

# 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

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- 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.



Photo by MEB [www.firenews.org](http://www.firenews.org)

# 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:** 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:** 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:** 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  
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# 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.



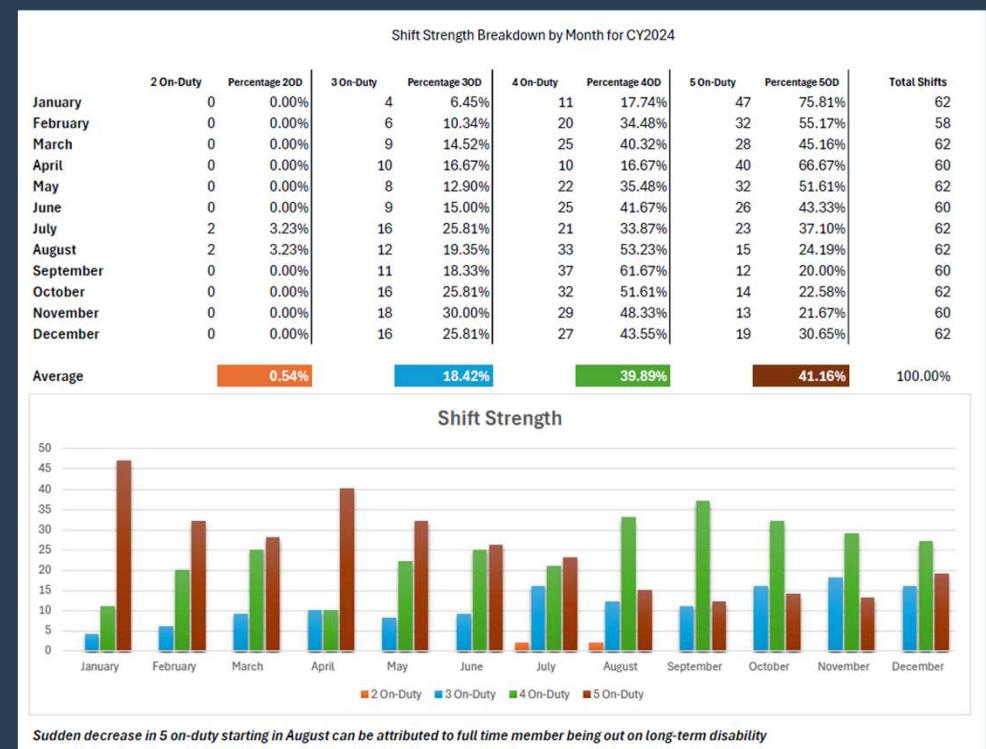
# Today's Part-Time Member

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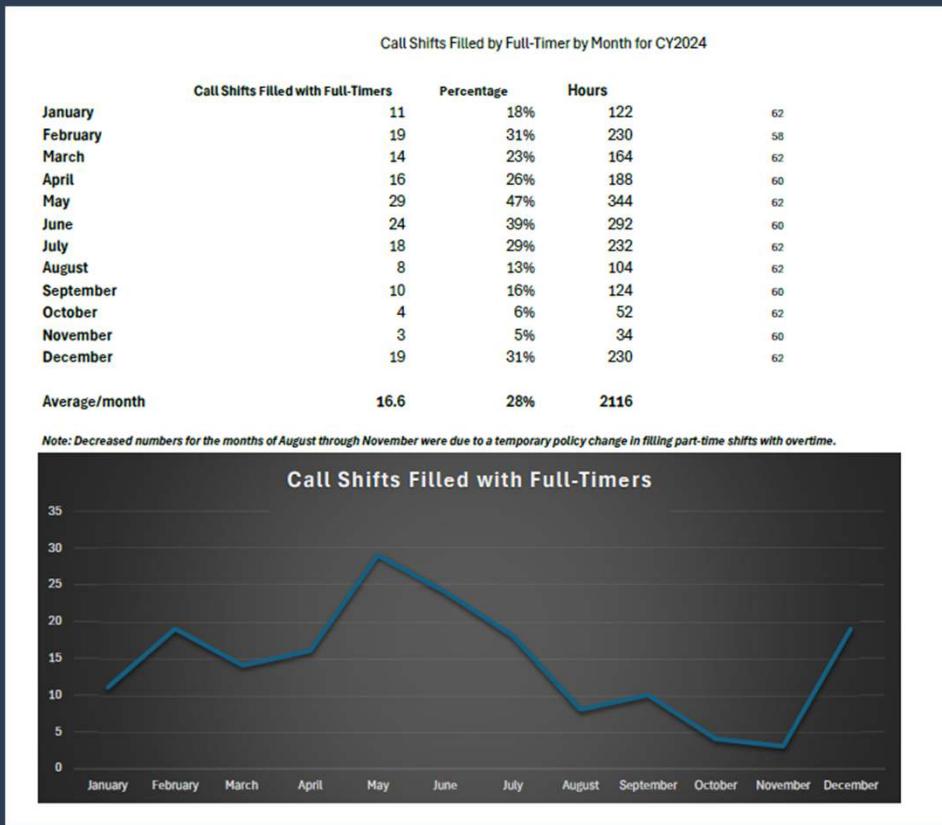
- Also known as Call-Member
- Utilized for years to supplement Department operations
  - Shift work
  - Callback
- Recruitment and retention challenges
  - Residency vs. non-residency requirements
  - Increased training requirements
    - Fire and EMS
  - Increased utilization of career firefighters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



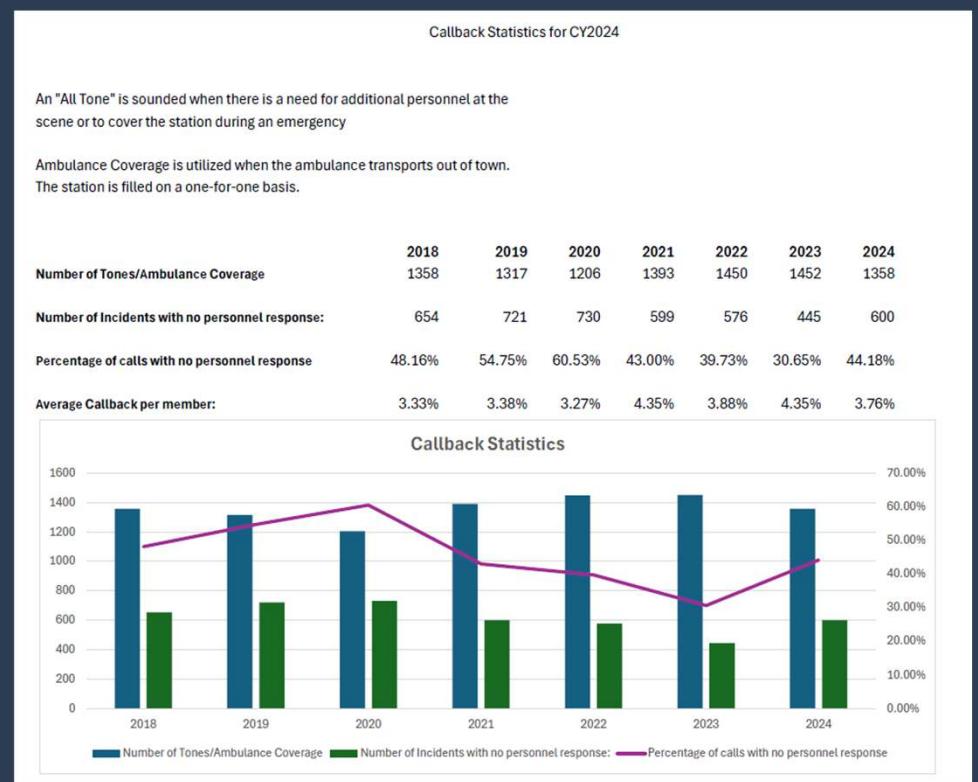
# Part-Time Shifts Filled with Full-Timers



