Organization and Development of Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by **Volunteer/Paid-On-Call** Fire Departments).

The first fire department to be represented in the NFPA was the New York City Fire Department in 1905. Today, the NFPA includes representatives from some fire departments, many fire insurance companies, many manufacturing associations, some trade unions, many trade associations, and engineering associations.

If one were accepting the NFPA definition, it would appear that all standards listed in any NFPA code other than in the appendixes, are in fact mandatory. Such would be the case if a governing body were to adopt the code in which the standard is listed. However, governing bodies are not required to adopt the NFPA codes; whereas, many view the NFPA terms, codes and standards as a benchmark by which to judge against.

Minnesota statutes and enabling legislation allows the elected officials wide latitude to organize and provide for fire protection in the State. Minnesota Statute 412.221 gives Cities the power to establish a fire department. There is nothing in the Statutes that appears to make fire protection compulsory. How each City chooses to provide fire protection, the level of protection reflects the quality of life standards for the community. NFPA 1710 (career FD) is more stringent, whereas, NFPA 1720 is less stringent and allows the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) considerable flexibility. Regardless if NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720, the codes/standards have the effect of a

double-edged sword; the fire department is not required to meet them, but the fire department would most likely be judged against these standards by a host of investigating agencies in the case of a firefighter’s line-of-duty death.

NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720

If a department’s employees are both career and paid-on-call, they are classified as a “combination fire department”. NFPA’s definition is: **Combination Fire Department** – a fire department having emergency service personnel comprising less than 85 percent majority of either paid-on-call or career membership.

The table below illustrates the category of employees, number of employees in each category, and the percent they represent of total employees for the CHFD.

Table 17: Category of Fire Employee

EMPLOYEE CATEGORY	# OF EMPLOYEES	% OF TOTAL
Career	10	31.3%
Paid-On-Call	22	68.8%
Total	32	100.0%

Columbia Heights clearly falls into the combination category. The questions then become which of the NFPA codes (1710 or 1720) should apply to the Department? Why does it matter which NFPA code would apply? Although NFPA 1720 is very comprehensive, it is not as stringent as NFPA 1710. The consultants recommend that neither the City or Department adopt either code; rather they should attempt to meet as many of the NFPA standards as feasibly/fiscally possible.

According to the Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program within Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicates that for combination fire departments the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) has the power to decide which standard the department should utilize. Therefore, in this case, the City needs to identify which of the two (2) standards they believe applies. What the department cannot do is switch between the two (2) standards to choose which is best at any given moment.

Clearly, the fire department leadership has based their resource needs on NFPA 1710; although they could base their needs on NFPA 1720 which is less stringent. Again, because CHFD is a combination fire department and limited career employees (31.3%), the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) could follow NFPA 1720 which is less stringent as illustrated below:

Table 18: NFPA 1720 Staffing & Response

NFPA 1720 Staffing & Response Times (2014 Edition)				
Demand Zone^a	Demographics	Minimum Staff^b	Response Time^c	Meet Objective
Urban Area	>1,000 people/Sq. Mi.	15	9 Minutes	90% of the time
Suburban Area	500-1,000 People/Sq. Mi.	10	10 Minutes	80% of the time
Rural Area	<500 People/Sq. Mi.	6	14 Minutes	80% of the time
Remote Area	Travel Distance ≥ 8 Mi.	4	Based on Travel Distance	90% of the time
Special Risks	As Determined by AHJ	Based on Risk	AHJ	90% of the time

^a jurisdiction can have more than one demand zone

^b Minimum staffing includes members responding from the AHJ department and automatic aid

^c Response time begins upon completion of the dispatch notification and ends at the time interval shown in the table.

With that said the difference is very minimal inasmuch as the City is only 3.4 sq. mi. and the population would classify Columbia Heights as urban in NFPA 1720. The NFPA 1710 standards is discussed below:

NFPA 1710 – Suppression Team

NFPA 1710 Section 5.2.4.1.1 (2016 edition) requires the initial alarm assignment to a structure fire in a 2,000 square foot home [two-story single-family dwelling without basement and with no exposures (defined in the same section)] involving a “working fire” (a working fire is defined as a fire within a structure of such magnitude that an aggressive interior or exterior attack will occur with a minimum of two hose lines for suppression) would require 14 personnel arriving at the scene within eight (8) minutes of the initial full alarm assignment 90% of the time (section 5.2.4.1.1) as illustrated in the Table below:

Table 19: NFPA 1710 Deployment Standard

# OF PERSONNEL NEEDED	ASSIGNMENT
1	Incident Command
1	Pump Operator
4	Attack Line - 2 lines @ 2 firefighters
2	Support - one each attack line
2	Search & Rescue

# OF PERSONNEL NEEDED	ASSIGNMENT
2	Ventilation
2	Initial Rapid Intervention Crew
14 Total	Sub Total
1	Aerial - if utilized
15 Total	Total

As the above table illustrates, one (1) additional firefighter is required if an aerial device with pump operation is placed into service, for a total personnel count of 15. The section of NFPA that applies is shown below:

1710–10 ORGANIZATION AND DEPLOYMENT OF FIRE SUPPRESSION
OPERATIONS BY CAREER FIRE DEPARTMENTS (2016 Edition)

5.2.4.1 Single-Family Dwelling Initial Full Alarm Assignment Capability.

5.2.4.1.1* The initial full alarm assignment to a structure fire in a typical 2000 ft² (186 m²), two-story single-family dwelling without basement and with no exposures shall provide for the following:

- (1) Establishment of incident command outside of the hazard area for the overall coordination and direction of the initial full alarm assignment with a minimum of one member dedicated to this task
- (2) Establishment of an uninterrupted water supply of a minimum of 400 gpm (1520 L/min) for 30 minutes with supply line(s) maintained by an operator
- (3) Establishment of an effective water flow application rate of 300 gpm (1140 L/min) from two handlines, each of which has a minimum flow rate of 100 gpm (380 L/min) with each handline operated by a minimum of two members to effectively and safely maintain the line
- (4) Provision of one support member for each attack and backup line deployed to provide hydrant hookup and to assist

in laying of hose lines, utility control, and forcible entry

(5) Provision of at least one victim search and rescue team with each such team consisting of a minimum of two members

(6) Provision of at least one team, consisting of a minimum of two members, to raise ground ladders and perform ventilation

(7) If an aerial device is used in operations, one member to function as an aerial operator to maintain primary control of the aerial device at all times

(8) Establishment of an IRIC consisting of a minimum of two properly equipped and trained members

Columbia Heights Suppression Team

On duty shift personnel is always maintained at a minimum of two (2) firefighters/EMTs, and at times might be augmented with Paid-On-Call. Although CHFD has an automatic aid response on structure fires, without such, meeting the standards of NFPA 1720 could not be achieved.

Recommendations

- *The fire department should ensure that the governing officials understand the significance of the current standard that applies to their Department. **Priority 2***
- *The City should not adopt either standards; however, they should strive to meet the standards listed in NFPA 1710. Adoption would include the adoption of all OSHA and NFPA standards by reference included in the document. However, a plan should be developed to meet as many of the NFPA standards as possible in the future. **Priority 5***

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

Mandatory

OSHA states that “once fire fighters begin the interior attack on an interior structural fire, the atmosphere is assumed to be “Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health” (IDLH) and section (g) (4) of OSHA’s Respiratory Protection Standard, 29, CFR 1910.134 [**two-in/two-out**] applies.”

OSHA defines interior structural firefighting “as the physical activity of fire suppression, rescue,

or both inside of buildings or enclosed structures which are involved in a fire situation beyond the incipient stage.” This rule is commonly referred to as the “**two-in/two-out**” rule, which is OSHA’s mandatory requirement for interior firefighting.

Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) Team

OSHA requires that at least one (1) team of two (2) or more properly equipped and trained fire fighters are present outside the structure before any team(s) of fire fighters enters the structural fire. This requirement is intended to assure that the team outside the structure has the training, clothing, and equipment to protect them and, if necessary, safely and effectively rescue fire fighters inside the structure. For high-rise operations, the team(s) would be staged below the IDLH atmosphere. [29 CFR 1910.134(g) (3) (iii)]

Insurance Service Offices, Inc. (ISO)

Non-mandatory

The Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) publishes and utilizes the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) to “review available public fire suppression facilities and to develop a Public Protection Classification (PPC) for insurance purposes.” Many insurance companies utilize this rating system to establish premium schedules for fire insurance. Communities with a lower rating can generally expect to have lower fire insurance premiums than those with higher ratings, thus creating an incentive for the community’s investment in fire protection. However, insurance rates are often driven by a competitive market between insurance companies, with ISO having less significances.

ISO Rating Factors

The classification of the fire protection assigned to a community is based on four (4) categories:

- Fire Department (50 percent)
- Water Supply (40 percent)
- Emergency Communication (10 percent)
- Community Risk Reduction (up to 5.5-point reduction)

The Community Risk Reduction section of the FSRS offers a maximum of 5.5 points, resulting in 105.5 total points available in the FSRS. The inclusion of this section for “extra points” allows

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recognition for those communities that employ effective fire prevention practices, without unduly affecting those who have not yet adopted such measures. The addition of Community Risk Reduction gives incentives to those communities who strive proactively to reduce fire severity through a structured program of fire prevention activities.

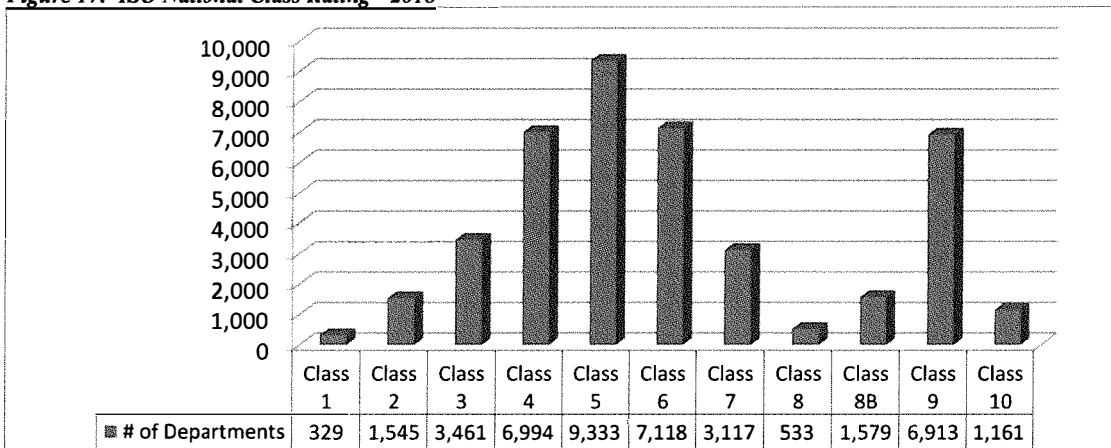
The areas of community risk reduction evaluated in this section include:

- Fire Prevention
- Fire Safety Education
- Fire Investigation

The total points are compared to a chart with ten classes, each representing about 10 points, for a total of 100 points, excluding the influence of Community Risk Reduction. Class 1 is the highest, and Class 10 is the lowest.

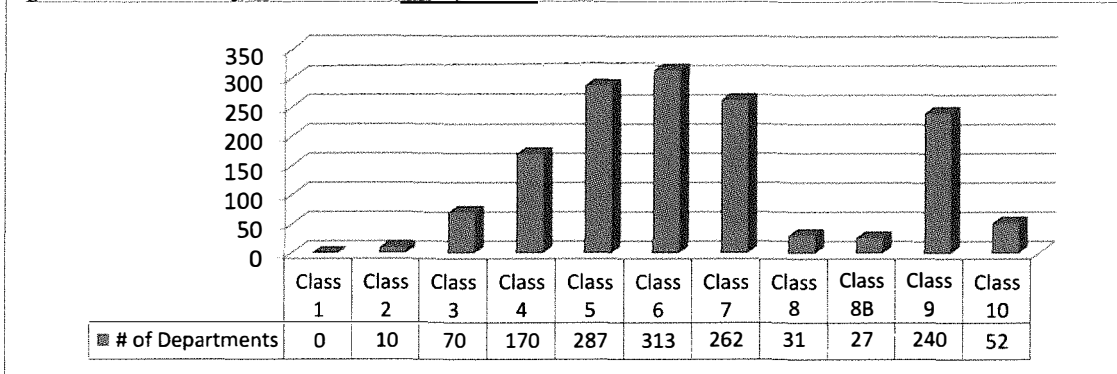
The figure below illustrates the classification category and number of departments with the corresponding ISO class number on a National basis 2018 data of 42,083 departments:

Figure 17: ISO National Class Rating - 2018



In the state of Minnesota, 1,462 fire departments ratings were classified by ISO in 2018 as illustrated below.

Figure 18: 2018 State of Minnesota ISO Classifications



Individual Public Protection Classification (PPC) Scores

The summary of the ISO PPC classifications for Columbia Heights is illustrated in the table below. The communication center (PSAP) control 10% of the Department's score, as previous noted are only receiving half of what they could achieve. The Department's 50% of the scores and water supply 40% of the scores, would be reflections of the individual department and municipality.

