

# Fire Department FY26 Budget

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Douglas K. LeColst, Fire Chief

# FY26 Supplemental Budget Request(s)

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- The Fire Department has submitted the following supplemental requests:
  - Four (4) additional full-time firefighter/Paramedics
  - One (1) daytime Deputy Chief



# Essential Functions of a Firefighter

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- Perform Emergency Functions
  - Fire Suppression
  - Emergency Medical Services
  - Haz-Mat Mitigation
- Fire Prevention Activities
- Training Activities
- Maintenance Activities
- Perform other duties as assigned



# Why The Need for Additional Firefighters?

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- Increased difficulty filling station shifts
  - Too much reliance on part-time staff
    - 2-24-hour shifts per day
  - The role of the part-time employee has changed over the years
    - Very few looking for FT employment with Middleton Fire
- Decreased callback participation
  - Leads to difficulty staffing emergency vehicles
  - Leads to insufficient coverage during emergency calls
- Increased hazards and risks within the community
- Risk of increased burnout

# Staffing Needs on Emergency Calls

- Medical Emergencies
  - At least 4-5 firefighters, possibly more based on the severity of the call.
  - The number of personnel increases based on the severity of the call.



# Staffing Needs on Emergency Calls

## KEY REQUIREMENTS



**Occupancy Type:** Single-Family Dwelling  
**Deployment:** Minimum of 16 members or 17 if aerial device is used

The initial full alarm assignment to a structure fire in a typical 2000 ft<sup>2</sup> (186 m<sup>2</sup>), two-story, single-family dwelling without a basement and with no exposures must provide for a minimum of 16 members (17 if an aerial device is used).



**Occupancy Type:** Garden-Style Apartment  
**Deployment:** Minimum of 27 members or 28 if aerial device is used

The initial full alarm assignment to a structure fire in a typical 1200 ft<sup>2</sup> (111 m<sup>2</sup>) apartment within a three-story, garden-style apartment building must provide for a minimum of 27 members (28 if an aerial device is used).



**Occupancy Type:** Open-Air Strip Mall  
**Deployment:** Minimum of 27 members or 28 if aerial device is used

The initial full alarm assignment to a structure fire in a typical open-air strip shopping center ranging from 13,000 ft<sup>2</sup> to 196,000 ft<sup>2</sup> (1203 m<sup>2</sup> to 18,209 m<sup>2</sup>) in size must provide for a minimum of 27 members (28 if an aerial device is used).



**Occupancy Type:** High-Rise  
**Deployment:** Minimum of 42 members or 43 if building is equipped with fire pump

The initial full alarm assignment to a fire in a building with the highest floor greater than 75 ft (23 m) above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access must provide for a minimum of 42 members (43 if the building is equipped with a fire pump).

- Fire Emergencies
  - Higher probability that additional resources will be needed
- Structure fires
  - Today vs. 30 years ago
- Two in, Two out minimum requirements
- Current staffing levels would often result in one firefighter responding to a building fire while awaiting mutual aid resources.



**Middleton**  
MASSACHUSETTS

# Typical Shift Configuration

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Ideal Shift Strength is 5 members

- 3 full-timers
- 2 part-timers

Attempts are made to fill vacant shifts at overtime.

The goal is not to drop below 3 members on duty at any given time.