- 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

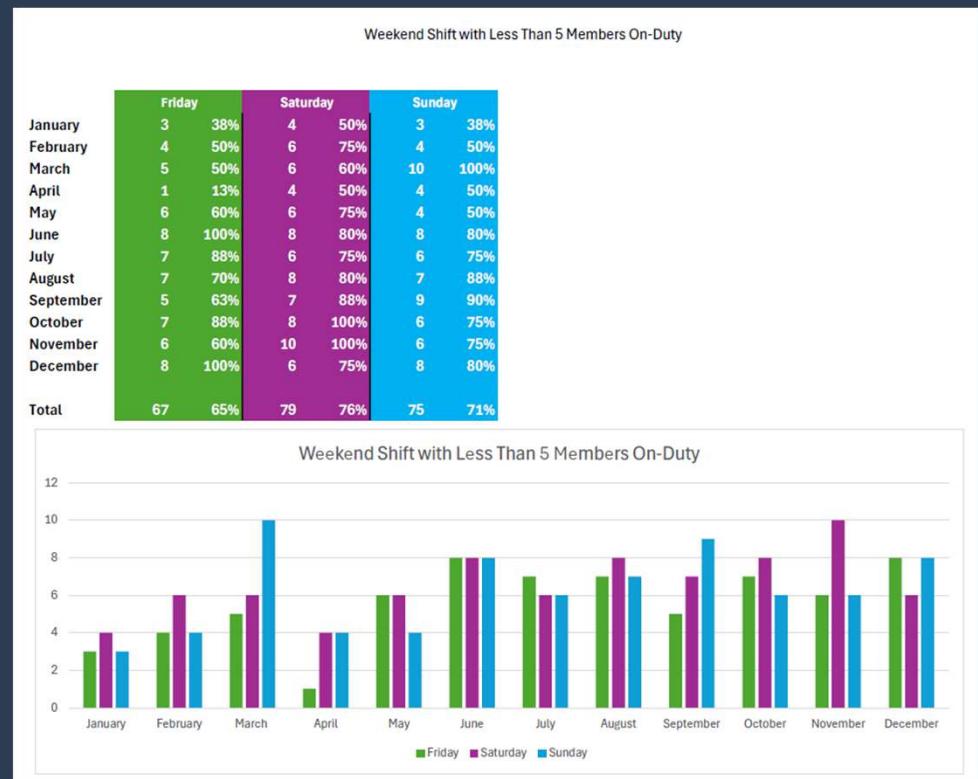
# Callback Participation (Full-Time and Part-Time)