The actual ISO PPC scores are illustrated in the table below

Table 20: Columbia Heights PPC Scores

FSRS ITEM	CREDIT EARNED	
	COLUMBIA HEIGHTS	CREDIT AVAILABLE
Emergency Reporting		
Credit for Emergency Reporting	1.95	3.00
Credit for Telecommunicators	2.00	4.00
Credit for Dispatch Circuits	1.79	3.00
Credit for Receiving & Handling Fire Alarms	5.74	10.00
Fire Department		
Credit for Engine Companies	4.78	6.00
Credit for Reserve Pumpers	0.00	0.50
Credit for Pumper Capacity	3.00	3.00
Credit for Ladder Service	2.52	3.00
Credit for Reserve Ladder & Service Trucks	0.00	4.00
Credit for Deployment Analysis	6.53	10.00
Credit for Company Personnel	4.53	15.00
Credit for Training	4.24	9.00
Credit for Operational Considerations	2.00	2.00
Credit for Fire Department	27.60	50.00

Water Supply		
Credit for Supply System	23.90	30.00
Credit for Hydrants	3.00	3.00
Credit for Inspection & Flow Testing	5.53	7.00
Credit for Water Supply	32.43	40.00
Divergence	-5.18	
Community Risk Reduction	3.67	5.50
Total Credit	64.26	105.50

Divergence = The divergence factor mathematically reduces your preliminary scores if the fire department and water-supply scores are out of line with each other.

CRR = Community Risk Reduction – prevention/safety education programs

The City of Columbia Heights was classified by ISO in April of 2014 with a Final Community Classification of 04. This is compared to 11.6% of reporting fire departments (1,464) in Minnesota. The areas in the above Table that are highlighted in yellow represents opportunity for the department leadership to address aggressively.

The value of the ISO rating to a community continues to be questionable as a determining factor in a community’s level of fire protection. The ISO purpose is to determine a fire insurance classification, which may or may not be used by insurance companies in the calculation of property insurance premiums for an area. ISO only rates those pieces of the fire protection program they feel are important to assign insurance rates. There is limited value in attempting to assess a fire department by solely utilizing the community’s ISO rating; rather, the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) accreditation process far exceeds any other type of instrument in measuring a service provider against defined benchmarks.

Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)

Non-mandatory

A better evaluation tool exists today. The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) has developed a program that measures the quality and performance of a particular fire service

agency and will award national accreditation to those departments that pass the stringent criteria. The Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), the umbrella organization, utilizes a process known as the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI). It specifies more than 250 performance indicators, including 70+ core competencies against which a fire agency can measure itself.

The CFAI is a structured process for documenting the levels of fire safety, fire prevention, fire safety education, and fire suppression services currently provided, and for determining the future level of service the department should provide. The accreditation process asks the community to determine and document whether its fire protection services are appropriate, adequate, and effective.

The advantage to the CFAI accreditation program lies in the process itself. The department must examine every aspect of its existence and determine the most cost-effective means of providing service. This program requires a time commitment and effort on the part of the fire administration. If at some future point the department wishes to seek accreditation, it is recommended that a single individual be assigned full-time for the completion of this project.

Although the consultants do not recommend the Department begin the accreditation process, it is suggested that the administration look at the performance indicators or benchmarks set up for the evaluation process to use as a guide while developing policies and procedures for their department.

Recommendation – CFAI Accreditation

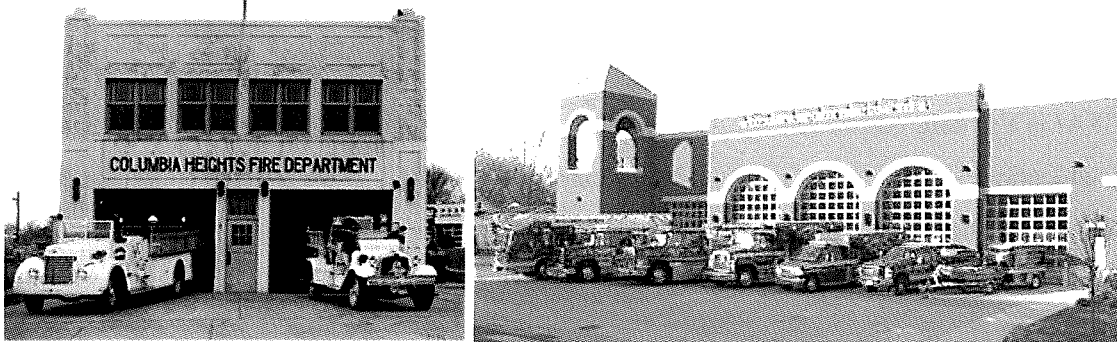
- *The Fire Department should not seek international accreditation (CFAI) at this juncture; rather, the CFAI performance indicators and core competencies should be utilized as a model for quality and a benchmark for opportunities. **Priority 5***

Facilities

In 1907 a group of 16 citizens of Columbia Heights gathered to form the Columbia Heights Fire Department, prior to which, fire suppression was provided by the City of Minneapolis. In 2009 McGrath Consulting Group, Inc.

the City of Columbia Heights built a state-of-the-art public safety facility that houses both Fire and Police Departments. This \$11,500,000, 47,000 square foot building has adequate room for both Departments.

Figure 19: Columbia Heights Fire Station – Then and Now



Apparatus Area

The fire station apparatus bay area consists of double-deep drive-through bays that houses the Department's engines, aerial ladder, rescue, utility, command vehicles, and a boat.

Office/Living Area

As entering the foyer of the Public Safety building, an antique fire truck is housed. As entering the fire section of the building there are a series of offices for the civilian and sworn personnel. The area opens into a day-room (lounge) with a kitchen and bulk room area for the on-duty personnel.

The building is segregated between the Fire and Police with the exception of an exercise room which can be utilized by both safety divisions. The building is American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant which includes facilities for both men and women.

Emission Exhaust

Apparatus emissions – diesel and other engine exhausts – have been proven to be harmful to the health of those exposed, even at low concentrations, for an extended time or within an environment that subject's individuals to this exhaust. The lack of an approved Occupational

Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) exhaust removal system is a proven health and safety issue.

Most states in the U.S., including Minnesota, have cancer, heart, and lung presumption legislation. Cancer, heart, and lung presumption legislation acknowledges that firefighters have an increased risk of heart and lung diseases, including certain types of cancer. The presumption legislation places the burden of proof on the employer to show that the disease was contracted outside the workplace.

Columbia Heights Fire Station

The discussion on emission exhaust remains a controversial topic within the industry. The Fire Department has an apparatus bay emission sensor that turns on an exhaust system (fan) to extract these emissions at a predetermine level. It is the opinion of the consultants, after considerable research, the consultants believe this type system (aka: ceiling air scrubbers) is not in compliance with the OSHA approved NFPA 1500 – A.10.1.5 – 2018 edition emission exhaust system from the stored station apparatus or small motors operating in the station (see Appendix C).

In many cases the OSHA approved system will be comprised of a device that is hooked directly to the tailpipe of the apparatus and has a breakaway function as the apparatus leaves the station. Therefore, rather than emitting the carcinogenic elements into the environment and then attempting to remove them; this system captures the carcinogenic elements and releases them outside of the facility. Ceiling air scrubbers are installed to capture exhaust from small engines operating within the apparatus bay.

The State of Minnesota Revised Statutes 176.011 subd.15 (c) states:

A firefighter on active duty with an organized fire department who is unable to perform duties in the department by reason of a disabling cancer of a type caused by exposure to heat, radiation, or a known or suspected carcinogen, as defined by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, and the carcinogen is reasonably linked to the disabling cancer, is presumed to have an occupational disease under paragraph (a). If a firefighter who enters the service after August 1, 1988, is examined by a physician prior to being hired and the examination discloses the existence of a cancer of a type described in this

paragraph, the firefighter is not entitled to the presumption unless a subsequent medical determination is made that the firefighter no longer has the cancer.

Emission exhaust is a serious concern to all fire/EMS personnel; as addressed in NFPA 1500 - Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program – Annex A – A.10.1.5 – 2018 edition which requires that apparatus emission exhaust must be limited to the lowest feasible concentration, according to NIOSH and OSHA.

Recommendation – Emission Exhaust Removal

- *The fire station should be equipped with an OSHA approved vehicle emission exhaust removal system which accomplishes 100% capture and removal of exhaust emissions to the outside. In addition, ceiling air scrubbers should be added to remove exhaust from small engines (saws, extrication engines) that will be released in the station. (reference Appendix C). **Priority 1***

Apparatus

The following apparatus is in-service for Columbia Heights, located within the Public Safety facility, as illustrated in the table below:

Table 21: Fire Department In-Service Apparatus

APPARATUS	MANUFACTURE	YEAR
Fire Chief - Command	Chevy Tahoe	2012
Asst. Chief - Command	Ford Expedition	2001
Aerial 109 ft. Quint	General Safety	2004
Engine 1	General Safety	1995
Engine 2	International	2015
Rescue 2 - Ambulance	Braun	2002
Utility/Rescue 3	Chevy Suburban	2012
Utility 3/Rescue 3	Ford F-250	2017
Boat 1	Zodiac /Spartan Trailer	1999
Investigation Trailer	Haulmark 5 x 8	1998

Apparatus Not Shown is listed in the following Table:

Table 22: Fire Department Apparatus Not Shown

APPARATUS	MANUFACTURE	YEAR
Rescue 1	Road Rescue - 1990	Retired
Engine 4	General Safety - 1985	Retired

APPARATUS	MANUFACTURE	YEAR
Ambulance	Purchased at end of study	New

The consultants did not understand the need for a new ambulance that is capable of transporting patients; inasmuch as the Department does not currently transport patients and did not indicate an interest in providing that service. Patient transports are provided within the City via private ambulance company. It should be noted that the City does hold a license for transporting patients at the BLS level if it chose to offer that service.

Apparatus Maintenance

It is essential the Department maintains detailed, lifelong, records of fire apparatus. Preventative maintenance, thorough diagnostics, as well as repairs were generally found to be a commitment by the Department's leadership; not only does the documentation need to show what work was specifically performed, but that it must accurately reflect all parts, costs, and relationship to the overall vehicle or tool. This documentation may very well need to be produced in the event of an injury, death, or accident involving of a particular piece of equipment or apparatus.

Sufficiency of Apparatus

Sufficiency of apparatus can be considered in two (2) divergent ways: the *amount* of apparatus present, as well as *capabilities of the apparatus*. The consultants have observed fire departments that have an abundance of apparatus, often resulting in apparatus that is rarely deployed or more apparatus than the department is able to staff. In other instances, departments are under-equipped and/or the apparatus is lacking the tools required to perform tasks on the emergency scene.

Presently, Columbia Heights does have more apparatus than it can staff with its limited personnel (career and part-time); however, with the exception of one (1) utility vehicle, the number of apparatus/vehicles is appropriate.

Odometers vs. Engine Hour Meters

An hour meter is a gauge or instrument that tracks and records overall elapsed time that the engine is actually running and is normally displayed in hours and tenths of hours. The majority of hour meters are used to log running time of equipment to assure proper maintenance of expensive machines or systems. This maintenance typically involves replacing, changing or checking parts, belts, filters, oil, lubrication or running conditions in engines, motors, blowers, and fans, to name a few.

Fire trucks, ambulances, and police cars may all have significantly higher running times (hours) compared to mileage. Fire trucks can be running for hours at the scene without clocking a single mile. If maintenance is performed on these vehicles based on odometer readings only, engine life may be affected. Maintenance personnel understand the wear issues surrounding a vehicle's engine hour time compared to road miles; therefore, elected officials and stakeholders should not base replacement needs solely on apparatus/vehicle appearance and mileage but take into account all factors including engine hours.

Recommendation – Engine Hour Meters

- *All future apparatus should be equipped with an engine hour meter to more accurately document apparatus/vehicle usage. **Priority 5***

Apparatus Replacement

Over the years, the NFPA has attempted to define life expectancy of apparatus with little success. However, under the 2016 edition of NFPA 1901, a new Annex D, titled Guidelines for First-Line and Reserve Fire Apparatus was added which discussed apparatus built prior to 1991. Section D.1 discusses minimizing the risk of injuries to firefighters and improvements in safety features that have been instituted since 1991. The guideline further states that new safety upgrades and innovations are not generally found in units built prior to 1991; therefore, this standard recommends that apparatus built to NFPA 1912, Standard for Fire Apparatus Refurbishing, be adhered to.

Another significant factor in equipment replacement worth re-emphasizing, as outlined in the NFPA standard, is the rapidly changing area of technology, much of which is directly related to firefighter safety. Based on this factor, apparatus technology becomes an issue when considering replacement. The NFPA recommends apparatus older than 15 years should be considered for reserve status only if the following NFPA standards have been followed: required maintenance of the vehicle being adequately maintained, and the overall condition of the vehicle has been determined to be safe. Apparatus that were not manufactured to the applicable NFPA fire apparatus standard or that are over 25 years old should be replaced.