# Today's Part-Time Member

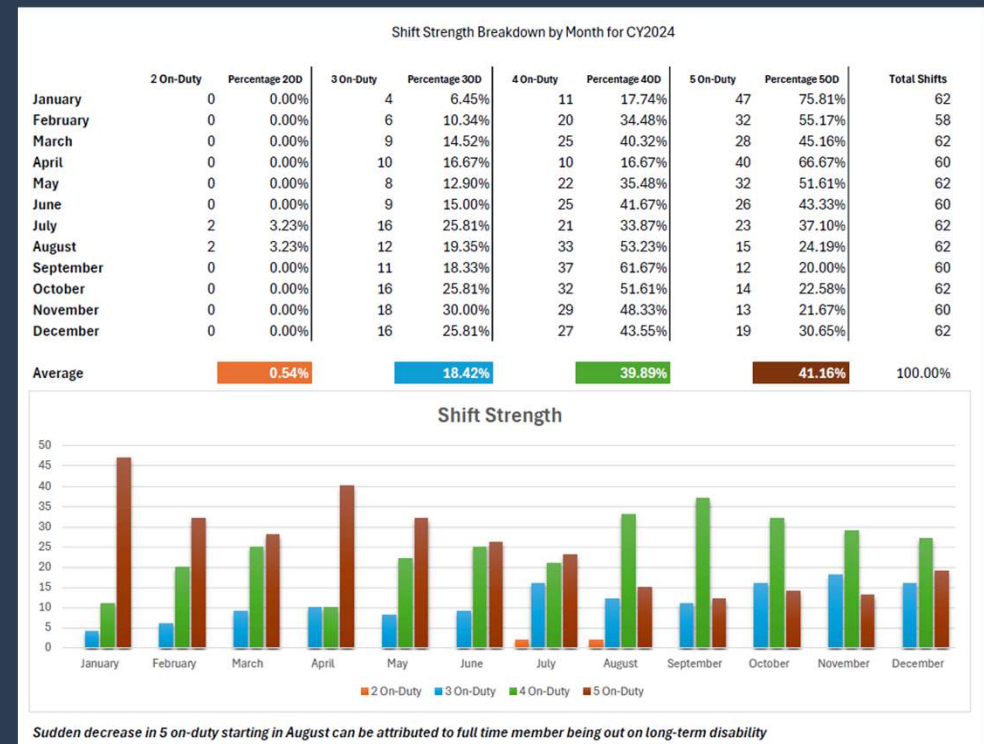
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- Also known as Call-Member
- Utilized for years to supplement Department operations
  - Shift work
  - Callback
- Recruitment and retention challenges
  - Residency vs. non-residency requirements
  - Increased training requirements
    - Fire and EMS
  - Increased utilization of career firefighters
    - Pros and Cons



# Monthly Shift Breakdown (Full v. Part Time)

- Ideal Shift Strength is 5 Members.
- Numerous instances where there were less than 5 on-duty
- Shift strength dictates the following:
  - Initial apparatus response
  - Initial resources on scene
  - Ability to field additional emergency calls
- Further complicated by decreased callback activity.

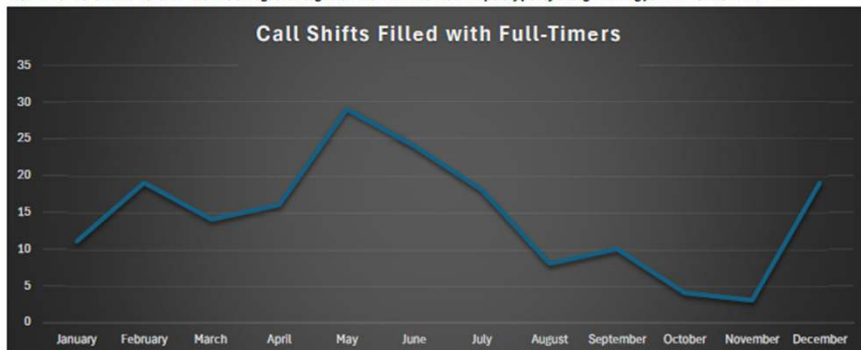


# Part-Time Shifts Filled with Full-Timers

Call Shifts Filled by Full-Timer by Month for CY2024

	Call Shifts Filled with Full-Timers	Percentage	Hours	
January	11	18%	122	62
February	19	31%	230	58
March	14	23%	164	62
April	16	26%	188	60
May	29	47%	344	62
June	24	39%	292	60
July	18	29%	232	62
August	8	13%	104	62
September	10	16%	124	60
October	4	6%	52	62
November	3	5%	34	60
December	19	31%	230	62
Average/month	16.6	28%	2116	

