



WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

Department Overview

2026



Who We Serve

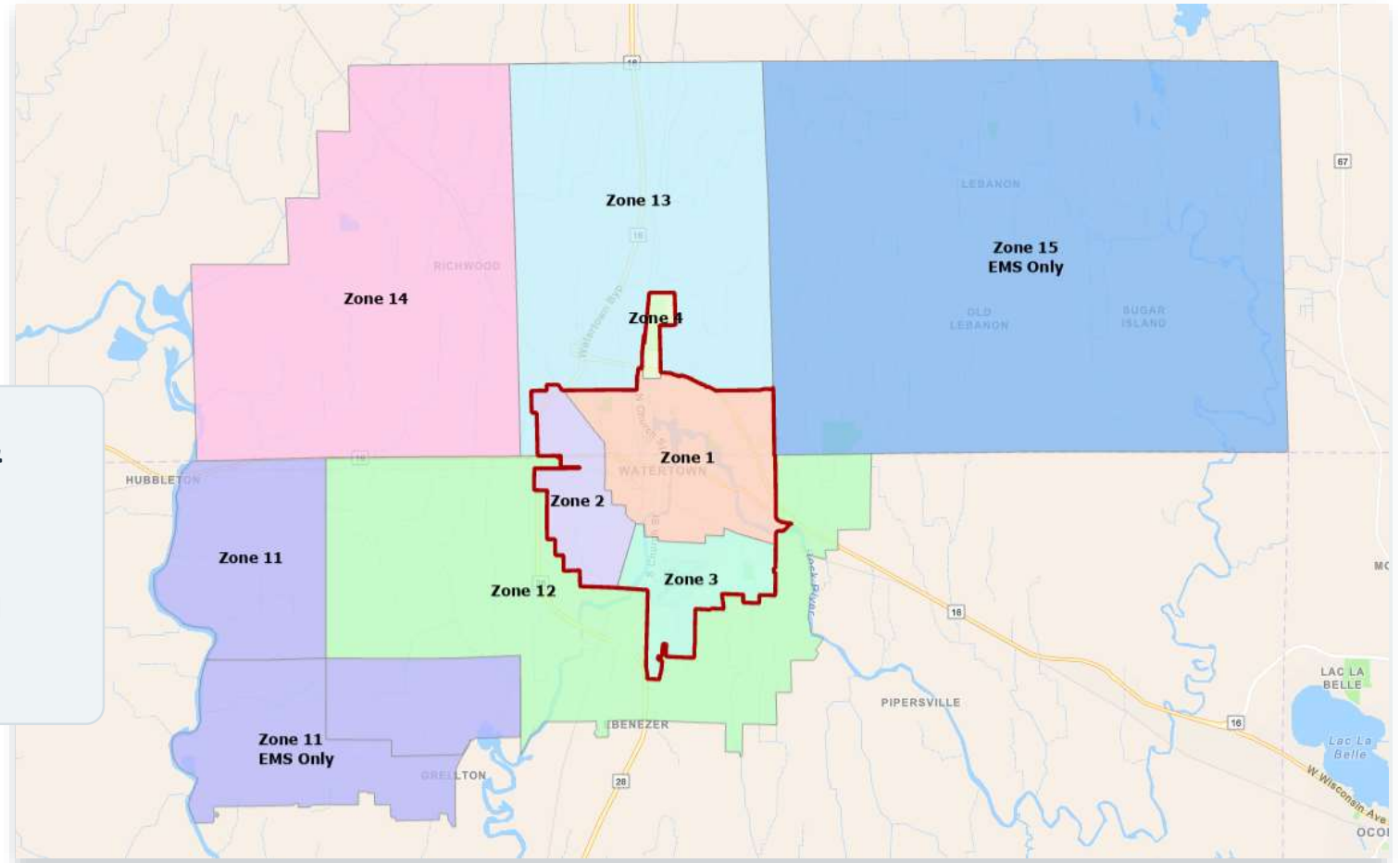
145

square miles. 9 response zones.



One of the largest footprints in Jefferson & Dodge counties.

Beaver Dam and Fort Atkinson each cover ~100 sq mi.