Fire Department Equipment Replacement Schedule

The fire department does an excellent job in providing employees with Personal Protection Equipment (PPE). Modern line Self-Contained-Breathing-Apparatus (SCBA) do much more than supply breathing air, integrated thermal imaging cameras, tracking devices, and Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) alarms have increased the capabilities and the cost of SCBA. The CHFD is providing top of the line SCBA. In 2018 the Department obtained new Scott air-packs to replace aging units. The replacement schedule is illustrated in the Table below:

Table 23: Fire Department Equipment Replacement Schedule

EQUIPMENT	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021	2026
Pagers 40 total. 5 per year for 8 year replacement. Cost - \$600 each.		11	6	6		8			Replaced with 800 Mhz from County			
Helmets Black, White and Red. 10 yr replcmt. Cost - \$180 each.		6	5	4 Black & 1 Red	5 Black		4 Black			Approx six to eight		
Turnout Gear Pants, jacket, & suspenders. 8 yr replacement. Cost - \$1900 set.	4	6	3	5 -Three sets reimbursed	5	12 -eleven reimbursed	4 -Reimbursed		14 pairs boots			
Radio Batteries 36 Total. Replace 12 per year. Cost - \$60 each	12	12	12	6		12	12	12	12			
Furniture Assorted Day Room and office furniture. Cost - \$1000 yr.				4 Recliners			Beds - 2		2 Dayroom Recliners. 1 Bed			
Detectors 4 gas, electrical, flammable liquid. One per year. Cost - \$700 each		4	0	2 Electrical 2 HCN				Wireless controler, Radiological detector, HCN Detector, two 4-eas				
Pulse Oximeters 4 total. Replace 2 per year. Cost - \$600 each.		2	2	1 BP Machine	1	1		1		6		
Rad-57 New 2009. Total Cost - \$7000												
PBT New 2008. Total 1 Cost \$ -20#0									1			
Defibrillators Total 5 Cost - \$1900 each.		4				1 donated					5	5
Nozzles & Appliances Evaluate inventory. Cost - \$1000 yr				3 TFF Nozzles 1.5"		2 Blitz fire monitors						
Fans Replace gas with electric. Cost - \$2500 each.				2 Electric		1 Electric with E2						
Hose Evaluate inventory. Cost - \$2000 yr.			1000' - 5"	1800' 1.75 Inch				800' 2.5 Inch with E1 refurb				
Med/O2 Bags 15 total Cost - \$400 each.		2		3 Hydrant Bags			2			3 Blue Packs, 2 Thomas Packs		
Thermal Imagers MSA-2015 x 2 MSA-2004 Cost - \$9000 each.						2 MSA with E2						

Apparatus/Vehicle Replacement Schedule

It is the consultant’s recommendation, based upon the NFPA Standard 1901 Annex D, that the Table below be considered and followed to develop an effective apparatus replacement program.

Table 24: Apparatus Life Expectancy

APPARATUS TYPE	RECOMMENDED
Engines	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Aerials	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Ambulances	10 years front line = re-chassis + 10 years
Squads (not ambulance)	15 years front line + 3 years reserve
Tanker/Tenders	20 years front line + 3 years reserve
Utility Vehicles	10 years front line + 3 to 5 years reserve
Vehicles (Car)*	10 years - no reserve

Apparatus Replacement Impact

Using the replacement schedule the following apparatus should be considered for replacement as indicated in the Table below:

Table 25: Apparatus Replacement Dates

APPARATUS	MANUFACTURE	YEAR	REPLACE
Fire Chief - Command	Chevy Tahoe	2012	2022
Asst. Chief - Command	Ford Expedition	2001	Remove from Inventory
Aerial 109 Ft. Quint	General Safety	2004	2024
Engine 1	General Safety	1995	Overdue 2015
Engine 2	International	2015	2013
Rescue 2 - Ambulance	Braun	2002	Rechassis* 2012
Utility/Rescue 3	Chevy Suburban	2012	2022

**An ambulance rechassis/remount is making use of an ambulance that already exists. The patient compartment is removed from the old chassis and a new chassis receives the existing patient compartment.*

Many ambulance modules (patient compartment) outlives their chassis. Most modular bodies come with a 15-year to lifetime warranty; a chassis warranty is substantially less. Rather than abandon the existing box for an entirely new ambulance, you can save a significant amount of money and protect your original investment by remounting to a new vehicle chassis.

Conservative estimates cost saving of 25% - 50% compared to the cost of a new unit. At the end of 10-year period of remounting, it is advantageous to retire the ambulance and replace with a new unit.

Recommendation – Ambulance Rechassis/Remount

- *The City should consider rechassis/remount of ambulances at the 10-year period extending the life of the patient compartment to 20 years. **Priority 5***

Training

“How You Train Is How You Will Perform On The Emergency Scene During An Emergency” and “Train Like Your Life Depends On It Because It Does” are two (2) well-known quotes used in the fire service. The importance of training and its documentation cannot be overstated.

Firefighting and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) work, is at times, demanding and a potentially dangerous job. Performing emergency scene activities correctly is essential to the safety of those receiving the services as well as to those providing it. The foundation of any successful emergency operation is directly linked to the training of its members who provide fire/EMS services.

All fire and EMS personnel are responsible for responding immediately to 9-1-1 emergencies. Their actions on the scene are often instinctive based on preparation from training held at the station. Successful mitigation of the emergency relies on training to ensure coordination, consistency, and timely communications to equal a safe outcome to the situation. Fire departments which provide quality-training opportunities for their personnel are better prepared to handle emergencies within their City. The safety of those in need, and fire service members, involved in emergency activities on a fire scene cannot be over emphasized as it relates to training.

Establishing a minimum training standard for Firefighter training found in NFPA 1001 will provide a basis of training for entry level training for career, Paid-On-Call, or volunteer firefighters. The NFPA 1001 (Firefighter I and II) standard identifies the **minimum** job performance requirements for career and volunteer firefighters whose duties are primarily structural in nature; and the purpose of this standard shall be to ensure that persons meeting the requirements of this standard who are engaged in firefighting are qualified.

Regardless of whether compliance with an NFPA standard is voluntary or mandatory, fire and rescue departments must consider the impact of “voluntary” standards on civil litigation. It is important to understand a department may be liable for the negligent performance of their duties. Even when you feel laws are in place that protect rescue workers under an immunity statute, laws do not protect fire or rescue departments for grossly negligent acts. Essentially, negligence involves the violation of a standard of care that results in injury or loss to some other individual or organization.

Training Program

The consultants struggle with the contradiction with the department’s training data presented and the leaderships description of the department’s training program. The career members indicated they spend the preponderance of their time with inspections which leaves them little time for traditional fire department responsibilities such as training. The part-time (Paid-On-Call) indicated they attempt to attend training when possible. The only data on training provided was for the years of 2015 and 2016, which were in different formats, the department could not account for the absence of 2017 data.

Fire Department Data

The consultants received two (2) documents that included data, there was also a number of blank forms the fire department apparently uses to record the data. The first was a spreadsheet titled: “Employee Credits Granted” – which had 5,256 entries with what appeared to be classes held at the Columbia Heights station for members and other fire department personnel.

Table 26: Fire Department Training Records – Full Year of 2015

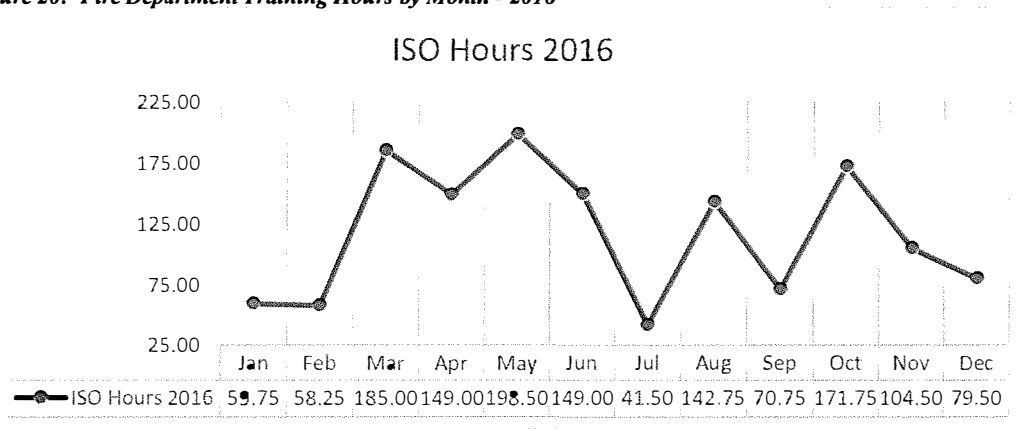
CHFD Station - 2015		
	Career	Part-time
	85.0	128
	81.0	121
	74.0	117
	73.0	114
	63.0	114
	62.0	80
		76
		73
		73
		64
		53
		53
		29
Average	73.0	84.2

The above table would indicate the average number of training hours for 2015 is 73.0 for career staff, and 84.2 for Paid-On-Call.

The second source of fire department training records was broken down by month for 2016 and did not provide names nor if the individual was career or Paid-On-Call. The data was labeled: “2016 ISO All Applicable Records”; which is interpreted to indicate that any training obtained in 2016 by any member was included in the month breakdown. This would indicate that each member (six (6) career and 11 Paid-On-Call) had accumulated 61.27 hours in 2016. This also indicates seven (7) Paid-On-Call had no training hours.

The figure below illustrates the training hours by month for all members for 2016.

Figure 20: Fire Department Training Hours by Month - 2016



The obvious concern by the consultants is who received what training, what was the training, what curriculum was utilized, what is the training goal of the department’s leadership, and with the departments current data management system all of this information should be retrievable.

ISO Mandatory Yearly Hours

ISO does not discriminate between career and Paid-On-Call employees and has new mandated hours for firefighters and additional hours for Officers as illustrated in the figure below:

Table 27: ISO Mandated Training Hours - Annually

ALL EMPLOYEE'S TRAINING - ANNUALLY	
Topic	Hours Required
Company	192 (16/hrs./Month)
Hazardous Material	6
Driver	12
Facility	18
Pre-Planning	1 review
Total	228 + 1 pre-plan

RECRUIT/NEW MEMBER TRAINING - ANNUALLY	
New Driver	60
OFFICER ADDITIONAL TRAINING - ANNUALLY	
Officer	12
Total	240 + 1 pre-plan

In addition, the State of Minnesota requires Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) to perform a minimum of 48 hours of continued education every 2 years. The Fire department is woefully inadequate in its training program and its documentation needs restructuring with greater emphasis on firefighter safety as it relates to training.

The Liability of Poor Training

With an increasingly litigious society, the liabilities associated with poor training and/or poor documentation of that training are enormous. Within the last decade, there has been an increased tendency for municipalities/districts to be stripped of their immunity protection when dealing with an employee's injury or death. It is hoped that Columbia Heights never experiences a firefighter's line-of-duty death. However, in the event of such an occurrence or a serious line-of-duty injury, a large number of state and federal agencies would conduct independent investigations.

At a minimum, the Fire Department and City would need to provide the investigators with the following:

- *Documentation that the individual received training in the evolution(s) in which the death/injury occurred.*
- *Comprehensive curriculum and lesson plan of the training topic.*
- *Attendance sheet with the individual's signature indicating he/she attended – not a list of member's names with a check-off box.*
- *Record of the instructor's qualifications to teach the topic.*
- *Competency documentation showing how the department measured the ability of the individual to safely perform the task in which he or she was injured.*
- *Historical record showing how frequently this topic was instructed and what other topics supported a safe environment under the conditions found at the accident scene.*

It appears the department does not have consistent training objectives, nor a plan for obtaining curriculum, methods of delivery, and scheduling. When this occurs a fire department training program will lack continuity, direction, and effectiveness. The question is related to firefighter safety and to mitigate any risk a fire department may have in the initial or continuing training of their firefighter staff. NFPA 1001 standards are just that, a performance standard to measure skill qualifications and the ability of a firefighter to accomplish their job during firefighting activities. For most organizations this is the standard to which fire departments train.

In the event of a serious accident or line-of-duty death, lack of such documentation could result in fines from both state and/or federal agencies, as well as leave the fire department and perhaps even the City/board open to serious civil litigation.

Recommendation – Training

- *Establishing a minimum training standard for firefighter training found in NFPA 1001 will provide a basis of training for entry level training for career and Paid-on-Call firefighters. The NFPA 1001 (Firefighter I and II) standard identifies the minimum job performance requirements for firefighters whose duties are primarily structural in nature and the purpose of this standard shall be to ensure that persons meeting the requirements of this standard who are engaged in firefighting are qualified. **Priority 1***
- *The department's leadership needs to address the training program and show documentation that a minimum of training hours per month are accumulated by each employee. **Priority 1***

- *Training documentation should be part of the data management system of the department, with all training records, classes, etc. recorded completely. The system should allow for the complete retrieval of an individual's training history. **Priority 2***
- *Significant greater emphasis should be placed on training. Career should meet the ISO annual mandate and Paid-on-Call should accumulate 72 hours annually (4 hours/month plus 2 – 12-hour fire ground weekend class). Much of the Paid-on-Call training could be accomplished through technology which would allow them to obtain training hours via the intranet. **Priority 1***

Fire Prevention/Fire Inspections/Public Safety Education Programs

A basic principle in society is that a person's home is his or her castle. Accordingly, fire and life safety codes have traditionally been lenient with regard to personal living space. One- and two-family dwellings and even individual apartment units enjoy protection from code enforcement activities. But most fire-related deaths and **injuries** occur in residential properties, so public fire and life safety education should be one of the more important strategies of a comprehensive prevention program.