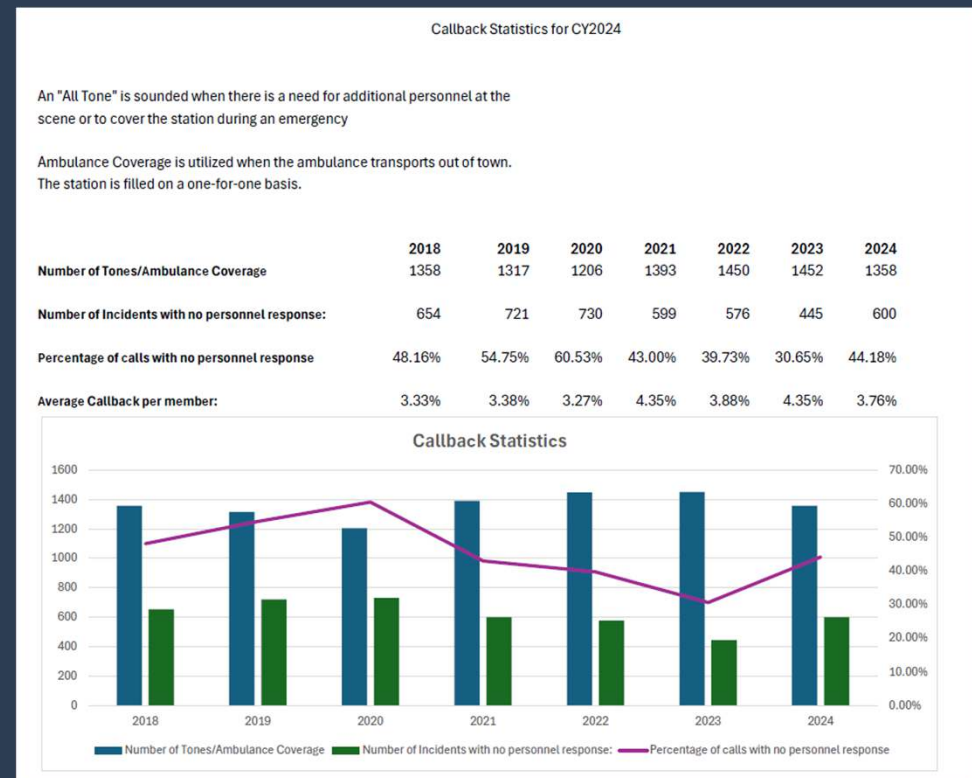
Note: Decreased numbers for the months of August through November were due to a temporary policy change in filling part-time shifts with overtime.



- Monthly breakdown showing call shifts filled with overtime
- On average 28% filled with OT
- Leads to higher overtime costs
- Leads to increase burnout
- Lead to less off-duty participation (callback)
- \$112,000 was spent filling part-time position with overtime

# Callback Participation (Full-Time and Part-Time)

- Callback participation is an integral part of successful operations.
  - Ensure sufficient resources on-scene
  - Ensure sufficient station coverage
- Numerous instances of insufficient station coverage/off-duty responses.
  - Response delays
  - Insufficient resources on scene
  - Inability to staff additional emergency calls



# Part-Time Staff: Filling Weekend Shifts

- Ongoing difficulties filling weekend shifts with part-timers.
- Reasons include:
  - Desire to have weekends off
  - Need to work weekend shifts with full-time job.
  - Family commitments



# Simultaneous Emergency Calls

Simultaneous Emergency Calls for CY2024

Month	Total Simultaneous Calls
Jan	25
Feb	31
Mar	33
Apr	27
May	23
June	29
July	35
Aug	27
Sept	34
Oct	42
Nov	63
Dec	35
Total	404

When a simultaneous emergency call occurs (absent off-duty response) staffing levels are significantly impacted:

Medical Calls: 1 to 3 members (2 other members are occupied on initial medical call)  
Fire Calls: 0 to 1 members depending on the fire incident type

Total Simultaneous Calls



- Monthly Breakdown of Simultaneous calls
- Defined as an additional emergency call(s) while the initial crew is committed to the first call.
- Decreased shift strength combined with decreased callback leads to increased difficulty in responding to calls.
- Increased reliance on mutual-aid resources.
- Decreased ambulance Ambulance revenue.

# Staffing Breakdown: Resident v. Non-Resident

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- Current staffing numbers (Full-Time and Part-Time): 37
- Members who reside in town:
  - Full-Time: 5
  - Part-Time: 1
- Percentage of staff who reside in town: 16%
- Percentage of staff who resided in town 20+ years ago: 100%
- People who want to do this job cannot afford to live in the area.
- This greatly impacts the ability for callback responses.
- Further strengthens the need for consistent shift staffing.