Who We Contract With



Five partners under contract

● Emmet	Fire + EMS
● Shields	Fire + EMS
● Milford (A Small Portion is EMS Only)	Fire + EMS
● Town of Watertown	Fire + EMS
● Lebanon	EMS only

CONTRACT REVENUE IN

\$521,990.80

per year, across all contracted areas

Townships pay operating costs — the city carries all capital.



More Than Calls

Prevention and EMS leadership you already fund.



Don Dishno

Deputy Chief · Fire Marshal

- **In-house plan review, state-approved.**
Contractors skip the state's long turnaround.
- Fire investigations & cause determination.
- Reinspections & annual inspections
- site-plan review.
- Fire-alarm follow-up.



Alyssa Cahoon

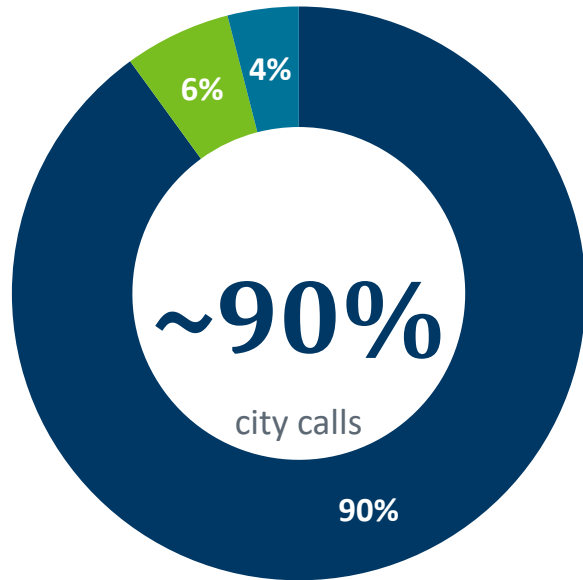
EMS & Training Chief · Service Director

- **EMS oversight, 70% of our call volume.**
- Hospital & medical-director liaison.
- Training, certification & QA.
- Clinical protocol & quality management.
- Compliance with State and Federal regulations.

Two officers. Value the funding delivers every day, beyond the call.



Where the Demand Is



■ City ■ Townships ■ Mutual aid given

The heaviest need is our own residents.

Nine of every ten calls are inside the city. This staffing serves Watertown residents first.

And the partners pay above their weight

10–13% of the budget

5–8% of the calls *nearly double their usage*



Our Real Footprint

We answer beyond our borders.

112

mutual-aid responses given in 2025



When crews are committed elsewhere, our nearest partner adds 15+ minutes. The transport revenue goes with them for EMS incidents.