- 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

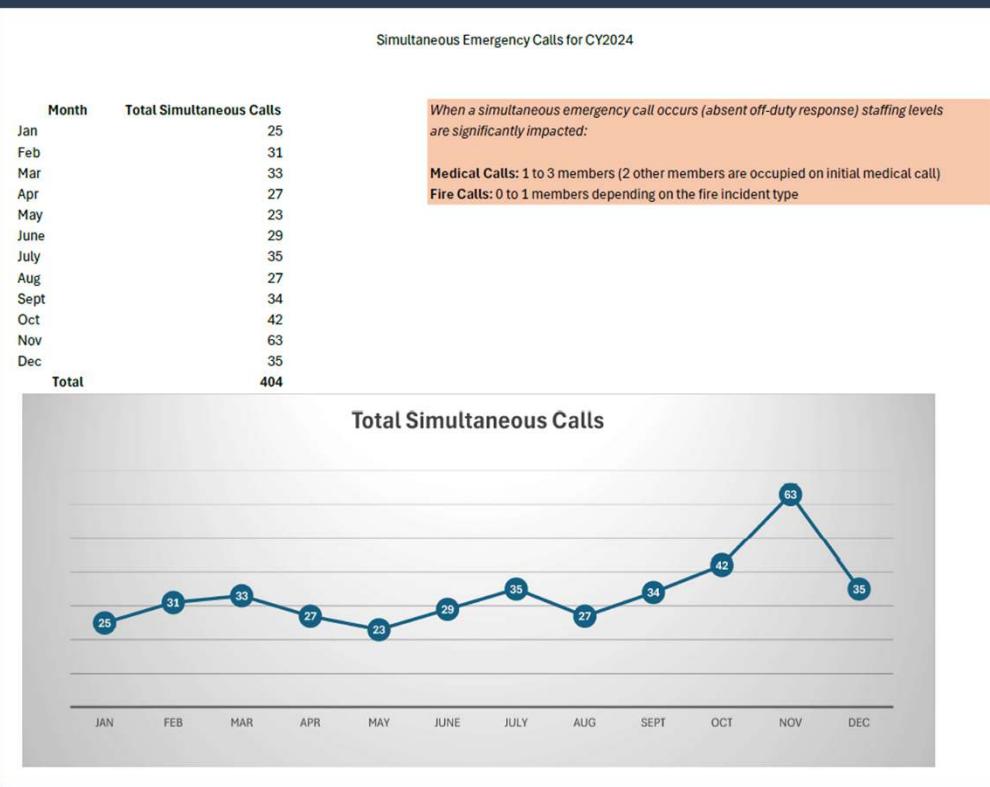


# Part-Time Staff: Filling Weekend Shifts

- 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



- 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.



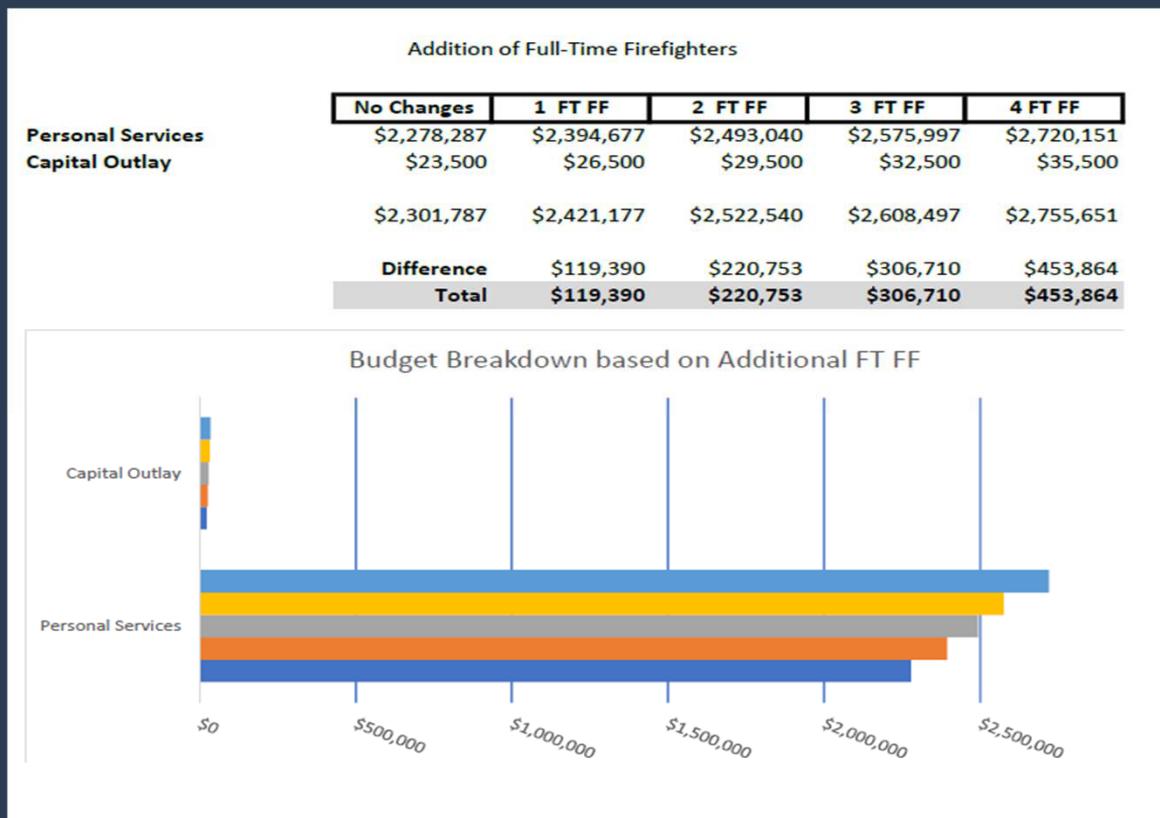
# What Would Hiring 4 FTE Accomplish?