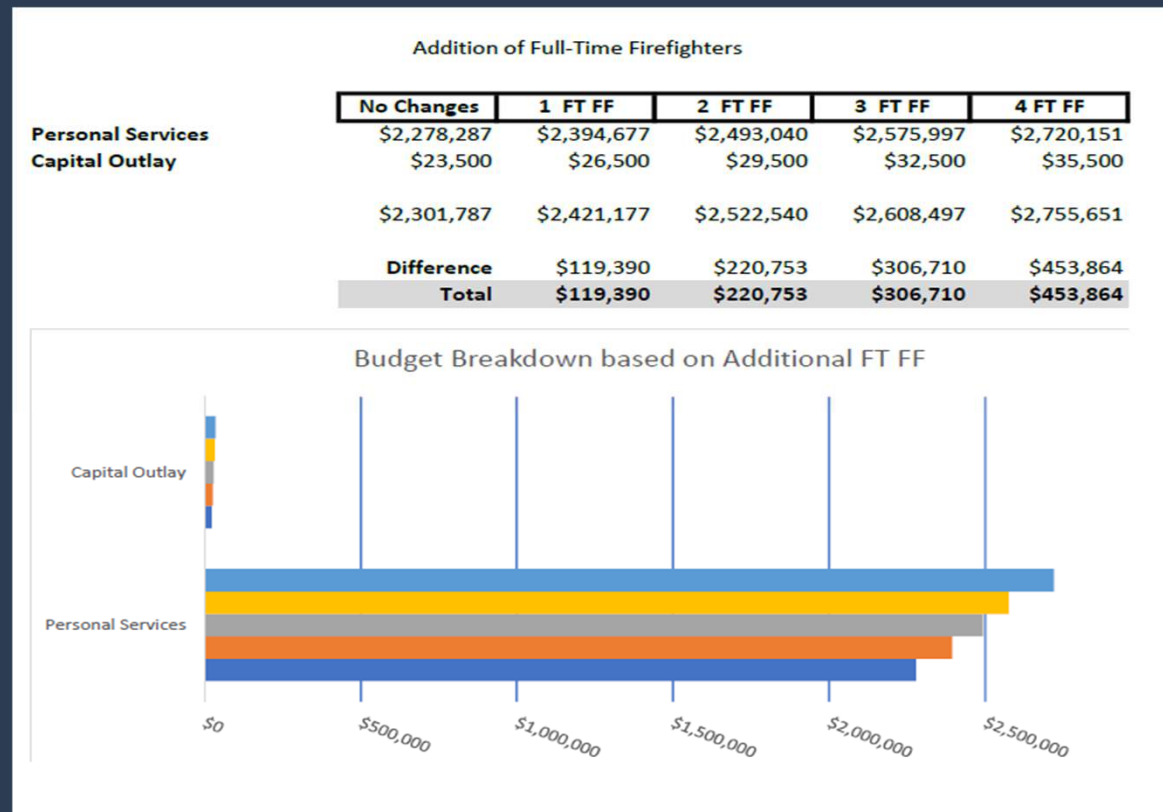
# What Would Hiring 4 FTE Accomplish?

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- Increase Full-Time staffing base from 3 to 4 members
- Allow for more consistent staffing
- Less reliance on part-time staffing
- Less need to fill part-time staff with overtime
- Decreased need for shift holdovers

**While these additional positions would help immensely, they will not eliminate the ongoing staffing issues.**

# Additional FTE: The Cost





# Hiring of Full-Time Deputy Chief

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- The department is looking to add one (1) Full-Time Deputy Fire Chief
  - Non-Union position
  - Schedule would consist of weekday hours
  - Current Command staff works a regular firefighter schedule (24-hour shifts).
  - Schedule irregularities (Chief and Command staff schedules do not coincide).
  - One of the few departments that does not have a second in command with a similar schedule.