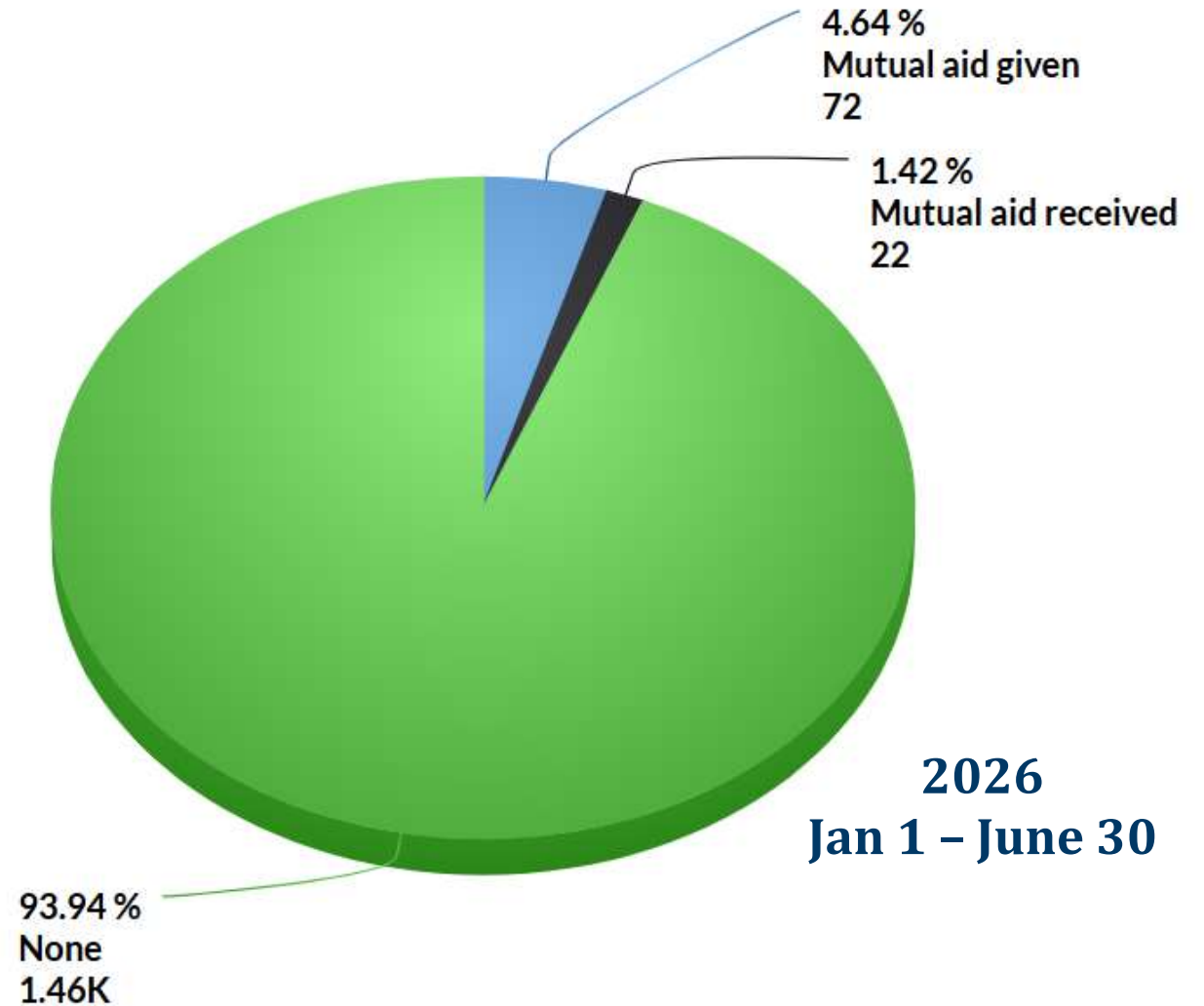
Mutual Aid Incidents- Impact

>50%

mutual-aid received – EMS Incident



Mutual aid **received** is predominantly EMS, while 65%+ of mutual aid **given** supports fire response.





Why We Have To



Mutual aid is a two-way promise.

When we are overwhelmed, they come for us. Break the promise and the whole regional system fails.

It is not optional. It is how every department in the region functions through MABAS Wi rules



Dodge County
Division 129



The Calls That Demand Bodies

Some calls need everything at once.

Critical EMS Incidents

Serious vehicle accidents

Any Structure Fire

Water or Ice Rescue

These pull the engine and the ambulance and command car, all at the same moment.





We're Still Delivering



86.7%

of exposed property saved

\$26.6M protected of \$30.7M exposed to fire in 2025.

1,823

patients transported in
2025

2:08

first-out turnout (90th
pct.)