The heart and soul of every fire department is its public education and fire prevention delivery. One of the primary responsibilities of every fire department is to recognize and best serve the community that supports it. The department has some basic education programs but is lacking in programs for prevention of service. Some programs to consider are as follows:

1. *Remembering When™ is centered around 16 key safety messages for the elderly population – eight (8) fire prevention and eight (8) fall prevention - developed by experts from national and local safety organizations as well as through focus group testing in high-fire-risk states. The program was designed to be implemented by a coalition comprising the local fire department, service clubs, social and religious organizations, retirement communities, and others. Coalition members can decide how to best approach the local senior population: through group presentations, during home visits, and/or as part of a smoke alarm installation and fall intervention program.*
2. *Safe Kids Worldwide is a nonprofit organization working to help families and communities keep kids safe from injuries. Most people are surprised to learn preventable injuries are the #1 killer of kids in the United States. Throughout the world, almost one million children die of an injury each year, and almost every one of these tragedies is preventable. Safe Kids works with an extensive network of more than 400 coalitions in*

the United States and with partners in more than 30 countries to reduce traffic injuries, drownings, falls, burns, poisonings and more.

- 3. The Citizens' Fire Academy is a free program designed to give community members an overview of how their local fire department operates, with hands-on participation. The purpose of the Citizens' Academy is not to train an individual to be a firefighter but to produce informed citizens and build a closer bond with community members.*

Human Resources

The Human Resource function is one of the major components of any organization. Its policies impact every member of the organization and can be an area of major litigation. Since the Civil Rights Act of 1991 in which the burden of proof for discrimination changed from the employee to the employer, and the introduction of a jury trial, as well as punitive and compensatory damages, the human resource landscape has changed.

The purpose of a Human Resources Department is to be a business partner to an organization to help manage an organizations most valuable resource, its employees. There are several disciplines of HR, and the focus of an HR department varies based upon the organizational structure of an organization, the organizations understanding and acceptance of the role of HR, and the strengths of the staff. The City has an HR Department, but some components of HR for Police and Fire Departments has historically been decentralized, meaning the Departments manage parts of the systems themselves. The City has been working to centralize all HR functions under the HR umbrella, which is highly recommended. The benefits of a centralized system include streamlined processes, legal compliance, and less time is needed for the "user department" to handles these functions. In order for a centralized system to be most effective, there needs to be sufficient HR staffing, well developed processes and systems, and an acceptance to relinquish control of these processes over to HR.

This section will highlight a number of issues regarding personnel procedures for both the Fire and Police Departments. The focus of this section is to not to focus on what may be wrong with current processes, but to provide best practices and compliance with various state and federal law

on what processes should be done to ensure the protection of the employee, department leadership, and the City.

Recruitment

Application Process

Recruitment is a critical part to ensure proper staffing. It is the potential employee's first contact with the employer, so it is an employer's first opportunity to make a positive impression for the applicant. Right or wrong, first impressions can influence decisions. The recruitment process should be easy to follow, transparent, and timely, so the applicant has a positive experience; so even if they are not selected, they may be drawn to apply again in the future.

The City does not currently have an electronic applicant tracking system, although the consultants were informed this has been budgeted for 2019. The current employment application is available online, although applications for Paid-On-Call positions with the Fire Department are available from the Fire Department only, and Reserve (Volunteer) opportunities with the Police Department are available from the Police Department only as well. General applications are currently received in HR, plus each of the Departments receive their own Paid-On-Call/Reserve applications, so there is not a single-entry point for applicants. General applications are routed internally from HR to the Police and fire Departments, but HR may not know the status of applications for Paid-On-Call or Reserve positions when received by the respective department, nor receive all applications submitted to the City for the purposes of retention.

HR should be the single-entry location to accept all applications for the City. This will allow the HR team to track all applications, and forward in a defined manner. It is standard for HR to review applications for completion and minimum qualifications; and only forward qualified applications to a department to be considered further. This also saves time for the Police and Fire Department. HR can then communicate with rejected applicants immediately. Having up to date job descriptions outlining the minimum qualifications will allow HR to screen consistently. This process also lowers the risk of discrimination claims or unfair hiring practices.

An electronic applicant tracking system will allow the City to accept applications for regular positions, paid on call, and volunteer opportunities via a single-entry portal that is managed via the Human Resources Department. Applicant tracking programs are real time, allow immediate access of application materials to the hiring managers (if set up that way), eliminate the passing of applications via paper or email, serves as a retention portal of hiring materials, maintains tracking system for processing of applications for the hiring manager and Human Resources staff; and communicates application status updates directly to the applicant.

Finally, the City should consider centralizing recruitment with Human Resources, meaning standardized and/or automated processes are developed and administered by Human Resources on behalf of other Departments. The benefits of a centralized system include streamlined processes, legal compliance, and less time is needed for the “user department” to handle these functions. In order for a centralized system to be most effective, there needs to be sufficient HR staffing, well developed processes and systems, and an acceptance to relinquish control of these processes over to HR. Staffing will be discussed later in the report.

Recruitment Sources and Locations

From the interviews conducted, it was found that advertising for the Police Department relies on standard publications, police related websites, and career fairs; whereas the Fire Department is more informal and does not currently have a targeted recruitment plan. This is likely problematic, as the Fire Department indicated they only hire full-time from within, and the current roster of Paid-On-Call is less than half of what the Department is authorized to fill. This plan may become problematic in the future if the current roster remains low.

Social Media for Recruitment

Today’s candidate doesn’t utilize the traditional modes of looking for positions. Social media is part of that cultural shift. What drives employees now is more than just a paycheck. Employees want a purpose, and the City’s website – the Fire and Police Department’s web pages – should be expounding as to why there is a benefit to becoming a Columbia Heights Firefighter or Police Officer. Since recruitment needs to go ‘beyond the good old boy’ network, use of social media

sites can assist in going beyond the traditional borders and bring in a diverse workforce for both Departments. Thus, the City needs to ensure its website, Facebook, LinkedIn etc. sites are emphasizing what makes Columbia Heights the employer of choice, over other local communities.

Recommendations

- *Implement an electronic applicant tracking system, that has been budgeted for 2019. Utilize this System for all hiring, including Paid-On-Call and Volunteer (Reserves) **Priority 3***
- *HR should be single point of entry to accept all applications for the City and screen applicants for minimum qualification. **Priority 2***
- *HR should be the department communicating with applicants during the interviewing process, and when applications are no longer being considered. **Priority 2***
- *The Fire Department and HR should develop a formal recruitment strategy for the Department's recruitment needs. **Priority 2***
- *The Police, Fire, and HR Department websites should be updated reflect why Columbia Heights is an employer of choice for recruitment purposes. **Priority 4***

Interview and Pre-employment Process

A process for hiring has been put in place for each respective Department in which applicants may go through a series of processes.

The Police Department's process consists of an initial interview with management and HR, a second interview with the Chief, a background check, psychological exam, and basic physical/drug test. The Department involves HR in these processes, and HR attends the initial interview. The consultant recommends the Chief bring in a second manager during his interview so there are two (2) City representatives to better defend claims of discrimination or unfair hiring practices. In addition, the City is recommended to have the results of the psychological evaluation sent directly to the HR Department (such as the physical/drug test) so all related application/interviewing/pre-employment documentation is received, handled, and retained by Human Resources. Finally, the Human Resources Department is recommended to review the medical documentation generally received by the City to determine if the level of information

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needs to change based on the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) to minimize the City's discriminatory practice liabilities.

The Fire Department's process consists of a written test (IMPA Firefighter exam), an interview, a physical ability test, background check, and medical exam and fit test. Human Resources is much more removed from the Fire Department's process and is not involved with hiring Paid-On-Call.

Ranks of positions participating in the oral interview panel for Fire Department may change, and HR is not present, nor is the Fire Chief, according to Department Policy. Although structured questions are used for interviews, a rating of the responses is not used to rank the candidates, when forwarded to the Chief. When asked about training conducted for panel members prior to taking part in the process, it was determined that no formalized training is conducted.

Significant risk exists in having untrained interviewers participate and score candidate's due to protected classification questions. To the untrained participant, a question may seem completely harmless and absolutely relevant to a candidate's abilities to do the job, but in reality, the question has the potential for discrimination based on the answer and interviewer biases. Because the City's Human Resource staff is not involved in the majority of the testing/hiring process, there is little oversight to the process.

The consultants recommend Human Resource staff become more involved with the testing/hiring process, and all interviewers participating on the panel be trained in interview techniques and questioning. In addition, a scoring methodology system should be established, and all recruitment documents and applications be retained by Human Resources.

Public Safety Departments are coming under heavy scrutiny for their testing and hiring practices. Charges of discrimination based a detrimental impact to one or more of the federally protected classes (including gender, race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, and in some cases disability status that can be addressed through reasonable accommodations) are being lodged against government and fire service agencies. One of the most common areas of liability is that of physical ability testing and standards.

For a physical ability exam to be valid, it must be applicable to the physical fitness level required to perform the essential job duties of being a firefighter. Practices that include testing components that cannot be directly linked to job functions are problematic in that they may be considered discriminatory, thereby wrongly eliminating candidates who would otherwise be qualified for the job. Because the physical ability test administered by the Fire Department is not validated, to reduce liability risk in this area, the consultants are recommending the Department begin using a third-party agency to conduct candidate physical ability testing utilizing the nationally recognized Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT). The CPAT is a legally defensible and legitimate tool for assessing eligibility for employment. In addition to being endorsed by the International Association of Fire Fighters and International Association of Fire Chiefs, the test meets validity criteria established by the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Department of Labor.

To ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity to succeed, the CPAT includes an orientation and mentoring process that begins weeks prior to the actual test. This process involves an explanation of the test and its physical demands, recommendations of training and conditioning drills, and an opportunity to preview and practice the exercises. The CPAT examination process is open to anyone interested in taking the test. The consultants recommend the Department make a policy modification that all candidates submitting an application to the Department must have a valid CPAT card at the time of application. All costs associated with the CPAT testing process should be bore by the candidate themselves thereby eliminating costs to the Department.

As with the Police Department, the City is recommended to have the results of the psychological evaluation, and medical/fit test be sent directly to the HR Department, so all related application/interviewing/pre-employment documentation is received, handled, and retained by Human Resources. The Human Resources Department is recommended to review the medical documentation generally received by the City to determine if the level of information needs to change based on the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) to minimize the City's discriminatory practices liabilities as with the Police Department process.

Human Resources should be responsible for ensuring all applicants are notified of their status during the application process. Communication is not currently handled solely through HR, but with department support staff, which should be changed as soon as possible. The previously discussed applicant tracking system allows the applicant to be notified via the System if there is a change to the status of their application, and email notifications can be sent quickly (and copies retained) if the applicant is not being considered for a posted position and/or will not be moving further in the hiring process after an interview; or even if their application is not being considered further as an example. Applicants who are receiving a written conditional offer of employment, should receive written notification of the process from Human Resources that will ensue outlining the remainder of the hiring process.

Finally, when a candidate completes all required post-offer testing and checks, a final offer of employment should be sent by Human Resources, indicating salary, benefits, start date, and welcoming the employee to the City of Columbia Heights. Information as to new employee orientation with Human Resources and the Department should also be included.

Recommendations

- *Ensure all pre-employment testing including background check, psychological exam, and basic physical/drug test results are submitted to HR. HR will be responsible to communicate required results information to the hiring department. **Priority 2***
- *Utilize a standardized rating system to rank candidates during interviews. All personnel who participate in interviews should be trained in interview techniques/legal questioning. **Priority 2***
- *All application and interview documents are to be retained by Human Resources. **Priority 2***
- *Discontinue to the current Fire Department physical ability test and begin using a third-party agency to conduct candidate physical ability testing utilizing the nationally recognized Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT). **Priority 2***

Compensation

Fair Labor Standards Act

In order to understand the compensation and overtime rules for the departments, one must first take a step back and understand the definition of an employee and the types of employees allowed under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). The Fair Labor Standards Act is the federal law passed in 1938 to regulate minimum wages, overtime pay, equal pay, and child labor standards in employment. In 2004, the federal regulations were amended with clarifications to the federal exemptions to the overtime provisions as well as clarifications with municipal employees. The State of Minnesota follows the provisions of the FLSA through the Minnesota Fair Labor Standards Act. Minnesota's FLSA requires overtime to be paid for hours worked over 48 hours a week; whereas, the Federal FLSA requires overtime paid for hours worked over 40 hours per week.

The question is then what law to follow – Minnesota's FLSA or the federal law. Federal overtime laws apply to:

- Businesses whose employees produce or handle goods for interstate commerce;
- Businesses with gross annual sales of more than \$500,000; and
- Certain other businesses, including hospitals, nursing homes, schools and government agencies (A guide to Minnesota's overtime laws).