# Functions of the Deputy Chief

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- Functions include but are not limited to:
  - Management of the department during the temporary absence of the Chief
  - Assist the Chief with administration, coordination, and direction of department activities, including during emergency situations
  - Help to maintain consistency, efficiency, order, and discipline within the department
  - Assist with Fire Prevention activities when needed
  - Assist with the development and creation of department policies and procedures
  - Assist in applying for and submitting various grants
  - Respond to emergency calls (Fire and EMS) when needed
  - Attend meetings and conferences during the Chiefs absence

# Deputy Chief vs. Fire Prevention Officer (FPO)

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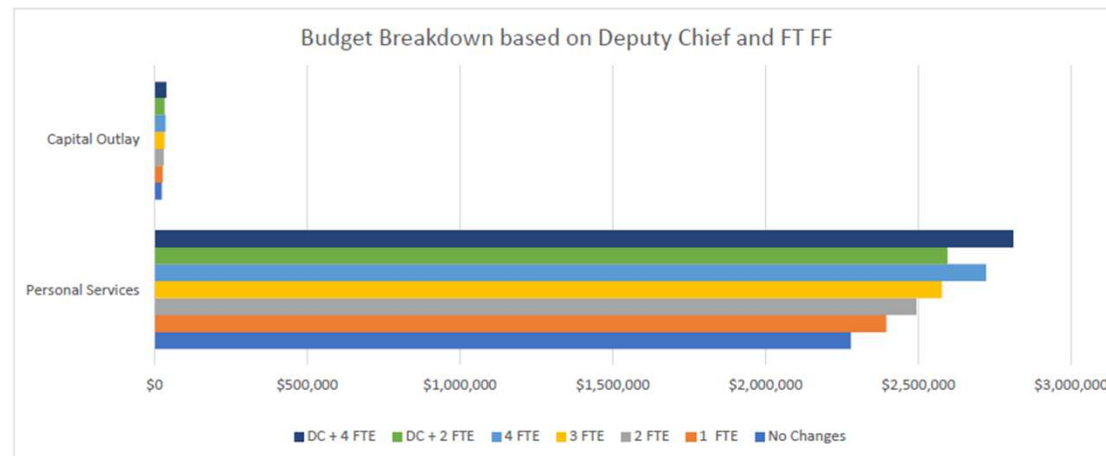
- Justification still exists for a full-time FPO
  - Continued need for inspectional services
  - Department Comps
- Focus recently shifted from FPO to full-time Deputy Chief
  - Recent wildland fires combined with ongoing administrative responsibilities
    - Grants
    - Budgets
  - Upcoming Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) revisions

# Financial Breakdown for Various FTE

Addition of Full-Time Firefighters Plus Deputy Chief Position

	No Changes	1 FTE	2 FTE	3 FTE	4 FTE	DC + 2 FTE	DC + 4 FTE
Personal Services	\$2,278,287	\$2,394,677	\$2,493,040	\$2,575,997	\$2,720,151	\$2,593,921	\$2,810,352
Capital Outlay	\$23,500	\$26,500	\$29,500	\$32,500	\$35,500	\$32,500	\$38,500
	\$2,301,787	\$2,421,177	\$2,522,540	\$2,608,497	\$2,755,651	\$2,626,421	\$2,848,852
Difference		\$119,390	\$220,753	\$306,710	\$453,864	\$324,634	\$547,065
Total		\$119,390	\$220,753	\$306,710	\$453,864	\$324,634	\$547,065

Budget Breakdown based on Deputy Chief and FT FF



# OSHA Emergency Response Standard

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- Will replace 43-year-old Fire Brigade Standard.
- Establish workplace protections for those who respond to emergency calls.
- Emergency Service Organizations would need to:
  - Develop Emergency Response Plans based on Community Risk Assessments.
  - Establish baselines for medical and physical baseline evaluations
  - Access to behavioral health resources
  - Enhance minimum training requirements
  - Enhance vehicle maintenance and inspection programs
  - Establish guidelines for firefighter PPE requirements

# Fire Department Comps

Department	Call Volume	Firefighters on Shift	Full-Time FPO	Full-Time Deputy
North Reading	3010	6	1	1
Lynnfield	2266	7	1	1
Littleton	2458	5	1	1

These departments are combination departments that utilize both full-time and part-time members.

Similar to Middleton, these departments continue to struggle with callback participation.

# Thank you