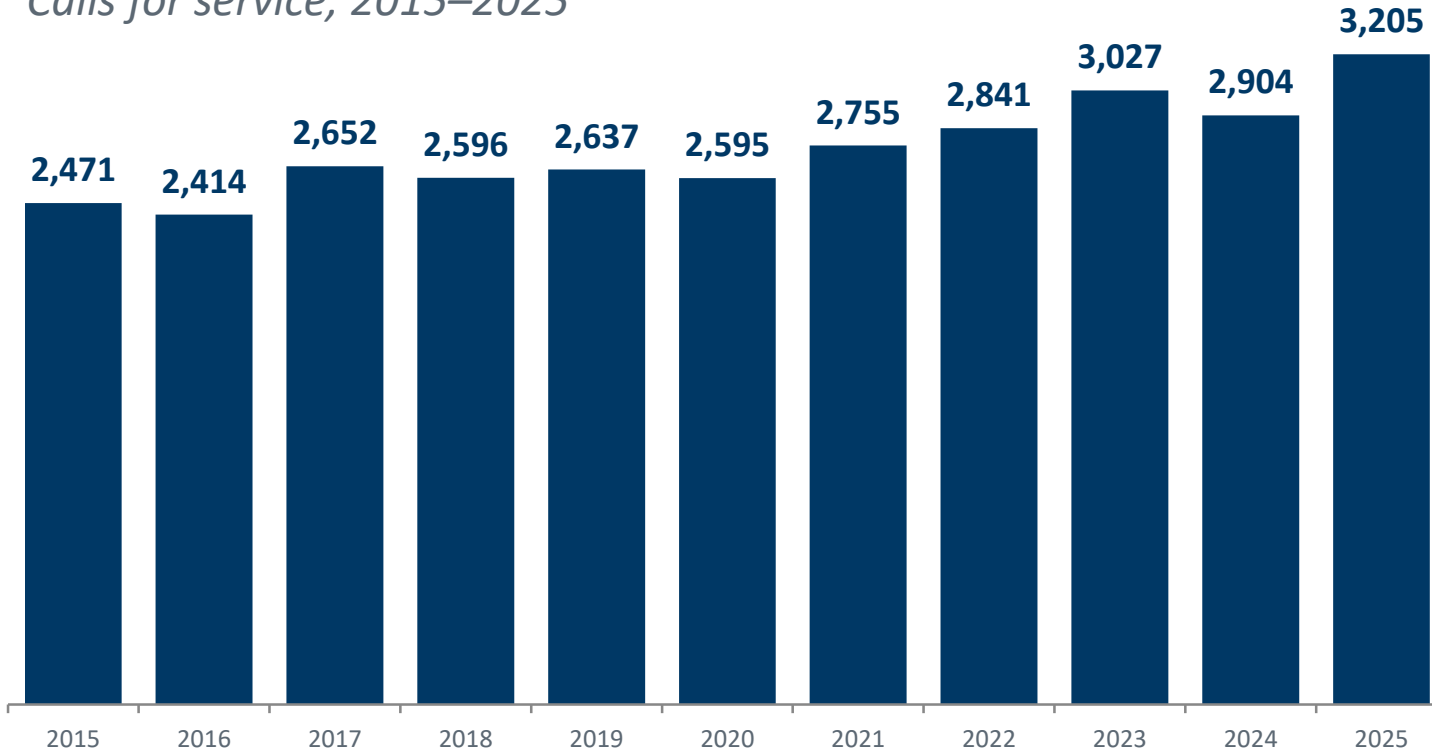
We are doing the job.

The question the council must weigh is at what hidden cost, and for how much longer.



But We're Stretched

Calls for service, 2015–2025



3,205

calls in 2025, up 30% over the decade

28.5%

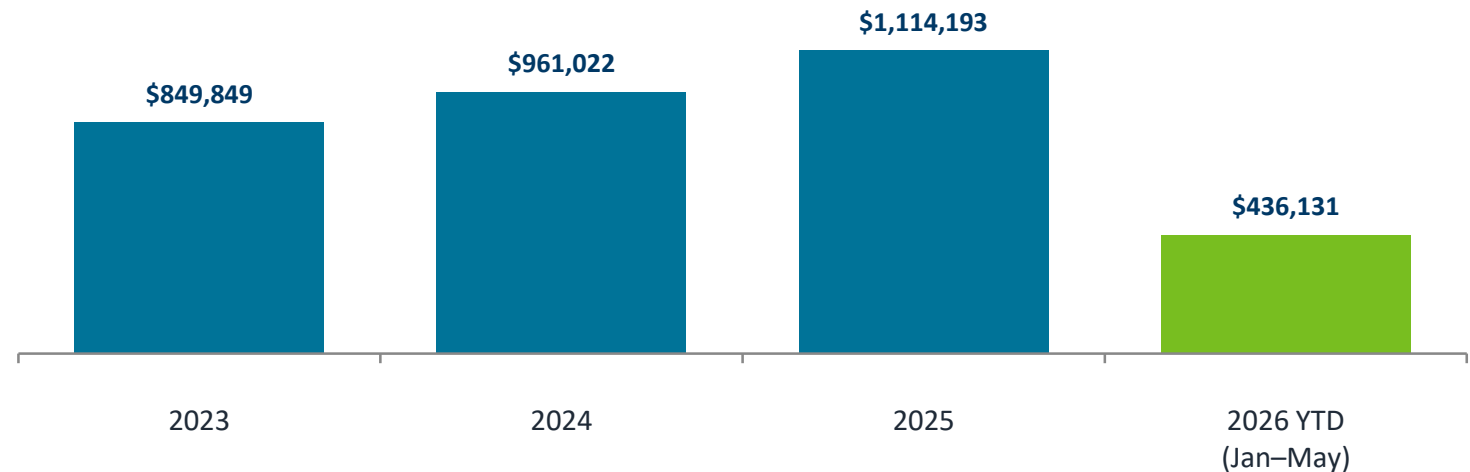
of calls overlap another in 2026,
↑ from 22.4% in 2024