Based on this definition, both municipalities would qualify as a government agency and therefore, would follow the federal FLSA guidelines.

This section delineates the regulations of the FLSA as it applies to all forms of employment currently present within the departments, including Paid-On-Call and Reserve (Volunteer). Thus, how the individuals are classified and how they are compensated will be the determining factors in the City's obligations under the FLSA. When Federal and State FLSA regulations conflict, the ruling is based on what is most beneficial for the employee. Furthermore, additional clarification will be made as to what constitutes an exempt (salaried) employee from a non-exempt (hourly) employee and the pay implications.

What is an employee?

What is an employee? The definition of an employee under FLSA is an individual who performs services for the “employer.” If an individual is not an employee, he or she is not covered by the minimum wage, overtime, recordkeeping, and other provisions of the FLSA.

Volunteers.

The FLSA provides a specific exemption for individuals who volunteer services to public agencies. The FLSA, however, exempts public employers from paying minimum wage and overtime to individuals who qualify as “volunteer” – individuals motivated to contribute service for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons. An individual who performs services for a public agency qualifies as a volunteer, if:

- The individual receives no compensation, or is paid *expenses, reasonable benefits, or a nominal fee* to perform the services for which the individual volunteered; and
- Such services are *not the same type of services* for which the individual is employed to perform for *the same public agency*.

If an individual meets the above criteria for volunteer status, he or she will not be considered an employee covered by FLSA minimum wage and overtime provisions. *A public employer can pay a nominal fee to a volunteer; the fee must not be a substitute for wages and must not be tied to productivity.* Thus, a Volunteer in a municipal environment, performing public safety responsibilities, and who does NOT receive compensation that is tied to productivity, such as an hourly wage, would also be exempt from the minimum wage requirements. Based on this, the Reserve Officers in the Police Department would be properly classified as a Volunteer.

Paid-On-Call

Individuals who receive some sort of compensation or nominal fee will have their employment status based upon how the fee is distributed. Two types of compensation are considered to be nominal fees by the Department of Labor (DOL) and continue to exempt the employee from the Fair Labor Standards Act – Pay per call, or a monthly/annual stipend. Pay per call, whether the person responds from their home or place of employment or is scheduled for hours at the Fire Station (paid-on-premise), has compensation paid to the individual when responding to an

emergency call. The amount of compensation may not be tied to productivity and may not vary on time spent on the activity. The Department of Labor's regulations specify that the payment of a nominal amount on a per-call basis to paid-on-call firefighters is acceptable so long as the compensation is tied to the paid-on-call's sacrifice rather than productivity-based compensation. (DOL, Wage and Hour Division Opinion Letter, August 7, 2006)

However, the Department of Labor has determined that payment to paid-on-call firefighters on a per-hour basis destroys the bona fide volunteer/paid-on-call status and creates an employment relationship. This type of payment is akin to hourly wages based on productivity. (DOL, Wage and Hour Division Opinion Letter July 7, 1999) Based on this, the Paid-On-Call Firefighters are classified as employees, and subject to FLSA, including overtime, and minimum wages laws.

Minnesota Minimum Wage

The minimum wage in the State of Minnesota is \$9.86 per-hour as of January 1, 2019, if annual revenues exceed \$500,000 annually. The City's annual budget exceeds \$500,000. Therefore, any payment based on a per-hour basis must be a minimum of \$9.86 per-hour. At this time, the City is in non-compliance with Minnesota Minimum Wages for wages owed to Paid-On-Call personnel for Station Duty and Drills, as well as EMT only for Fire Calls and should be corrected as soon as possible.

FLSA Work Period

FLSA overtime requirements for public safety employees differ from other employees, because a specified number of work hours is needed within the FLSA work period before the FLSA rate can be applied to overtime pay; this provision is commonly referred to as the 7(k) exemption. The law allows the employer (municipality) to choose a pay cycle from seven (7) to twenty-eight (28) days as illustrated in the table below, for specific police and fire positions:

Table 28: FLSA 7(k) Work Period Chart

Maximum Hours Worked (Rounded) Before Overtime

CONSECUTIVE DAYS WORK PERIOD	HOURS OF FIRE PROTECTION	HOURS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
28	212	171
27	204	165
26	197	159
25	189	153
24	182	147
23	174	141
22	167	134
21	159	128
20	151	122
19	144	116
18	136	110
17	129	104
16	121	98
15	114	92
14	106	86
13	98	79
12	91	73
11	83	67
10	76	61
9	68	55
8	61	49
7	53	43

Each covered employer is required to establish a written work period in which it calculates compensation. The City does not currently have a written policy on its work period for the Police Department or Fire Department, although the consultants learned during the onsite visit that Police uses as 28-day FLSA Cycle, while Fire uses a 21-day FLSA cycle. Fire Management indicated no FLSA Cycle is in place for Paid-On-Call, so Paid-On-Call would never be paid overtime. If no work FLSA Cycle exists, the City should have been following the traditional 40-hour / 7-day work week to calculate overtime.

The City is then recommended to develop a written policy outlining the FLSA Work Periods for both the Police Department and Fire Department (including for 24-hour and proposed 8-hour shift personnel), and if the Paid-On-Call will be paid on a different Work Period within the Fire Department. In addition, the City is advised to review the hours of work for the Paid-On-Call

staff to determine if any have worked over 40 hours per week in the last two (2) years to determine if any overtime compensation is owed.

Most municipalities with a paid-on-call department choose the highest FLSA cycle (28-days). This would mean that if any member, other than an exempt member, (currently none are classified as such) would not receive overtime at a rate of 1.5 times normal hourly rate until that member exceeds 212 hours within the 28-day cycle.

The cycle beginning date and ending date must be set by the municipality and the City must account for the hours any employee works (receives compensation) within those 28-days, At the end of the 28th day, a new 28-day cycle would begin. The probability that any Paid-On-Call personnel would reach this threshold at this FLSA cycle would be rare; however, the Department has an obligation to track hours and ensure all time worked, if over the 212 hours in the 28-day cycle, is paid at the overtime rate.

Training hours will need to be tracked as hours worked. Per the 7(g) FLSA provision, those hours, as long as they do not resemble the work performed as a paid-on-call, are truly training and/or meeting duties. Thus, these training hours can be paid at a rate different provided they meet Minnesota's Minimum Wage requirement.

Overtime Calculations

Per the Fair Labor Standards Act, all remuneration for employment paid to, or on behalf of, the employee must be calculated into the overtime rate, unless it is a regular rate exception. The City provides law enforcement personnel with various special pays including longevity, Holiday Pay, Education Incentive, Court Time, Special Assignments, Standby Pay, and Out of Classification Pay. Similarly, Fire personnel also receive longevity, Holiday Pay, Education Incentive, and Out of Classification Pay. Each of these special pays should be thoroughly analyzed to determine if they are required to be included in the calculation of regular rate for the purposes of FLSA overtime.

The City properly includes longevity, Court Time, Special Assignments, Out of Class pay, and Education Incentive into the FLSA overtime calculation. Holiday pay is received as each observed Holiday occurs, and is paid as a reward for service, but not dependent upon hours worked, so it is excluded from overtime calculation.

The Police Department also provides for Standby Pay, in which the employee is not scheduled to work, but has been notified they may need needed for court purposes. At this time, the City does not include Standby Pay in the calculation of FLSA overtime. Provided the employee is “waiting to engage”, this is likely proper. However, should the standby time become overly burdensome to the employee that the employee is considered working, the time may need to be included. The City should review this time to determine if the employee is able to engage in personal activity during this time, if there are geographical limits, the frequency of being called in, and required response times to better identify the level of burden to the employee and discuss with legal counsel any concerns.

Wage Schedules

Full time career employees in both Police and Fire are covered under multiple Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA). What is similar about each of these CBA’s is the salary structure. In the Fire Department, each rank has only one rate of pay, although there are six (6) levels of Firefighter and four (4) levels of Captain. These levels, however, are directly tied to years of service, not additional training/certification/change in duties. In the Police Department, there are two (2) CBA’s for Police Officer and Sergeant, and both receive increases based upon years of service in their respective position as well.

With the generations that are entering the workplace, compensation based upon achievement of additional training/certifications, is becoming more popular and may need to be considered by the City for future recruitment/retention efforts.

The consultants did not perform a compensation study and thus, did not compare the wages to those of similar departments in the area. Staff did indicate Compression between ranks exists, although payroll data was not requested to verify this statement. Compression is when base

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salary plus overtime exceeds the rank above. Given the expansive amount of Special Pay offered at the City that was discussed in a previous section, the City is recommended to do a Compression Analysis inclusive of base wages, special pays, overtime, and longevity, to determine if Compression exists between ranks. Compression can be relieved, in part, from the structure of the compensation system, and negotiations of special pay.

Payroll Processing and Recordkeeping

Each organization is required to maintain recordkeeping requirements for all employees, including City personnel. The Wage and Hour Division provides the following as a list of the basic records an employer must maintain:

- Employee's full name and social security number
- Address, including zip code
- Birth date, if younger than 19
- Sex and occupation
- Time and date of week when employee's workweek/work period begins
- Hours worked each day
- Total hours worked each workweek
- Basis on which employees' wages are paid (i.e., \$12.00 per hour for emergency response; \$9.86 for training)
- Regular hourly pay rate
- Total straight time earnings
- Total overtime earnings for the pay cycle
- Additions/deductions from wages
- Total wages paid each pay period
- Date of payment and the pay period covered by the payment

All payroll records must be maintained for at least three (3) years. Records on which wage computations are based should be retained for two (2) years (i.e., time cards, wage rate tables, records of deductions from wages, etc.). (*Wage and Hour Fact Sheet #21: Recordkeeping Requirements under the Fair Labor Standards Act*).

Both the Police Department and Fire Department have very complex internal payroll processes, unique to each Department. These processes are very labor intensive and inefficient, and the City is also using an older financial system, which further inhibits the payroll process.

The Police Department currently has an electronic scheduling software. Prior to the Study, employees were not actually documenting time in/time out each day or signing off on their individual time reporting records. This has since been changed in late 2018 when the Police Department and Finance Department personnel acknowledged the system in place was inefficient and developed what is in place now.

The Fire Department support staff completes the timecards for all Paid-On-Call personnel, based upon the Call Log and Call Back Sheets completed. These timecards are then submitted to and signed off by a Captain. The total time and gross earnings are then entered by the Department support staff into an excel spreadsheet for submittal to Finance for payroll processing. Full time personnel complete their timesheets, inclusive of scheduled shifts and overtime. This is then collected by the Assistant Chief, who verifies before it is submitted to Department support staff into an excel spreadsheet for submittal to Finance for payroll processing. This method is concerning in that the Finance Department is paying employees based on the Department's calculations alone, which is not further reviewed for legal or contractual compliance given the limiting information being submitted to Finance.

Overall, the City is recommended to ensure that all employees in both Departments (Full Time and Paid-On-Call) have a paper or electronic mechanism in which the employee completes their time in/time out for each day worked and signs off on its completion. Having the employee sign off on their time work allows better accountability from the employees related to their time. The City can more effectively address falsifications, missing hours, and supervisory changes so there is an accurate record of the process for defense and compliance purposes. In addition, ensuring the Finance department has an accurate account of all hours and hourly rates will ensure accurate payroll processing that is in compliance with collective bargaining agreements and wage and hour laws.

The process in which to ensure the hours are validated by management and entered by Finance is also an area of opportunity. The City is recommended to conduct a lean review on the payroll process for both the Police Department and Fire Department to eliminate inefficient and unnecessary processing steps, ensure all compliance documentation is being developed/retained,

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and to identify primary and backup roles in each Department. This process should be led by a kaizen or six sigma lean processing professional. The team to participate in this process should include a representative from each Department familiar with the current payroll processes, a Finance Department representative familiar with payroll processing, and a Human Resources professional familiar with wage and hour requirements. In addition, because this Report also covers other financial process improvements, such as credit card processing, other like systems can be evaluated in the same manner.

Recommendations

- *Classify Paid-On-Call as employees and develop a 28-day work period in accordance with 7(k) for overtime calculations. **Priority 1***
- *Amend Paid-On-call hourly rates for compliance with Minnesota Minimum Wage laws. **Priority 1***
- *Develop a written policy to clarify work periods for both Police and Fire Departments. **Priority 1***
- *Review Standby Pay to ensure it is properly defined as “waiting to engage”. **Priority 3***
- *Conduct a Compression Analysis between ranks to help determine if compensation systems need adjustment. **Priority 4***
- *Require a paper or electronic mechanism in which the employee completes their time in/time out for each day worked and signs off on its completion. **Priority 2***
- *Require the Finance Department to review hours per pay period for each employee to ensure proper hours of work and payroll calculations are correct. **Priority 2***
- *Conduct a lean processing review on the payroll process for both the Police Department and Fire Department to eliminate inefficient processing steps, ensure all compliance documentation is being developed/retained, and to identify primary and backup roles in each Department. **Priority 3***

Orientation

The orientation process is as important as the interview process in terms of the impressions an organization makes on a new hire. An engaging orientation process that is clearly laid out and documented for the new employee will be smoother and more productive than informal processes and sets a standard of expectation. An effective orientation process will cover the

culture and history of the Department, SOPs and performance expectations, job requirements, communication expectations, issuing gear, and much more.