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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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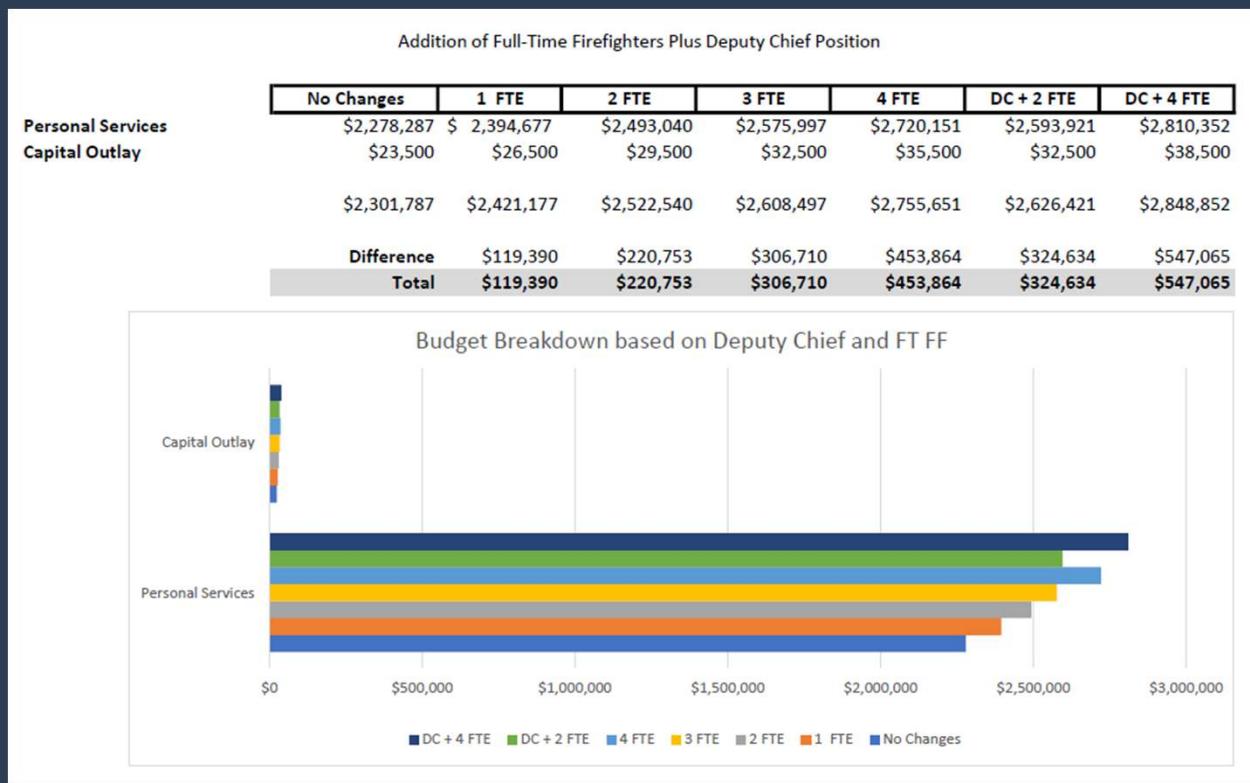
- Functions include but are not limited to:
  - Management of the department during the temporary absence of the Chief
  - Assist the Chief with administration, coordination, and direction of department activities, including during emergency situations
  - Help to maintain consistency, efficiency, order, 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



# 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

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