EMS Revenue & GEMT Funding

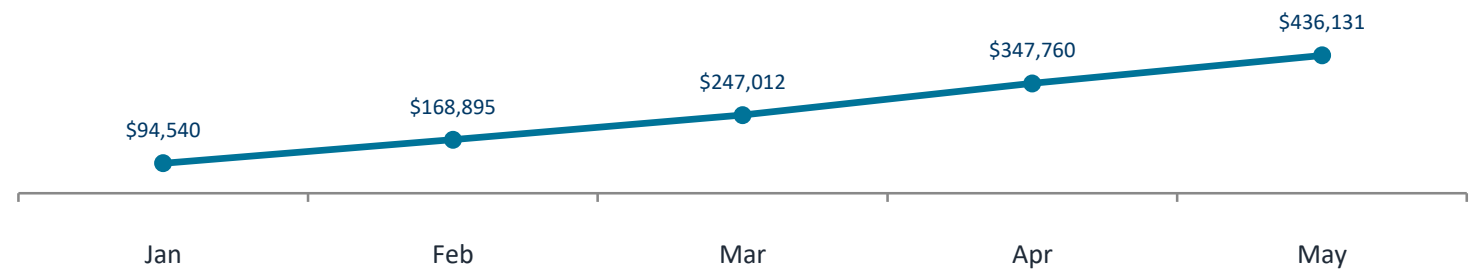


What the service already returns.

EMS Billing Revenue by Year



2026 Revenue — Cumulative YTD



2026 shown year-to-date through May; June pending. Full-year totals for 2023–2025.



GEMT REIMBURSEMENT

2023

\$63,921

2024

\$186,000

2025 (expected)

\$94,000

A bonus offset that helps fund the service — subject to state funding decisions.



What Happens on the Second Call



The second call robs the engine.