A written comprehensive orientation checklist will help ensure consistent training and documentation of the training process, especially if assigned trainers vary. This will also ensure time sensitive items, such as I-9 documents that have mandatory timelines for completion are met within legal timeframes. Orientation processes should include payroll information, scheduling, gear/equipment assignment, a copy of all relevant SOG's, other policy/procedures, introduction to other personnel, introduction to physical location, introduction to apparatus/equipment, location of resource materials, sit down time with the Chief, and other items specific to each Department.

The Fire Department did provide a checklist used by the Department, although the Assistant Chief did indicate the process of meeting with employees and covering critical items during the orientation process was more informal, and employees may not be required to sign off on their orientation process. No such form is in use by the Police Department at this time. The City is recommended to develop a formalized orientation process to onboard a new employee prior to starting the formal Field Training Program.

Recommendations

- *Develop a new employee orientation checklist for each Department and HR to ensure all paperwork, benefits, and City and Department information is consistently provided.*
Priority 5

Job Descriptions

Job descriptions are useful communication tools to explain to employees what tasks an employer expects them to perform. Job descriptions should also address performance standards. Without these tools, employees may not perform as expected. Job descriptions also identify the education, skill, and ability necessary for a position. Minimum qualifications assist in screening for recruitment and promotional purposes and provide employees with a guide of what will be needed to attain higher ranking positions they may be interested in obtaining in the future.

Job descriptions are also an important part of the application process – in which the applicant signs off that they are capable of performing the functions of the position; of indicating the types of accommodations that are required. The job descriptions should also delineate responsibilities of Officers – not only operational skills, but also management and leadership skills required for the positions. These job descriptions should be utilized not only in the hiring process, but also the promotional process.

Although job descriptions currently exist for both the Fire Department and Police Department, the City does not typically update these documents until there is a vacancy. In addition, the Fire Department does not follow the consistent job description template the rest of the City uses. With the current job description template used by the City, the HR Department should designate personnel within both Departments to incorporate the job functions, minimum qualifications, and other relevant areas to describe each position, and submit to the HR Department for review. HR will then be responsible to ensure the job description information is complete and consistent across all positions. This process should include all Paid-On-Call positions/ranks, as a job description was not available for all POC ranks.

Recommendations

- *The HR Department should designate personnel within both Departments to review all current job descriptions to incorporate the job functions, minimum qualifications, and other relevant areas to describe each position, and submit to the HR Department for review. **Priority 3***

Promotion

Currently both Departments use an internal posting process for promotional opportunities in which employees submit an application for consideration. The Police Department utilizes an interview and assessment center process for the selection of their promotional positions, while the Fire Department utilizes strictly an interview.

The consultants suggest the testing process called an Assessment Center, be incorporated into the Fire Department promotional process, just as Police uses. An Assessment Center is a process that places the candidate in a testing environment that provides a high degree of reliability and

insight into his/her supervisory, leadership, management, and/or operational potential by testing skills and ability, rather than just knowledge. The candidate participates in a series of exercises designed to simulate his/her competency to perform a particular job.

The Assessment Center process allows the Assessors to observe the candidate's thought process, organizational skills, leadership ability, stress tolerance, analytical skills, influence, delegation ability, decisiveness, sensitivity and/or empathy, communication techniques (both verbal and non-verbal), ability to function as a team member, and his/her ethics. In addition, assessment center testing can also be utilized to show a candidate's ability to command a scene.

The Department would then develop a promotional eligibility list. Per Department policy, promotional testing currently occurs when an opening occurs. Normally, the Chief can anticipate a future opening and conduct a testing process well in advance of a potential opening, which is beneficial not only to the employees but also the Department. The promotional eligibility list is good for two (2) years. The Human Resources Department should maintain all scores, rankings, and lists on behalf of the Departments.

An eligibility list can also serve as a management tool to assist in the career development of an employee. Individuals on the list should be able to "act" in the next rank in the absence of the supervisor, thus gaining on-the-job experience prior to assuming the promotional rank. Further, this allows administration a chance to see how the employee performs when placed in the position. These assignments are considered temporary, and it is recommended the Department's policy manual to delineate the maximum length of time a person may serve in this capacity. The purpose is for the employee to gain experience and try out the position, as well as minimize overtime in bringing individuals in to fill the spot. This is not intended to fill a position on a regular basis with an individual with lower pay.

Recommendations

- *Incorporate an Assessment Center into the Fire Department promotional process.*
Priority 5

Performance Evaluations

Employee performance reviews by definition, is a process that uses predetermined standards (i.e. job description) to evaluate the performance of an employee over a designated and established time period. The goal is for the employee's supervisor to provide a review, constructive feedback, and meaningful information on areas of needed improvement and to establish goals. An employee's evaluation should be specific to inform and guide the employee in the performance of his/her duties. Unfortunately, too often, performance evaluations have no clear purpose, and supervisors are going through the motions. The evaluations and the process are then seen as a formality that accomplishes little or nothing in the way of true feedback. Several management studies have concluded that evaluations conducted once a year are too infrequent and that the annual evaluation process is too formal to be effective.

Currently, the Fire Department provides an annual evaluation process for full-time personnel. The Police Department, however, does quarterly reviews in eight (8) competency areas. These quarterly reviews, along with an employee's self-appraisal, are then used to develop an annual evaluation.

The Police Department is commended for having a progressive evaluation system in place, that engages employees throughout the year, not just once per year. The competency areas are meaningful and relevant, and the self-appraisal encompasses career development questions. Evaluations beyond the 3-year mark, the structure of these meetings can change to be more informal but should be considered essential and cover mandatory components. The Department might do well to develop a generic "topic template" for these discussions. This model gives the employee time to prepare and focus on the upcoming discussion and gives the supervisor a forum to ask questions and provide feedback.

The focus of these meetings could revolve around the following:

- Employee performance goals
- Goals for the organization
- What is the employee's role in accomplishing these goals?

- How is the organization doing in accomplishing the goals?
- How can I – as their supervisor/manager, help them better accomplish the goals?

The self-appraisal tool should also continue. No employee wants to be a problem or weak link within an organization. Regardless of the attitude they project, most employees want to do a good job. A self-appraisal tool helps an employee to critically analyze their own performance and to provide insight into their strengths and weaknesses. A perception fallacy is that if you ask them to rate themselves, they will tell you how great they are since no one is going to tell their boss how they are underperforming. This is not the case. Employees tend to be honest in self-appraisal. By using this process, the supervisor can learn a great deal about the employee, their personal thoughts and priorities, and how to help them be better performers.

Performance reviews should be an integral and essential part of the employee management and documentation process. Documentation needs to exist showing employee strengths and competencies as well as the fact that the employee was made aware of their performance deficiencies. Employees should be given the opportunity to correct deficiencies with support of the organization where possible. They should also be made aware of the consequences for future infractions or failure to improve performance. In the end, the goal is to improve performance, but also to give the Department the necessary tools to terminate a poor performer. Documentation is essential for that process.

Overall, the Fire Department is recommended to incorporate the Police Department's evaluation system for its Department, for both career and Paid-On-Call positions.

Recommendations

- *Continue the performance evaluation process into the Fire Department for both full-time and Paid On-Call, at least annually, regardless of tenure with the City. Upon successful implementation, the Department should strive to utilize the Police Departments evaluation model and frequency. **Priority 3***
- *Continue performance meetings within the Police Department beyond the three (3) benchmark. These meetings can change be more informal but should be considered essential and mandatory. **Priority 3***

HR/Management Training

Both the Police Department and Fire Department discussed types of human resources related training that has been provided to manager level positions; and although some training has occurred, both Departments expressed a desire for more training. Topics of interest may vary from new manager topics: coaching, conflict resolution, performance management and documentation; to HR topics: employment law and compliance like FMLA, ADA, Harassment, Civil Rights etc. The more educated managers are in these areas, the more effective they are in their roles, and the less likely they are to respond improperly to a personnel issue that could put the City in a vulnerable defense position.

The City is recommended to establish a regular schedule of training topics for its managers and director level positions. Those topics should incorporate management topics, employment law and compliance topics, but could also expand to other areas the City may deem critical for managers such as budgeting and strategic planning. Employees who are not trained may not understand the legality behind certain statements or actions, which makes this a liability for the City. Therefore, it is recommended all manager/director positions receive basic training on employment law, interviewing, performance management, and discipline as soon as possible. The City HR Department could develop these trainings in house, or the City could utilize outside sources for these topics. Each manager should be required to attend a pre-determined number of training each year.

Recommendations

- *All manager/director positions should receive basic training on employment law, interviewing, performance management, and discipline. **Priority 3***

Personnel Policies

Personnel Policy Manuals are a summary of information about an organization that will often include administrative procedures and employment related policies. This document covers basic topics such as expectations of conduct, selection and promotional processes, hours of work, discipline, benefits (if applicable), separation, and standard employment policy topics such as

harassment. There may be crossover of topics into a CBA, although CBA's typically prevail, unless the topic is part of a state/federal law.

Even though the City has a Personnel Policy Manual, the last revision date was in 2010. The Manual is missing critical regulatory updates that have occurred over the last decade. Some examples include Reasonable Accommodations under ADA/ADAAA; ensuring the sexual harassment policy does not create an employment contract; USERRA; Military Leave under Federal FMLA; Break Time for Nursing Mothers; as well as other more recent HR topics like social media, use of cell phones or other electronic devices, confidentiality etc.

The HR Department is recommended to have the Personnel Policy Manual updated. Even if the City is compliant in their practices, yet the official documents of the City are not, the City still has a liability risk. Once the Policy Manual is updated, the Fire Chief and Police Chief are recommended to evaluate their Department policies to ensure no policies conflict with City Policy. Finally, as a best practice recommendation, the City may also wish to consider conducting an HR Audit of the City to identify any regulatory compliance concerns.

Recommendations

- *Update the City's Personnel Policy Manual for regulatory updates. **Priority 3***
- *Review Department Policies to ensure no conflicts exist between City and Department policy topics. **Priority 3***
- *Conduct an HR regulatory compliance Audit. **Priority 5***

Wellness/EAP

House Bill HF 3873 and the companion Bill in the Senate SF 3420 both passed with overwhelming support in 2018. The portion of the bill as it relates to first responders and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) took effect January 1, 2019. Minnesota worker's compensation law did not recognize PTSD as a compensable injury. This meant that an individual with work-related PTSD was ineligible for workers' compensation benefits. This new legislation creates a statutory presumption of work-relatedness for certain classes of workers, who have been diagnosed with PTSD, specifically including police officers, firefighters, and EMTs. As a result,

employers will want to review the voluntary EAP services to support the employees within these roles in a proactive manner.

Both the Fire Department and Police Department discussed wellness and EAP for their Departments. The City currently offers an EAP program through their Life Insurance Company, and the Police Department has an in-house volunteer wellness program. The Departments indicate they feel the employees know what resources are available to them, although they do not know who, if any, utilize the services offered. The Police Department expressed interest in ensuring the City offers as robust a program as they could. Given the officers continuously put their lives in jeopardy and respond to stressors most citizens don't experience, ensuring they have support is critical, and the Department genuinely cares for the wellbeing of its personnel. Under the Departments' Wellness Policy, employees of the Department receive formal training and serve as Wellness Coaches to be a resource, advisor, or coach. The initial concern of this is the need for confidentiality between two (2) employees, as well as the burden on the Wellness Coach on matters they may not be comfortable with or qualified to address. Currently, these Coaches serve more as liaisons to identify or coordinate wellness activities for employees, which seems appropriate. The City is recommended to update this Policy to reflect the role of Wellness Coaches is more of a liaison/communication only role.

The City is recommended to speak with their EAP provider to discussion options for enhancing the EAP service. Alternatively, there are multiple service model programs available from third party vendors that provide robust EAP programs, inclusive of traditional EAP, local events/programs for employees/dependents, publications/newsletters, coaching etc. These programs can offer 24/7 assistance via telephone, and its services include mental health support to budget management support, because sometimes life stressors outside work have an impact at work as well. Some services have a specific focus for public safety, which may prove beneficial to the City.

Recommendations

- *Update the Police Department Wellness Policy to amend the role of Wellness Coaches as communication liaison. **Priority 4***

- *Search for a Third-Party Vendor or current EAP provider to identify enhanced wellness programs. **Priority 3***

Personnel Records

Personnel records have three (3) major functions in an organization. They provide a memory or recall to administration and employees; they offer documentation of events for use in resolving questions or human resources problems; and they provide data for research, planning, problem solving, and decision-making.

While federal, state, and local laws require that certain employee information be maintained, certain basic records should also be retained to avoid errors of memory and provide information for making management and human resources decisions.

Not all personnel files are maintained with the HR Department. Currently the Fire Department maintains their own set of records on certain items and may or may not forward a copy of their contents to HR for the official record. No retention/destruction policies were noted, and files are not forwarded to HR following an employee's termination. It should be noted the Fire Chief indicated the Department will be transitioning its files to HR in 2019, and this should be done as soon as possible.

Based on discussions with the Assistant City Manager, the City is effectively separating personnel documents into different files, as required under the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). The following illustrates which documents should be maintained and in what type of file. Organizations must differentiate between employee information and medical information and maintain these documents in separate files.

The contents of human resource files vary by organization, but most human resources professionals accept some practices as standard. The following provides a checklist of items that may be included in personnel files:

Main Employee File

- Offer/promotion/transfer letter(s)
- Application form
- Acknowledgement of SOP/employee manual
- Acknowledgement of new policies
- Orientation checklist
- Termination checklist
- Performance appraisals
- Official performance documentation (memos, letters, discipline, recognition, etc.)
- Payroll documentation (change of address, transfer)
- Training requests (with approval and/or denial documentation)
- Copies of certifications, licences, transcripts, etc.

Separate Payroll File

- W-4 form
- Group benefit enrollment forms
- Retirement system calculations/benefits
- Insurance claim forms
- COBRA letter sent at time of employment and termination and other mandatory notices
- Automatic payroll deposit authorizations
- Miscellaneous deductions
- Payroll documentation (change of address, transfer documentation, leave of absences, etc.)

Separate Medical File – Mandatory separation

- Initial physical documentation
- Worker's compensation information (doctor reports, letters, etc.)
- On-going non-CDL drug and/or alcohol screening information (CDL screening mandates its own file)
- Hepatitis vaccine records and/or decline form
- Other medical tests results

Subject Files Kept Separate

- Child support
- DSS requests (Medicaid, etc.)
- Exit interview forms
- Garnishments
- Immigration Control Form I-9 – (All organization documents are usually maintained together for auditing purposes)
- Investigation notes or reports
- Litigation documents
- Reference checks

- Requests for employment/payroll verification
- Wage assignments
- Worker's compensation claims

The official file for all Fire and Police Department employees should be retained in City Hall under the direction of the HR Director. The personnel files should have limited access and be kept in a secure filing cabinet. Access to the general file should be restricted to the HR Department. Only the HR Director and designated administrative personnel should have access to the medical file. The person performing payroll functions should have access to the payroll files. Chiefs and the manager involved in the promotion process should have limited access to information pertaining to potential employee officer candidates. Information should be limited to past performance evaluations, and if appropriate, past commendations and/or disciplinary notices.

The Fire Department and Police Departments should maintain limited information regarding an employee, and the information they have should be kept in a locked file with access only by the Chief and a confidential support/management position. Information maintained in the Department files should be limited to copies of disciplinary actions and performance evaluations. All other information on an individual should be kept in the City's official file with Human Resources. Any support staff with access to the Department's files should be trained on employee confidentiality.

Individual supervisors should maintain a confidential employee file that is utilized to store information (notes) to assist in the development of a performance evaluation. However, once any piece of information is acted upon, given a disciplinary action or documented in the performance evaluation, the original form should be maintained in the City's personnel file, with a copy in the Department file. Any supervisory notes should be destroyed once transferred to an official document.

Recommendations

- *Ensure all active and inactive personnel files are maintained in Human Resources. Departments should only maintain supervisory files on active employees. **Priority 2***

- *Department managers should be trained on the contents and legality of supervisory files.*
Priority 3

HR Staffing

During the course of the Study, it was noted that the City's current HR Staffing to employee ratio is 2:340. The two (2) HR positions include the Assistant City Manager/HR Director, who has other duties besides HR, and an HR Assistant. Of the 340 employees, 110 are Full-time and 230 are temporary/seasonal/paid-on-call. The average HR staffing ratio in the United States is currently 1.4 HR per 100 employees served. Although this was not the focus of this Study, the need for additional HR support for Police and Fire was identified.

From the Study alone, the consultants identified the need to tighten the recruitment process for both the Fire and Police Department which will include more hands on recruitment processing by HR (centralized recruitment), developing a recruitment strategy to enhance the Paid-On-Call staffing, developing an orientation program for new employees, redesigning the payroll processing between the two (2) Departments and Finance, developing a performance management program for the Fire Department, reviewing compensation and compression, and updating City HR policies, just to better support the operational needs for both the Police and Fire Department. Based on the operational recommendations throughout this report, there will likely be other related HR needs that arise as well.

Given the nature of the Fire and Police Departments, it is the consultant's recommendation that a Full-Time senior level HR professional be hired to be the dedicated HR liaison for both Police and Fire. This position should have a bachelor's degree with a minimum of five (5) years HR experience, some of which must be public sector experience. This position will report to and be supervised by the Human Resources Director, but it's primary role will be HR Functions for the Public Safety Departments. This alone will not likely result in full-time responsibilities, but with the current HR: Employee ratio at the City, and considering the level of experience recommended, this position could also assume responsibility over the work of other HR staff in the Department. It could also assume other HR responsibilities such as leave management,

project management, employee relations, legal compliance, onboarding, or benefits and compensation etc. to make this a dedicated full-time position to Human Resources.

As previously mentioned earlier in this report, the HR Department may benefit from a full HR Audit, which could also help determine if the organizational structure for the Department to better serve as an internal service provider for the City.

Recommendations

- *Hire a full-time senior level HR professional to be dedicated to Police and Fire. This position may have other duties as assigned, and report to the highest-ranking HR official at the City. **Priority 2***

Collective Bargaining Representation

With some the staffing recommendations presented in this Report, the Fire Chief would be the only Fire Officer within the Department that can address issues of performance/discipline. Because all other ranks fall in the same collective bargaining agreement, Captains are unable to discipline or perform other personnel related duties for the Department. The City will either need to 1) perform a Unit Clarification to have that rank removed from the CBA; or 2) create a separate bargaining unit for those supervisory ranks. This will create a better opportunity for higher level positions to be used in a more effective manner, including performance related matters, and frees up the Chief for other functions.

Recommendations

- *Based upon the Fire Department organizational structure outcomes, the City should consider the best course of action to provide for a supervisory level position that is not in the same bargaining unit as subordinate positions of the Department. **Priority 2***

Recommendation Summary

Police Department		
Priority	Objective	Recommendation
2	PD Technology	<i>Purchase additional iPhones for use in patrol. By Department policy, prohibit officers from utilizing personal phones for work related matters</i>
2	Police Staffing	<i>Increase the number of Police Officers by two (2) additional Officers. Assign them to day shift</i>
2	Police Staffing	<i>Staff a non-confidential senior level civilian support position that can be a lead worker over the Records Technicians, assist with non-confidential communications, budget review, and data reporting. This position will report directly to the Office Supervisor</i>
2	Police Staffing	<i>Increase patrol and CSO staffing, as noted previously, to sustain the community policing philosophy and programs of the department</i>
3	PD Organization Chart	<i>Modify the Department organizational chart to assign a Captain to supervise the Patrol function</i>
3	PD Technology	<i>The recording system in the area adjacent to booking (detention center interview room) should be fixed or replaced</i>
3	PD Technology	<i>Install surveillance cameras in the evidence processing and doorway leading into the area</i>
3	Police Staffing	<i>Adjust patrol shift scheduling by eliminating the B Shift. Assign current B Shift Officers to regular night shift hours</i>
3	Police Staffing	<i>Assign each shift with an early car beginning and ending one (1) hour earlier than the regular shift to provide for roll call overlap coverage and to reduce officer shift holdover</i>
3	Police Staffing	<i>Insure staffing of specialized units by adequately staffing the patrol function; thereby reducing the need to transfer officers to patrol during times of temporary vacancies</i>
3	Police Staffing	<i>Assign the preparatory paperwork and documentation for in custody arrests to the arresting patrol officer</i>
3	Police Staffing	<i>Increase CSO full-time staffing by one (1)</i>
4	PD Code Enforcement	<i>Create a Code Enforcement Unit within the Police Department and transfer inspection and enforcement responsibilities from the Fire Department to that Unit</i>
4	PD Code Enforcement	<i>Staff the Code Enforcement Unit with one (1) full-time supervisor, two (2) full-time Code Enforcement Officers, and a part-time seasonal long grass Enforcement Officer</i>
4	PD Code Enforcement	<i>Move rental residential licensing and other work from the COP and assign to the Code Enforcement Unit</i>
4	PD Organization Chart	<i>If the Department assumes responsibility for code enforcement, adopt the revised organizational chart and include a Code Enforcement Unit in the Administration Division</i>
4	PD Response Times	<i>Annually, review the Department response times to both low and high priority calls for service</i>
4	PD Technology	<i>A bar-coding system for evidence, that is compatible with the records management system, should be implemented</i>
4	PD Technology	<i>Develop a streamlined system for credit card payments and accept them year-round</i>
4	Police Staffing	<i>Modify CSO schedules to one (1) officer Sunday - Wednesday, and the other (assuming two full-time officers) Wednesday - Saturday. Hours of work should be assigned from 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m</i>

Fire Department		
Priority	Objective	Recommendation
1	FD Emission Exhaust	<i>The fire station should be equipped with an OSHA approved vehicle emission exhaust removal system which accomplishes 100% capture and removal of exhaust emissions to the outside. In addition, ceiling air scrubbers should be added to remove exhaust from small engines (saws, extrication engines) that will be released in the station. (reference Appendix C).</i>
1	FD Leadership	<i>Utilize the salary savings from the vacant Assistant Chief to offset the creation of a firefighter/EMT position: 40-hours/week, Monday – Friday to create a three-person response team.</i>
1	FD Training	<i>Establishing a minimum training standard for firefighter training found in NFPA 1001 will provide a basis of training for entry level training for career and Paid-on-Call firefighters. The NFPA 1001 (Firefighter I and II) standard identifies the minimum job performance requirements for firefighters whose duties are primarily structural in nature Top of Form Bottom of Form and the purpose of this standard shall be to ensure that persons meeting the requirements of this standard who are engaged in firefighting are qualified</i>
1	FD Training	<i>The department's leadership needs to address the training program and show documentation that a minimum of training hours per month are accumulated by each employee</i>

Fire Department continued

2	FD Anoka County PSAP	<i>The City of Columbia Heights should request a monthly report form Anoka PSAP as to the components they control of the Fire and Police Departments</i>
2	FD Emergency Incidents	<i>The fire department should include incidents by Day of the Week in their annual report inasmuch as all three (3) metrics are needed to determine if a pattern of calls occurs in which staffing, or resources could be added at those times</i>
2	FD Inspections	<i>Move all property inspections under the authority of the Police Department</i>
2	FD Inspections	<i>Strengthen the Paid-On-Call membership to the allotted 30 positions. This will allow the Chief to serve in an Administrative capacity in lieu of going on all calls while working and will provide for staffing relief for training requirements</i>
2	FD Leadership	<i>Until additional data warrants the position of Assistant Fire Chief, the City should leave this position vacant</i>
2	FD Suppression Team	<i>The fire department should ensure that the governing officials understand the significance of the current standard that applies to their Department</i>
3	FD Consolidation	<i>The City of Columbia Heights should lead a taskforce to revisit the opportunities of consolidation with the Fridley, and St. Anthony Fire Departments</i>
3	FD Inspections	<i>The rental and nuisance inspections should fall under the authority of the newly created Code Enforcement Unit in the Police Department (see law enforcement section). The fire department would remain responsible for residential and commercial inspections as it pertains to fire and life safety issues</i>
3	FD Retention	<i>The department leadership has opportunities to develop a comprehensive retention program using existing resources such as the National Volunteer Fire Council</i>
5	FD Accrediation	<i>The fire department should not seek international accreditation (CFAI) at this juncture; rather, the CFAI performance indicators and core competencies should be utilized as a model for quality and a benchmark for opportunities</i>
5	FD Apparatus	<i>All future apparatus should be equipped with an engine hour meter to more accurately document apparatus/vehicle usage</i>
5	FD Apparatus	<i>The City should consider rechassis/remount of ambulances at the 10-year period extending the life of the patient compartment to 20 years</i>
5	FD Suppression Team	<i>The City should not adopt either standards; however, they should strive to meet the standards listed in NFPA 1710. Adoption would include the adoption of all OSHA and NFPA standards by reference included in the document. However, a plan should be developed to meet as many of the NFPA standards as possible in the future</i>

Priority	Objective	Recommendation
1	Human Resources	<i>Classify Paid-On-Call as employees and develop a 28-day work period in accordance with 7(k) for overtime calculations</i>
1	Human Resources	<i>Amend Paid-On-call hourly rates for compliance with Minnesota Minimum Wage laws</i>
1	Human Resources	<i>Develop a written policy to clarify work periods for both Police and Fire Departments</i>
2	Human Resources	<i>HR should be single point of entry to accept all applications for the City and screen applicants for minimum qualification</i>
2	Human Resources	<i>HR should be the department communicating with applicants during the interviewing process, and when applications are no longer being considered</i>
2	Human Resources	<i>The fire department and HR should develop a formal recruitment strategy for the Department's recruitment needs</i>
2	Human Resources	<i>Ensure all pre-employment testing including background check, psychological exam, and basic physical/drug test results are submitted to HR. HR will be responsible to communicate required results information to the hiring department</i>
2	Human Resources	<i>Utilize a standardized rating system to rank candidates during interviews. All personnel who participate in interviews should be trained in interview techniques/legal questioning</i>
2	Human Resources	<i>All application and interview documents are to be retained by Human Resources</i>
2	Human Resources	<i>Discontinue to the current fire department physical ability test and begin using a third-party agency to conduct candidate physical ability testing utilizing the nationally recognized Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT)</i>