At 7–8 on duty *(a typical day)*

→ the 2nd ambulance pulls the ENGINE crew

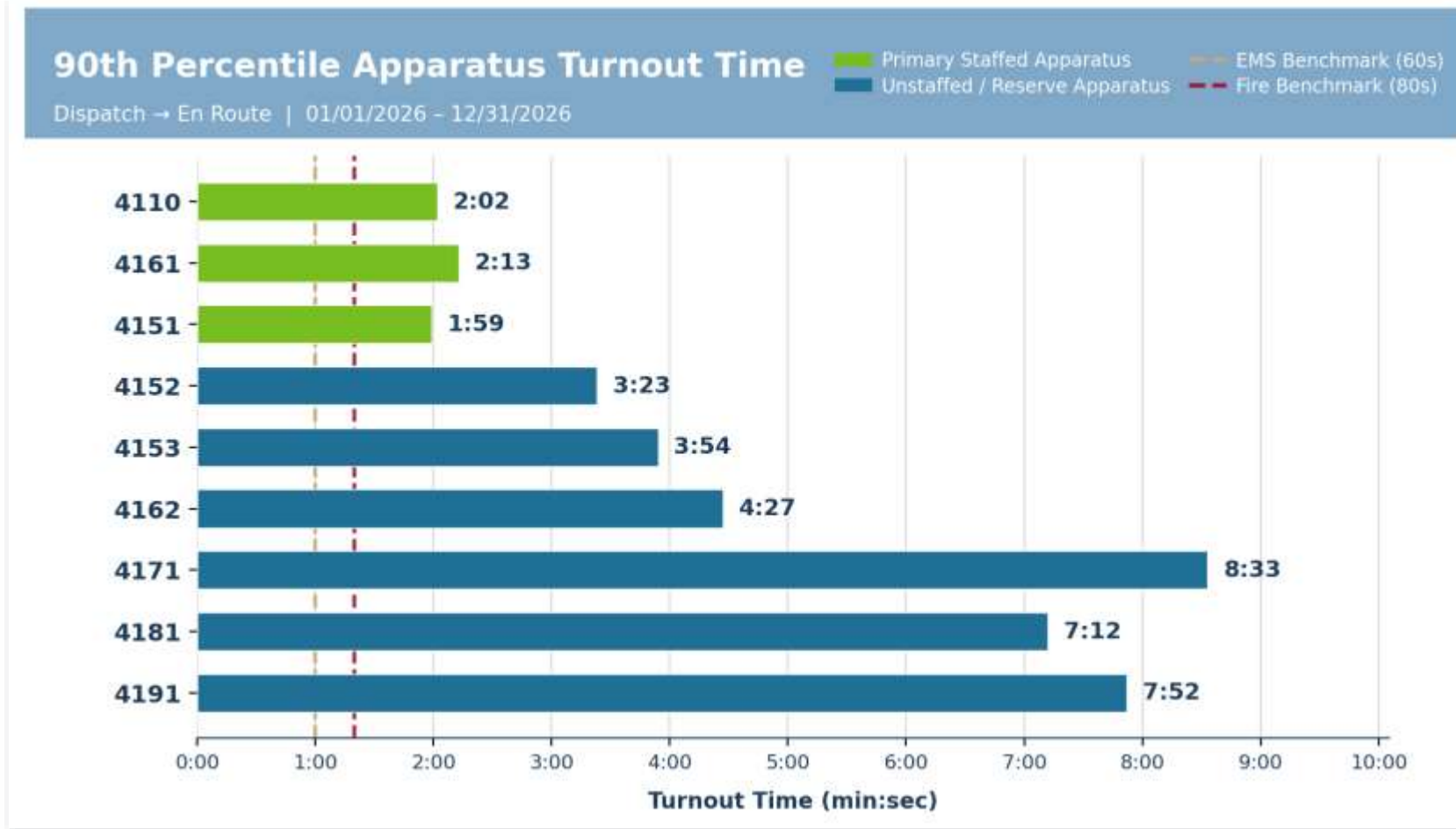
At 9 on duty

→ the “swing” crew responds, and the engine stays whole

Average Daily Staffing 7.9 in 2026.



Staffed Rigs Roll — the Rest Wait



Staffing is speed.

~2 min

staffed apparatus turnout

3-8 min

unstaffed / reserve apparatus

A truck with no crew is not a fast truck. Staffing is what puts it on the road.



The Ask

6 firefighters. 2 additional per shift.

No increased capital cost. Two people unlock four capabilities.



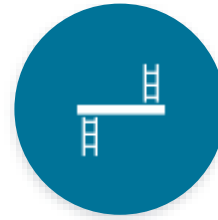
2nd Ambulance

Rolls without robbing the engine



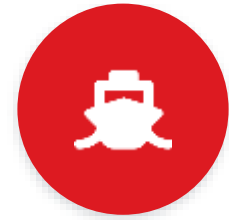
Tender

Water on rural fires without stretching staff thin



Ladder

Elevated operations on structure fires



Brush Truck & Boat

Grass fires & water rescue

EMS is why the need shows up first — it is 70% of our calls. The fix covers fire, too.



The Cost of Adding Six

6 FTEs = \$611,106 / year



Same floor, better rate

The department holds a minimum staffing floor which is currently set to 7. Today it is held with forced hireback at 1.5× pay to achieve when there are extended leave or sick calls. Staff are called in on a day off to ensure staffing.

\$303,000 in premium hireback (2025)



This is what gets to 9 on duty

Nine on duty unlocks the second ambulance, tender, ladder, and brush truck the department already owns. Six FTEs reach 9 on duty 90%+ of days, without hire-back

Not cheaper overall, smarter money, safer crews



Bonus funding support — GEMT

2024 reimbursement \$186,000,

2025 Estimated.

Federal / state program subject to funding cuts.

Plan for it as a bonus, not the baseline

The cost of a delayed response never shows up on a budget line.



The trend doesn't wait.

Calls up. Overlaps up. Staffing flat.

6 people. The trucks are already here.