Human Resources continued

2	Human Resources	<i>Require a paper or electronic mechanism in which the employee completes their time in/time out for each day worked and signs off on its completion</i>
2	Human Resources	<i>Require the Finance Department to review hours per pay period for each employee to ensure proper hours of work and payroll calculations are correct</i>
2	Human Resources	<i>Ensure all active and inactive personnel files are maintained in Human Resources. Departments should only maintain supervisory files on active employees</i>
2	Human Resources	<i>position. This position may have other duties as assigned , and report to the highest-ranking HR official at the City</i>
2	Human Resources	<i>Based upon the fire department organizational structure outcomes, the City should consider the best course of action to provide for a supervisory level position that is not in the same bargaining unit as subordinate positions of the Department.</i>
3	Human Resources	<i>Implement an electronic applicant tracking system, that has been budgeted for 2019. Utilize this System for all hiring, including Paid-On-Call and Volunteer (Reserves)</i>
3	Human Resources	<i>Review Standby Pay to ensure it is properly defined as "waiting to engage"</i>
3	Human Resources	<i>Conduct a lean processing review on the payroll process for both the Police Department and Fire Department to eliminate inefficient processing steps, ensure all compliance documentation is being developed/retained, and to identify primary and backup roles in each Department</i>
3	Human Resources	<i>The HR Department should designate personnel within both Departments to review all current job descriptions to incorporate the job functions, minimum qualifications, and other relevant areas to describe each position, and submit to the HR Department for review</i>
3	Human Resources	<i>Continue the performance evaluation process into the fire department for both full-time and Paid On-Call,, at least annually, regardless of tenure with the City. Upon successful implementation, the Department should strive to utilize the Police Departments evaluation model and frequency</i>
3	Human Resources	<i>Continue performance meetings within the Police Department beyond the three (3) benchmark. These meetings can change be more informal but should be considered essential and mandatory</i>
3	Human Resources	<i>All manager/director positions should receive basic training on employment law, interviewing, performance management, and discipline</i>
3	Human Resources	<i>Update the City's Personnel Policy Manual for regulatory updates</i>
3	Human Resources	<i>Review Department Policies to ensure no conflicts exist between City and Department policy topics</i>
3	Human Resources	<i>Search for a Third-Party Vendor or current EAP provider to identify enhanced wellness programs</i>
3	Human Resources	<i>Department managers should be trained on the contents and legality of supervisory files</i>
4	Human Resources	<i>The Police, Fire, and HR Department websites should be updated reflect why Columbia Heights is an employer of choice for recruitment purpose</i>
4	Human Resources	<i>Conduct a Compression Analysis between ranks to help determine if compensation systems need adjustment</i>
4	Human Resources	<i>Update the Police Department Wellness Policy to amend the role of Wellness Coaches as communication liaison</i>
5	Human Resources	<i>Develop a new employee orientation checklist for each Department and HR to ensure all paperwork, benefits, and City and Department information is consistently provided</i>
5	Human Resources	<i>Incorporate an Assessment Center into the fire department promotional process</i>
5	Human Resources	<i>Conduct an HR regulatory compliance Audit</i>

Appendix A – Police Data Request

Columbia Heights, Minnesota Police Department

List of requested documents

If these documents are not readily available, we can discuss alternatives.

1. Part one crime statistics for the previous three years.
2. Part two crime statistics for the previous three years.
3. Department policy and procedures manual.
4. City employee personnel manual.
5. Job descriptions for all department employees.
6. Current schedules for all employees.
7. Information on calls for service including dispatched and self-initiated, for the previous three years. Should include details (if available) distinguishing priority levels as well as response times. This can be discussed and developed further while onsite.
8. Department public annual reports for previous three years if applicable (DISREGARD AS IT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE).
9. Labor contracts if applicable.
10. A list of the types of time off leave and amounts per employee classification.
11. Jurisdictional map.
12. Jurisdictional map with police districts or beats.
13. Description and/or any materials related to community policing and crime prevention programs.
14. Current department budget.
15. Narrative description of department's use of technology. Any inventory lists of department equipment if available. The description and list can be developed onsite if not currently available.
16. Police Department organizational chart.
17. List of police employees and position on organizational chart.
18. Organizational chart of City government.
19. Training records for the previous three years.
20. Over time usage report by codes for the previous three years.
21. Any current Comprehensive Plan from the Community Development or Planning Department.
22. Current contract with the City of Hilltop for Police and Fire Service.

Appendix B – Fire Data Request

Show each year data separately i.e. 2015, 2016, and 2017 – do not group years together

We request data in an electronic format on a flash drive or disk

If an area does not apply simply indicate NA

Do not send this information. Once collected we will meet with you on site to review it.

Call if you have any questions – especially before conducting hand counts

- General Information
- Overview of the department
- History
- Overview of the area protected
- District
- City/Village
- Population – Residents of Protection Area
- In-flux or Out-flux of Daytime Population
- Department’s Strategic Plan

- Response District –
- Map of Coverage Area
- Map of the District
- Map of Area of Concern for Relocation of Station
- Map of Contiguous Surrounding Area Showing Department Stations Locations
- Total Square Miles Protected
- Square Miles of Hydrant Area
- Square Miles of Non-Hydrant Area

- Personnel Management/Human Resources
- Current Roster of Members
- Personnel (information needed for all employees)
- List of members (sworn and non-sworn)
- Hire date
- Age or date of birth
- Organizational Chart
- # of Career
- # of Paid On Call
- # of Paid On Premise
- # of Volunteers
- # of Other Employees (Include civilian)
- Rank Structure (Number of Employees in Each Category)
- # of days at maximum daily staffing

- # of days at minimum daily staffing
 - Current salary of each employee (name, rank, salary)
 - Spreadsheet – name, rank, current salary,
 - (if possible, a spreadsheet with the benefit breakout -health, pension, taxes, etc. for fiscal year of the study)
 - Labor agreement
 - Department's By-Laws (if corporation)
 - Police & Fire Commission or Civil Service Regulations
 - Employee Policy & Procedure Manual (prefer electronic version)
 - Promotional Process – including forms utilized
 - History of Turnover (All Employees Last 3 Years – Include Reason and/or Exit Interview Data)
 - Recruiting/Retention Programs
 - Hiring Process (all forms)
 - Application
 - Hiring packet
 - Reference questions
 - Interview questions
 - Etc.
 - Grievances/Discipline Issues
 - Performance Evaluation process and forms
 - Last year's overtime by employee – include rank
 - FLSA pay cycle (if not in contract)
 - SOG/SOP Manual – prefer electronic copy – (sure to include HR policy section)
 - Department Employee's Handbook
 - New employee Orientation Process – (packet and/or forms)
-
- The Department
 - Department SOG's
 - Department Rules & Regulations
 - Annual Reports – Last 3 Years
 - Current ISO Rating
 - Provide complete ISO document
 - Last ISO On-Site Evaluation (copy of point distribution sheet)
 - Last On Site Evaluation
 - Accreditations
 - Others
-
- Emergency Activities –
 - Total calls last ten years (no breakdown just total calls per year)
 -
 - Last 3 Years (All Sub-Sections)

NFIRS Series	Nature of Call	Calls 2015	Calls 2016	Calls 2017
100	Fires			
200	Overpressure/Explosion			
300	Rescue/EMS			
400	Hazardous Conditions			
500	Service Calls			
600	Good Intent Calls			
700	False Alarm/False Calls			
800	Severe Weather			
900	Special Incidents			
	Total Calls			

- # Of Emergency Responses
- **NFIRS) Type of Responses: *For each of the 3 years***
- EMS Responses # of:
 - 1st Responder
 - ALS
 - BLS
 - Non-emergency Transports/Transfers, etc.
- Incidents by Time of Day
- Incidents by Day of the Week
- Incidents by Month
- Calls Breakdown by Area (City, District, Town, Etc.)
- Distribution by Shift
- Distribution by Station
- Response Times: (include documentation from dispatch)
- Notification time
- Turnout time
- Drive time
- Mitigation time
- Mutual Aid – Auto Responses (Given & Received) – With Whom? – Copy(ies) of Written Agreement
- Simultaneous (Overlapping) Call Data

- Dispatch (PSAP)
- Who provides dispatch
- Location (address) of dispatch center
- Cost

- Dispatch data – time from receiving call to FD notification
 - A data printout showing CAD verification times - from call received until agency is dispatched. CAD shows minutes and seconds.
 - Who answers 9-1-1
 - Who answers cellular 9-1-1
 - # of Employees
 - # of Shifts
 - Staffing per Shift (minimum & maximum)
 - EMD Program
 - Dispatchers/Call Taker Certifications
-
- Fire Station(s) – include mailing address for each station – include City & Zip
 - Current Facilities
 - # Of Stations – Street Address
 - Square Footage – (Floor Plans for each if available)
 - Age
 - Future Facility Plans/Needs Documents
-
- Apparatus & Equipment –
 - Type of Apparatus (I.E. Engine, Ambulance, Utility, Truck – Include Manufacturer)
 - Apparatus department ID number
 - Pump & Tank sizes
 - Mileage
 - Engine Hour Reading (if appropriate)
 - Vehicle VIN Number
 - Age of Apparatus
 - Manufacturer
 - Replacement Schedule
 - Apparatus maintenance records
 - Internal
 - External
 - Special Teams Apparatus
 - Specialized Equipment: Haz Mat, Water Rescue, Etc.
 - Radio, Type and Frequencies
 - Computers (Number of, Type, Age, Replacement Plan)
 - In Apparatus?
 - Software Programs
-
- Training
 - Training Records (Last 3 years) for each member
 - Training schedule
 - Training hours per month per employee

- Training Curriculum & Lesson Plan
 - Instructors qualifications
 - Training Manual
 - Certifications Categories (state)
 - Special Teams – certifications
 - All current employees’ certification level
-
- Fire Prevention –
 - Number of inspectable occupancies
 - History of Inspections & Re-Inspections (Last 3 Years)
 - Identification of Codes Adopted
-
- Safety Education
 - Public Safety Education Programs
 - Public Safety Education Data (Last 3 Years)
-
- Fiscal
 - Past three years of audited year financial statement
 - Current year audited financials
 - Past three years’ budget
 - Operating – include all revenue and expenses
 - Capital - include all revenue and expenses
 - Financial policies and procedures
 - Purchasing policies
 - Equipment or Capital reserve fund ledger
 - Overtime records
 - Ambulance information –
 - Ambulance revenue current year and two previous years
 - Ambulance billing contract
 - Copy of ambulance rates charged and authority for those rates i.e. ordinance
 - Identification of all accounts for the department
 - Account details for each of the above accounts – last three years
-
- Revenue
 - List of grants applied for and/or received for current year and two previous years
 - List 2% fire dues received current year and two previous years
 - List and explanation of any other department revenue received i.e. inspections fees, permit fee, etc.
 - Other information needed:
 - Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) if multiple communities for all

- Resource Hospital
- Project Medical Director contact information
- Involvement level with resource hospital
- Breakdown of where patients are transported (3-year period)

Any Additional Information Deemed Important

Appendix C – NFPA 1500 Emission Exhaust Standard

NFPA 1500 A.10.1.5 2018 edition

The operation of a fire department requires the storage and indoor operation of the fire apparatus that are generally housed in an enclosed building. The need to keep the apparatus and other vehicles ready for immediate service and in good operating condition, which requires the indoor running of vehicles for response and routine service/pump checks, makes storage in an enclosed area, such as an apparatus bay necessary. The exhaust from all internal combustion engines, including diesel and gasoline-powered engines, contains over 100 individual hazardous chemical components that, when combined can result in as many as 10,000 chemical compounds. A large majority of these compounds are today listed by state and federal regulatory agencies as being cancer causing or suspected carcinogens. The target components listed by NIOSH/OSHA consist of both hydrocarbon carbon components and compounds, which are produced as both gas-phase and particulate-phase compounds. The gases and particulates, which are viewed by NIOSH and OSHA as life threatening, consist of a cancer-causing substance known as polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Gases in diesel exhaust, such as nitrous oxide, nitrogen dioxide, formaldehyde, benzene, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide, and carbon monoxide, can also create health problems. According to NIOSH, human and animal studies show that diesel exhaust should be treated as human carcinogen (cancer-causing substances). In accordance with the NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards, as it pertains to diesel exhaust, NIOSH recommends that occupational exposure to carcinogens be limited to the lowest feasible concentration. NIOSH uses OSHA's classification, outlined in 29 CFR 1990.103, Definitions, which states in part, "Potential occupational carcinogen means any substance, or combination or mixture of substances, which causes an increased incidence of benign and / or malignant neoplasm, or a substantial decrease in the latency period between exposure and onset of neoplasm in humans or in one or more experimental mammalian species as the result of any oral, respiratory or dermal exposure, or any other exposure which results in the induction of tumors as a site other than the site of administration." This definition also includes any substance that is metabolized into one or more potential occupational carcinogen by mammals.